

#78 “I WAS LOST, BUT NOW I AM FOUND”

LUKE 15:1-32

After speaking to the crowd about repentance (Lk. 13:1-5) and the parable of the fruitless fig tree (Lk. 13:6-9)—Jesus went and taught at a synagogue; and, there, He healed a woman on the Sabbath (Lk. 13:10-21). As He moved towards Jerusalem, He remained dedicated to teaching the people about the Kingdom to come (Lk. 13:22-30).

We are told that Jesus went (for some time) to Perea (Jn. 10:40-42), and then dined with a Pharisee leader; where He healed another person on the Sabbath (Lk. 14:1-6), and continued to teach about the coming banquet in heaven (14:7-35).

THE FIRST PART OF THE PARABLE: THE LOST SHEEP

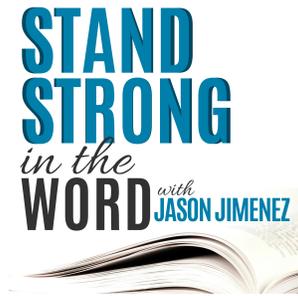
15:1-7

1. **Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near** (get closer) **to hear him.**
² **And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled** (outraged; discontent), **saying, “This man receives** (welcomes; accept with friendliness) **sinners and eats with them.”**

Another issue the Pharisees have with Jesus. No matter what He did, the religious leaders would attack Him for it. In their minds, by Jesus associating with “unclean/wicked/sinners” that meant He was living an unclean life with them.

- A. “eats with them.** Table fellowship created a covenant relationship of friendship. Scripture warned against intimate fellowship with sinners (Ps 1:1; Pr 1:15; 13:20; 14:7), but it should be noted that here the influence is going the other direction. The religious critics’ complaint occasions the three parables of vv. 3–32. Nevertheless, their values would not allow them to identify easily with the main characters: a shepherd (vv. 4–7), a woman (vv. 8–10), and an indulgent father (vv. 11–32). Urban people in this period often looked down on shepherds; courts mistrusted the testimony of both shepherds and women. Those who love God celebrate with him when what was lost to him is restored (vv. 7, 10); the critics here, by contrast, reject the celebration.”¹
- B.** Yet, Jesus, in love, reaches out to the outcasts; despite what the religious leaders assumed He was doing with them. This action of “reaching the lost”

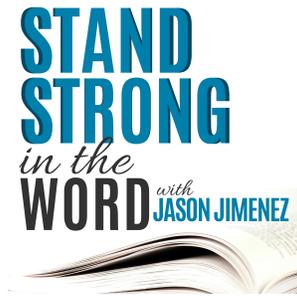
¹ Zondervan,. NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture (Kindle Locations 233708-233712). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.



launches Jesus into telling the parable with three stories about a lost sheep, coin and son.

2. ³ **So he told them this parable** (singular teaching with three stories): Jesus directs this singular parable to the Pharisees and scribes who were outraged by His association with the unclean/wicked. His message is about welcoming repentant sinners into fellowship, and rejoicing that they have been found (saved). These **lost** people are tied into the poor, crippled, the lame, blind, etc. in 14:12-24.
 - A. ⁴ **“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?** Many flocks had a hundred sheep. Sheep are prone to wandering off and getting hurt. So when a shepherd goes to find a lost sheep—the other shepherds look after his flock.
 - 1) “The prophetic book of Ezekiel includes an extended metaphor in which the people of Israel are portrayed as a stray flock of sheep and Yahweh promises to raise up a shepherd for Israel—a proper leader whose focus is the will of Yahweh (Ezek 34:1–24; compare John 10:1–21).”²
 - 2) Isaiah prophesied, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” No doubt Jesus was thinking about these passages when He told this story about the lost sheep. He would later state in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” A prime message of Jesus throughout His ministry.
 - B. ⁵ **And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.** Often the shepherd would have to break the leg of the sheep and carry it over his shoulders and nurses it back to health. This would create a bonding between the shepherd and sheep; and hopefully teach the sheep a lesson to not wander off anymore (see Ps. 23:1; Jn. 10:11).
 - C. ⁶ **And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’**
 - 1) The shepherd was responsible for the safety and well-being of the sheep. If he lost a sheep and couldn’t prove it was killed, he had to pay for it (see Gen. 31:38-39; Ex. 22:10-13).
 - 2) Much is written in the OT regarding the “Shepherd” as an image of God, and a portrayal of the Messiah (see Num. 27:17; Ps. 23; Ezek. 34).

² John D. Barry et al., [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Lk 15:4.



- D. ⁷ *Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.* This story is about rejoicing and celebrating a soul that comes to Christ in true repentance (see Matt. 18:12-14).

THE SECOND PART OF THE PARABLE : THE LOST COIN

15:8-10

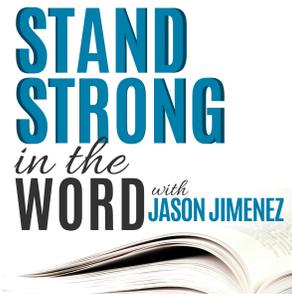
1. ⁸ *“Or what woman, having ten silver coins (drachma—day wage; on a dowry), if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently (move from place to place) until she finds it? The flooring of first century peasant homes were laid with loosely fitted stones. Dropping a small coin on the floor would make it extremely difficult to find. That’s why she uses a broom—to get in-between the wedges; and a lamp because the houses had no windows and small entryways. A thorough search to find something so important.*
 - A. “When a Jewish girl married, she began to wear a headband of ten silver coins to signify that she was now a wife. It was the Jewish version of our modern wedding ring, and it would be considered a calamity for her to lose one of those coins.”³
2. ⁹ *And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’* ¹⁰ *Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”* The celebration over finding the lost coin speaks to the joy in heaven over one lost soul coming to Christ.
 - A. Isaiah 62:5, “as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”
 - B. Zephaniah 3:17, “The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”

THE THIRD PART OF THE PARABLE: THE LOST SON

15:11-32

1. ¹¹ *And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give (something of value with love) me the share of property that is coming to me (the right of inheritance).’ And he divided (apportioned; distributed;*

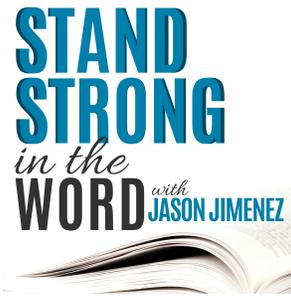
³ Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 234.



deal out) **his property between them**. The third story of the parable is marked by two sons: the younger/prodigal son (15:12-24) and the elder/ungrateful son (15:25-32). The son was a teenager and single. According to Deuteronomy 21:17, younger sons received only half of what the eldest son received, and a third of the father's estate. It was not customary/lawful to give a young son his portion prior to the death of the father. This was tantamount to wishing the father dead. Yet, the father agrees to the demands of his son, and gives the son his inheritance before he (the father) dies. The son depicts greed, rebellion and foolishness; while, the father—represents love and mercy.

2. ¹³ **Not many days later, the younger son gathered** (exchanged into money) **all** (taken from his father's hands) **he had and took a journey into a far country** (too far away for a long period of time), **and there he squandered** (to spend foolishly with no purpose; winnowing grain) **his property in reckless** (careless; wasteful; debauchery) **living**. The concept here is the son “burned all his bridges” before leaving. He takes all the livestock, property and goods—and liquidates it all into cash. He wanted nothing to do with his father or the family business. No plans to invest properly and to give back. **Prodigal** means “dissolute” and carries the idea of sexually immoral living. This is mentioned by the older brother (15:30).
3. ¹⁴ **And when he had spent** (wasted) **everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need** (to lack in essentials). The prodigal son wasted all of his inheritance on sinful living; and had nothing in reserve in case of an emergency.
 - A. ¹⁵ **So he went and hired** (to build an association) **himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs**. This was a disgraceful job for Jews.
 - B. ¹⁶ **And he was longing** (strong desire) **to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything**. Carob pods are used to feed the pigs, and the food is not digestible for humans. Notice, that the prodigal son not only ran out of money, but had no one to care for him.
 - C. “Since pigs were unclean animals according to the law (Lev 11:7; Deut 14:8), Jesus suggests that the younger son became a swine-herding slave to a Gentile (non-Jewish person)—a threefold dishonor. The scribes (teachers of the law) and Pharisees to whom Jesus is speaking (Luke 15:2) would have equated this existence to a cursed life.”⁴
4. ¹⁷ **“But when he came to himself** (came out of insanity), **he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger!** It

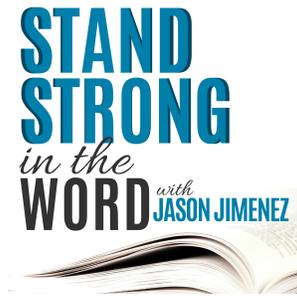
⁴ John D. Barry et al., [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Lk 15:15.



was at his lowliest state that the prodigal comes to see his sin, and realize how ungrateful he was to his father. He wasn't himself. The sin had driven him to insane living.

5. ¹⁸ ***I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned (engage in wrong doing; break the law) against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy (deserving of a high state) to be called your son. Treat (make; turn into) me as one of your hired servants."*** Notice, the prodigal announced his sin against God, and then his heavenly father. He wasn't demanding his formal status. He simply wanted to gain his father's forgiveness, and accept whatever consequences to follow.
6. ²⁰ ***And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.*** The father was waiting for his son to return.
 - A. "In the East, it is unusual for older men to run; but the Father had to run because of his compassion for the boy. Also, the son had disgraced his family and his village and could have been stoned to death (Deut. 21:18–21). If they threw any stones, they would have to hit the father! The best robe would be the father's expensive festal robe; the shoes indicated that the son was not a servant (in spite of his request); and the ring was the proof of sonship. Again, there is joy, for the lost has been found!"⁵
7. ²¹ ***And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*** As the prodigal begs for his father's forgiveness, his father embraces him and calls for celebration. A reception not expected by the son.
8. ²² ***But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe (reserved for the guest of honor), and put it on him, and put a ring (sonship) on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead (lifeless), and is alive again; he was lost (suffer destruction), and is found.' And they began to celebrate.*** Once again, Jesus inserts the banquet motif into His teaching (see 13:29; 14:15-24). This picture of repentance and celebration would have made perfect sense to a Jew. They believed (as a nation) in repentance to God if they were to be forgiven.
9. ²⁵ ***"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.*** The elder son depicts the religious leaders.

⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, [*Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 184.



- A. ²⁷ **And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’** News that certainly didn’t excite the elder brother.
- B. ²⁸ **But he was angry (furious) and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated (earnestly asked; implored; appealed) him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son (not brother) of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’** Notice how the eldest based his relationship with his father on work and reward. He resented his father for lavishing his youngest with such riches and celebration. And yet, the father pleads with his eldest to participate in the celebration. This demonstrates the father’s great love for both sons. But, due to his hardness of heart—the eldest rejects his father’s request. Likewise, the Pharisees refused to enter the kingdom of heaven.
10. ³¹ **And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’**” The father reminds the son of the continual blessings he receives. His possessions have always been in possession of the son.