



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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The Lost Sheep, Coin, and Son!

Lesson Text: Luke 15:1-32

Focus Verse: Luke 15:20-21 - ²⁰And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. ²¹And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Truth About Covenant: Jesus is passionate about covenant inclusion.

Covenant Context: Throughout the Gospels, Jesus continually reached for people the religious leaders excluded, such as sinners and tax collectors. Jesus intentionally invited them into covenant relationship with Him and taught the religious leaders that He came for all, not just for them. In order to prove this principle, Jesus told three signature parables in Luke 15.

If you have ever lost something meaningful to you, this story and the three Jesus told in Luke 15—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son—should resonate with you. The joy of finding what is lost will always supersede the agony of the search. Through these parables Jesus invites us to share in His loving perspective. Like the shepherd, the woman, and the father, He invites us not only to search for those who are lost, but also to rejoice when they are found.

Jesus taught parables because He knew those who are hungry to know Him could relate, while those whose hearts were closed toward Him would miss the meaning altogether. **God has a heart for all people.** Jesus loves the lost enough to find and restore them.

In the first parable Jesus shared, a shepherd left a flock of ninety-nine safe sheep to find one that was missing. The sheep was so valuable that the other ninety-nine were left behind in pursuit of only one. They are not meant to survive on their own; in fact, they cannot. Not only are sheep social, but they are easily spooked and naturally defenseless. Sheep depend on the care of the shepherd in order to survive. The shepherd called his neighbors to rejoice with him because he had found his one lost sheep.

The second parable a woman lost one coin out of ten coins. She lit a lamp, swept the house, and searched until she found the missing coin. When she did find it, she went door to door to invite her neighbors to rejoice with her that what she had lost was finally found.

The third Parable of the Prodigal Son wanted what would be his when his father died, but he wanted it before his father died. When he left, he wasted everything his hard-working father had earned to give him. After a famine in a far country ravaged him and what little pride he had left, he walked the many miles home to his father's house. The father ran to meet his prodigal son. The father did not respond as many would; there was no "trial period," no reluctance on his part. Rather, the father ordered a celebration unlike any other, and the son who was lost was restored as a son, not a servant.

However, the older son wasn't happy for the brother receiving a celebration. Most of us would identify with him more than the wayward son or the father. Another natural human desire is the desire for justice. It would seem unfair that a child who had wronged a parent could be forgiven so freely. His brother had squandered what had been given prematurely, but the older brother had been faithful. He had dutifully served his family. Such kindness to the undeserving would have naturally seemed to undermine the value of the older brother's love and loyalty.

While we many need to confront our tendency to demand justice as we see fit, this parable (Prodigal Son) requires us to look in the mirror. We too have broken our Father's heart. We are the younger son at times; we are like the older brother at times. But Jesus is calling us to be like Him: like the Father. These parables are a clear call for us as believers to be more than recipients of God's love but also to be extensions of God's love to others. This hearkens us back to what Paul wrote to the church in Rome: "*Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us*" (Romans 15:7). Amen.

No matter how far you or someone you love has gone from God, He is still reaching. Come home. Tell your family and friends they can come home. God and we want them to come. And when they do, God and we will rejoice.