

The parables of this chapter all center on one theme: to demonstrate God's love and concern for the lost. The occasion for these parables is the context of chapter 14. After Jesus taught the parable of the slighted invitation in which the host invited those in the highways and by-ways to come to his feast (14:21), a multitude followed Jesus. He taught them the cost of discipleship.

To some degree, the Lord turned away from the exclusive, self-righteous portion of the nation and began to address the outcast and despised with much success. Many publicans and sinners were attracted to Jesus' message. The Pharisees charged Him saying, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (15:2). The implication of this charge is "birds of a feather flock together." Jesus must, therefore, be a sinner. In response to these Pharisees, Jesus taught the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. The parables show a progression in loss. In the parables, the shepherd lost 1/100 of his sheep, the woman lost 1/10 of her money, and the father lost 1/2 of his children.

The Lost Sheep (15:3-7)

A man had 100 sheep, one of which wandered off and got lost. The shepherd left the ninety-nine and went in search of the lost sheep. When he found it, he laid it on his shoulders and carried it home. Then he called together his friends saying, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." The lesson of the parable is this: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (15:7).

This parable depicts the lost sinner under the image of the lost

sheep. We see that God experiences a loss when one goes astray. The sinner is God's creature, created in His image. When he becomes lost, God experiences the loss. The leaving of the ninety-nine depicts Jesus' leaving heaven in search of the lost

there should be rejoicing among God's children on earth when sinners are brought to repentance. The attitude of the Pharisees and scribes is the opposite to that of the angels in heaven.



sinner. The parable emphasizes God's initiative in seeking and saving that which is lost. When Jesus found the lost, He received him gladly; He did not strike the sheep or speak to it harshly.

The parable emphasizes the joy in heaven over the restoration of the sinner. If there is joy in heaven,

The Parable of the Lost Coin (15:8-10)

The parable relates that a woman had ten coins, one of which she lost. Upon discovering her loss, she diligently searched for the lost coin. When she found her lost coin, she called her neighbors to rejoice with her. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the

angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (15:10).

The coin which was lost still had value; consequently, the woman searched for it. Likewise, the sinner has value to God; the Lord came from heaven in search of him. When the lost sinner repents, the Lord and the angels of heaven rejoice. If the angels in heaven rejoice when the lost repents, so also should the Pharisees and scribes.

The Parable of the Lost Son (15:11-32)

This parable depicts in greater detail the circumstances which the Lord was addressing. A certain man

While in these circumstances, the young man came to himself (15:17) and realized that the servants in his father’s house fared better than he was faring. He resolved to return to his father and to say, “I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants” (15:19). He arose and went home.

When the father saw his son coming home, he rushed to greet him. He had compassion on him and hugged and kissed him. The son confessed his sin against his father. The father said to his servants, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it

told him of his brother’s return and his father’s joy. The elder brother was angry and would not go into the house. The father loved the older brother just as much as he loved the younger brother, so he went out to talk to him. The older brother complained that his father had never made such a feast for him and he had remained obedient to him through the years. The father explained that it was only fitting that he should rejoice that his lost son was now found.

This parable depicts many lessons including (1) the manner in which sin deceives the sinner; (2) the condition to which sin leads; (3) the nature of true repentance; (4) the manner in which God receives the sinner. However, the main thrust of the lesson is to depict the wicked attitude displayed by the Pharisees and scribes toward the publicans and sinners who heard and obeyed the gospel of Christ. They are pictured by the elder brother who resented the attention given to the younger brother. In His masterful way, Jesus rebuked their cold-hearted and self-righteous attitude toward those who come to repentance. In despising Jesus for receiving sinners, they were out of harmony with the angels of heaven who rejoiced when a sinner came to repentance.



had two sons. The younger son asked his father to divide his inheritance. After receiving his share, the younger son left the father and went into a far country where he wasted his inheritance with riotous living (15:13, 30). Sometime thereafter, a famine came and the younger son was unable to find work. Soon he was reduced to providing for himself by feeding swine.

on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry.” There was true joy that his son had returned home.

Meanwhile, the elder brother had been working in the field. Upon returning home, he saw the merriment and asked one of the servants what was happening. The servant

Questions

1. Who were the “publicans and sinners” and why were they abhorred by the Pharisees? _____

2. To whom might we be tempted to have similar feelings today? _____
3. What is implied in the charge in v. 2? _____

4. What attitude did the shepherd have toward his lost sheep (15:2-7)? _____

5. What effort did he make to find it? _____

6. What was his reaction when he found it? _____
7. What was the lesson of this parable? _____

8. What attitude did the woman have toward her lost coin (15:8-10)? _____
9. What was her reaction when she found it? _____

10. What was the lesson of the parable? _____

11. What lesson can we learn from the efforts to find the lost sheep and coin made by the shepherd and the woman? _____

12. In the parable of the lost son, identify the following:
 - a. Father: _____
 - b. Younger son: _____
 - c. Older son: _____
13. Define “prodigal”: _____
14. List the steps which the younger son took in his apostasy. _____

15. What words describe the son’s condition while away from the Father (15:24, 32)? _____

16. What conditions did the younger son find far away from his Father? _____

17. List the steps which the younger son took in his returning home. _____

18. How did the father receive the son? _____

19. What attitude did the older son have toward his younger brother? _____

20. What did the father do to show his love for the older brother? _____

21. What lesson was taught by use of the older brother? _____

True or False

- ___ 1. To apostatize, a Christian must leave the Father.
- ___ 2. Life in the far away country was exactly what the younger son thought it would be.
- ___ 3. Sin promises a better life than it can produce.
- ___ 4. The famine in the country contributed to bringing the younger brother to repentance.
- ___ 5. The younger son did not confess his sins to the father.

Answering Denominational Error

The Baptists teach “once in grace, always in grace.” How does Luke 15 show this doctrine is false? _____
