

Prodigal Gift Week 3

12.12.2021

Luke 15:8–10 (CSB)

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

⁸“Or what woman who has ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹When she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, because I have found the silver coin I lost!’ ¹⁰I tell you, in the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels over one sinner who repents.”

Opening: A messy reality.

A. Life is messy.

1. In the midst of life’s messiness, it’s easy to lose important things.
2. Christianity tells the story of how God finds what was lost and restores it to its original position.
3. In the Garden, we lost fellowship with God.
4. The rest of Scripture, and even the future prophecies, tell us of how God endeavors to find and restore the lost back to Himself.

B. A few key lines and thoughts have stuck out this series:

1. When did the loss become our enemy?
2. We are called to be door-greeters, not door-keepers.
3. Today, there is a line that captured my heart:
4. The Joy of God has no price tag.

C. This weekend, we look at the simple yet powerful parable of a woman and her lost coin.

1. This parable continues Jesus' theme:
2. God will go to every length to find that which was lost and to restore it to its rightful place.
3. Just as the lost sheep belonged with the flock, and the Lost Son belonged to the family, the lost coin belongs with the woman.

1. It starts with a woman.

A. In the cultural world of first-century Palestine, the very use of a woman in an illustration required a moral decision. Jesus is again rejecting Pharisaic attitudes toward groups of people in society. First it was the proscribed shepherds, now the inferior woman.¹

1. Jesus' two parables utilize two illustrations that the Pharisees would hate:

- a. Shepherds were detestable.
- b. Women were unmentionable.
- c. Yet Jesus makes a woman the main character of this parable.

2. Side-note: when people critique the Bible as being sexist it demonstrates a lack of understanding regarding ancient cultures and history.

3. Jesus, and the New Testament writers, regularly broke tradition and cultural views by elevating women.

- a. Remember, God creating women was not a mistake.
- b. Please be careful reading our modern, western culture into the text.

¹ Kenneth E. Bailey, [*Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke*](#), Combined Edition., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 158.

c. Because Jesus routinely broke with tradition by ministering to women and allowing women to minister to him.

4. Jesus' parable, involving a woman as the main character, was taboo.

5. In fact, to even mention the word "woman" in public would necessitate an apology from a male speaker.

B. Yet, Jesus uses the picture of a woman searching for a lost coin to illustrate the earnest desire of God to find even one lost person.

1. 1 out of 10 is certainly more than 1 in 99.

2. To God, the value is not in the percentages.

3. He is not willing that ANY should perish.

4. Jesus illustrates that truth in this parable.

2. The loss of a coin.

A. As usual, it is helpful to understand the culture and imagery Jesus is using.

1. Peasant women carry any cash held for daily expenses in a tightly knotted rag. The drachma mentioned in this story is a Greek coin weighing 4.3 grams of silver. It was a day's wages for a laborer. Perhaps these ten coins were given to the wife to provide for the family for a week or two. She tied them up in her little rag but the knot worked loose and a coin fell out. Having failed to be more careful, she was filled with shame and remorse for not tying her rag more tightly. The village homes of the early centuries around the sea of Galilee often had floors made of either a lime plaster or of smooth uncut stones from the sea of Galilee. Cracks naturally developed in such floors and coins often fell into those cracks, becoming a delight for modern archeologists who find them. Windows in peasant homes of the period were small slits placed about seven feet up the wall from the floor. The building stone around the sea of Galilee is a very black basalt,

which would have added to the darkness of the home. Even in broad daylight the woman naturally needed a lamp to find a coin.²

2. The woman loses a coin in a difficult setting.

B. The why something is lost is not as important as the fact that something is lost.

1. At times, we become enamored with the why?

a. We debate the why.

b. We hold committees and commissions on the why.

c. We talk about the why, because it is easier to theorize about lostness than it is to confront it.

2. This woman could kick herself, guilt herself, and shame herself for losing a coin.

3. But none of those emotions would help her find the lost coin.

C. I am all in favor of understanding our community and culture better.

1. However, eventually we have to stop studying and start doing.

2. Eventually, you stop lamenting what is wrong and start fixing what is wrong.

3. Eventually, the woman had to light a lamp, get on the floor, and start looking for what was lost.

D. We will never seek the lost if we are content with what is left.

1. Just like the shepherd, the thought of losing something that was theirs was not acceptable.

2. Losing people to the enemy must never become acceptable.

² Kenneth E. Bailey, *The Cross and the Prodigal: Luke 15 through the Eyes of Middle Eastern Peasants*, Second Edition. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2005), 35.

3. God is no more content than is the woman with what remains to him.³

a. I have never met a mom or a grandma who was content with only some of her kids or grandkids making it home for Christmas.

b. Usually, moms and grandmas are happy their kids are there but they always miss the one who couldn't make it.

c. The reason may be justified; the excuse might be acceptable and unavoidable, but the WHY does not make it easier.

E. Labels make it easier to dismiss and ignore people.

1. Tax-collectors and sinners made it easier to write people off.

a. It's easier to lump people into categories and damn them all to hell.

b. But give them a name...

c. See their face.

d. Look into their eyes.

e. See their humanity and their lostness.

2. Don't let the enemy tempt you with generalizations and percentages.

a. The enemy wants you to lump them together and throw them all away.

b. But God knows them by name.

c. He knows every hair on their head.

d. He knitted them in their mother's wombs.

3. Do not devalue what God has valued.

³ John Nolland, [Luke 9:21-18:34](#), vol. 35B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1993), 776.

3. The lost coin was in the house.

A. This coin has to be here somewhere!!!

1. The shepherd was sure the lost sheep could be found.
2. The woman was certain the lost coin would be found.
3. Jesus is certain that ALL who call upon His name will be saved and found.

B. The lost are not only out in the wilderness, they are also in the house.

1. Perhaps, Jesus is pointing to the Pharisees that not only are tax-collectors and sinners far from God but so too are those who think they are in the house.
2. The parable of the Lost Sons (plural) will make this point clear.
 - a. In other words, you don't have to go to the bar to find lost people or to the strip-club, or to the poor neighborhood or to the rich neighborhood.
 - b. There are lost people within the house.
- c. It sobers me to think that there are lost people in this place today.
 1. People that I gather with every week but who do not know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
 2. People that I worship with who are struggling with sin, hatred, and lostness.
 3. The reality is, not everyone in this room will live with Jesus in eternity.
 - a. Jesus said there would even be people who healed and cast out demons in His name who do not enter the kingdom.
 - b. I may not understand how all of that works, but I do understand that it isn't what God wants.

4. The Joy of God has no price tag.

A. The joy of God has no price tag. “There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (v. 10).⁴

1. This language may feel familiar.
2. Of course, heaven and the angels, and God himself celebrates.
3. But that isn’t what the Rabbis and Pharisees believed.

B. Rabbinic literature also spoke of joy in heaven—joy when irritating people were vanquished, the wicked crushed, the godless condemned. Jonah longed for such joy in the destruction of Nineveh, and God’s mercy on Nineveh caused him grief. The Pharisees would rejoice to see Jesus condemn tax collectors and sinners, and like Jonah, they grieve when he shares table fellowship with them (vv. 1–2)⁵

1. The Pharisees expected there to be joy in heaven:
2. But it was joy over the death of the lost, not their salvation.

C. The woman invites her friends and neighbors to celebrate with her.

1. Each of the three stories tell of a celebration within the community.
2. The joy of the finder is shared by the community.
3. Because God celebrates the lost being found, we are invited to join in that celebration.

D. We are reminded that the joy of God has no price tag.

1. Have you ever saved up for a trip but, once you got there, discovered that it wasn’t really worth the price?

⁴ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 437.

⁵ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 435–436.

2. Maybe you have saved up to buy something you've always wanted but, after you bought it, realized that it wasn't really worth it.

3. **God has never regretted sending His Son to save us.**

4. The joy of the shepherd and the joy of the housewife point us towards the joy God has in saving us and seeing us repent.

Application:

A. **The woman was willing to turn her house upside down to find the lost coin.**

1. The love of Jesus turns the world upside down to find the lost.

2. And He has chosen to use you and I, empowered by Holy Spirit, to turn the world upside down to find lost and hurting people.

3. For those of us with friends, families, and neighbors who need Jesus, this morning we will take a few minutes to pray for them.

B. Perhaps, this morning, you are the one that is lost.

1. Lately, you have been sensing that you aren't where you should be.

2. You've been doing your own thing, and now you don't like where you are.

3. If that's you: This is the season for the lost to be found.

C. This morning, whether you are lost or you have family and friends who are lost, I invite us to pray.