

## Luke 15, "The Lost Son"

- ↳ By way of introduction about parables: fabulous works of art; there is no storyteller better than Jesus! He uses common situations to make powerful spiritual points. Would you consider the heart of the Father as an important thing to know? Would you consider the heart of the Father toward sinners an important thing to know? We are given three classes of sinners that God saves and a fourth that can't be saved because they think that God owes salvation to them. One sure thing to keep you from being saved is to think you don't need it! "Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people, even eating with them!" Luke 15:1-2. Do you know the heart of the Father? He's hunting sinners!, He's watching for them, He longs for them, we know that because of what Jesus teaches us through these parables.
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### 1. The average sinner, like a sheep, knows some things but is basically dumb about the things of God.

- ✓ They got themselves lost, but really didn't know any better. They saw how a shepherd would do this, but never saw God doing this, Luke 15:3-7. 99 persons who need no repentance, which equals, do you know, or have you known a single person who has needed no repentance, there is no such thing! So, there are sinners God rejoices over and sinners that keep God from rejoicing.

### 2. The mindless sinner, like a coin that has no power over what happens to it, sinners but their lostness is really someone else's decision or carelessness.

- ✓ "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it?<sup>9</sup> And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.'<sup>10</sup> In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents," Luke 15:8-10. Of course, she would, we are valuable because God assigns us value

### 3. The Sinner who knows better and does it anyway: the lost son.

- ✓ The first two categories of sinners weren't really rebels, just people who are separated from God because of sin and who have a Savior who loves them. The first two are "Of course you would" stories, the last one is an "Of course you wouldn't" story. A father would never accept back a son like this in that culture. This is really a story of a "Man who had two sons," Luke 15:11.
  - ✓ We tend to focus on the prodigal but it's actually the father who is the main focus, he's the one that we are misinformed about. "The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So, his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons," Luke 15:12. Of course you wouldn't do this in this culture, you would never shame your father and your ancestors in this way. Of course, a father would never do what this father does. He liquidates lands, animals, and other things in just a few days; read that: he got far less for it than what it was worth. He devalues what was passed down to him—that did not happen in that culture. Luke 15:13. He's fully aware that what he's doing is completely against the rules, but he doesn't care. Have you ever known a person like that? Have you ever been a person like that? God loves sinners, even the ones who do shameful things and who shame God in the process. Rabbinical proverb: "When the Israelites are reduced to Karob pods, then they repent" He has completely shamed and defiled himself and has become completely unredeemable in the eyes of his culture, Luke 15:14-17a.
  - ✓ "Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused," Romans 1:21. "When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!<sup>18</sup> I will go home to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you,<sup>19</sup> and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.'" So, he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming," Luke 15:17-20a, this is his only chance of living! He will be the example that all the other parents will use to say, "you don't want to turn out like him." He would not be allowed in his father's house for years in this culture, 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 14:24. He would never be redeemed but the society would redeem its respect through his tortured existence. What happens next is the final "Of course you wouldn't moment.
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- ✓ "Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him," Luke 15:20b.
  - 1) Fathers never ran anywhere for anyone or any reason. That required you to gather your robes around your waist, which means you would see his legs, you only saw the legs of servants in this culture. It would have been very shameful for the father.
  - 2) If you did not allow the son to receive his well-deserved shame, you took the shame upon yourself! The father would have lost his standing in the eyes of this culture. The father doesn't care about the shame or what society thinks. The heart of the parable is the heart of the father. What was important was his heart, notice the verb, he felt compassion, ran, embraced, kissed.
- ✓ He is reinstated as a full son, based on what?, Luke 15:21-24, repentance. "The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent," 2 Peter 3:9. Who paid the price for the son's reinstatement and bore the shame for the remainder of his life?, His father! A relationship with the father was all he needed to reinstate him.

**4. The fourth sinner, the older brother who thinks the father owes him his position and his stuff, Luke 15:25-30.**

- ✓ The older son represents works religion wherever you find it, thinking: "I've been a good person, I'm better than most, I'm better than him," not realizing that your relationship to God is strictly by grace not works. The father didn't have to do or leave anything to older son, it was strictly based on love and relationship that he had anything as well. He's never reconciled to the father, he's beyond the father's reach because he doesn't want to be reconciled; he's lost but he doesn't want to be found.

**"His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours.'<sup>32</sup> We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!' " Luke 15:31-32. "We had to rejoice"? I wasn't aware that God had to do anything! He only has to do what He decides He has to do.**

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