

LIGHT UP YOUR WORLD
Stories for *Easier* Evangelism (Part 3)
Parables about Lostness (Luke 15:1-24)

OPENING: Evangelism is the Early Church:

1. Never limited to church facilities
2. Always initiated by a believer
3. Usually connected to some event or experience (healing, crisis)
4. People were not forced into it

INTRO: How many of you have ever been lost or lost something? I got lost going to Sam's. . . gave me empty, hollow feeling, panic set in, frantic search for bearings. Our text is all about being lost. Luke 15 is unique in the Gospels. No chapter is more tender and loving. Almost 8 billion on earth (70% are lost). Parable is a window into the heart of God.

I. (15:1-2) THE PROBLEM JESUS EXPERIENCED

- A. *ATTRACTION* (v. 1) – Jesus attracted sinners while Pharisees repelled them. Lost people flocked to Jesus, not because He catered to them or compromised His message but He cared for them. It was bad enough to welcome and teach them but He even ate with them – sign of acceptance! (Lk 5:30-32; 7:34). They felt comfortable in His company. You?
- B. *ACCUSATION* (v. 2) – Jesus persistently antagonized the religious self-righteous. They muttered that Jesus attracted the outcasts. Pharisees stepped on sinners and tossed them aside as trash but Jesus picked them up and treated them as treasure.
- C. *PROBLEM* prompts three parables on lostness that gives us glimpses of His grace – All represent different types of people. All are lost. All are valuable. All require a different approach to be reached.

II. (15:3-24) THE PARABLES JESUS EMPLOYED (contrast God vs. Pharisees' attitude toward lost sinners)

- A. *SHEEP* (vv. 3-7) – indifferently lost
 1. *Reason* lost was its own internal disposition. By nature, sheep are careless, senseless, foolish, wander astray, drift into other pursuits.
 2. *Reality* is all humans are like sheep in that we have an internal disposition bent toward sin (Isa. 53:6). All born with a sin nature. We are all off course from birth (Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Isa. 48:1; 53:6).
 3. *Response* of shepherd to “go after the lost sheep until he finds it” (v. 4). Sheep tend to lie down and cry out when see they are lost. After all, Bible says Jesus is the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10).
- B. *COIN* (vv. 8-10) – ignorantly lost
 1. *Reason* lost was of no personal fault but through external circumstances. Coin (drachma) was lost at home. Scary to think our carelessness at home could aid in someone's lostness. Coin didn't know it was lost.

2. *Reality* is we live in a society of fallen people who are clueless, they are lost and need a Savior.
 3. *Response* again was the woman diligently, thoroughly searching until finds her prized coin (day's wage), wedding head band, necklace?
- C. *SON* (vv. 11-24) – willfully lost (2 Cor. 4:4)
1. *Reason* lost is very different than with sheep and coin. Son was lost intentionally and wilfully. See his rebellion (vv. 11-16). Lightfoot...
 2. Son's *Repentance* tells us how lost people get found (vv. 17-20). There must be: *recognition of need* (17 “came to his senses”) – insanity to sin, decision to return (18 – “I will set out and go back”), *confession of sin* (18-19 no excuses), *action* (20 “he got up and went”). Chooses to repent and return home. No delay from saying to doing. Easier to go than return.
 3. His *Return* (vv. 20-24) – Response of Father is different than of shepherd and woman. The Father patiently waits for us. “*What brought son home?*” (v. 17 – he remembered Father's goodness (Rom. 2:4). Crisis?

III. THE POINTS JESUS EMPHASIZED

Three words summarize drama of these parables: *Lost* – our condition, *Found* – God's desire, *Rejoicing* – Heaven's response. THREE LESSONS:

- A. *PEOPLE ARE LOST* – Six times “lost” stated (vv. 4,6,8,9,24). Jesus used lost to describe people's condition more than sinners. In each story, something valuable is lost. Sin is root, lost is fruit. More important than knowing why you're lost is knowing *that* you're lost (Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:23).
- B. *GOD LOVES THE LOST SO MUCH HE SEARCHES UNTIL HE FINDS THEM* (vv. 4,8). The stories of lost sheep and coin shows us that God doesn't just accept sinners, He actually searches for them. All worth finding. Response to son (v. 20). (Lk. 19:10). Who searched for you?
- C. *REJOICING RESULTS WHEN LOST PEOPLE ARE FOUND* (vv. 5, 6,7,9,10,23,24). “Who gets the joy when a lost person is found?” the one found, one who does the finding, friends, heaven (esp. the Father who is in the presence of the angels). Found people find people. John 3:16

CONC: There we have three parables on lostness, being found and the joy that comes over one sinner who repents and a lost person who is found. They tell us not so much about a lost sheep as a seeking Shepherd, about a lost coin as a searching woman, about a lost son as a loving Father who seeks and waits for us to come home. All of these speak of our Father in heaven. God's heart aches over the lost; His heart rejoices over the found! Your Story . . . Prayer . . .