

Parable of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin (Luke 15:3-10)

Parable of the Lost Sheep

1) Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. 2) And both the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." 3) So He told them this parable, saying, 4) "What man among you, if he has one hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5) And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 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 which was lost!' 7) I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15:1-7, LSB)

1. Who is Jesus directing this parable to?

2. As you review the context of Luke 15:1-2, who does the shepherd represent? Who are the sheep?

3. What is the meaning of Jesus' question? What is the point of the parable?

Parable of the Lost Coin

8) "Or what woman, if she has ten drachmas and loses one drachma, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9) And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma which I had lost!' 10) In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:8-10, LSB)

4. Who represents the lost coin?

5. What is Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees and scribes? How is this criticism different from the Parable of the Lost Sheep?

Parable of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin (Luke 15:3-10)
Teacher Notes

The two parables are presented separately. Encourage the student to circle / underline the text to help their observation. It's OK to make mistakes and mark up the text!

Among all of Jesus' parables, there are a few places where He presents a series of parables as a singular narrative unit (i.e. the unit of parables describing the Kingdom of God or rebuking Jewish religious authorities). The Parable of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin are part of a continuous unit of parables that Jesus tells to challenge the attitudes of Jewish religious authorities towards sinners.

When a parable of a narrative unit is studied in isolation, one may not fully understand that particular parable without recognizing its purpose within the narrative unit.

Parable of the Lost Sheep

1) Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. 2) And both the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." 3) So He told them this parable, saying, 4) "What man among you, if he has one hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5) And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 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 which was lost!' 7) I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15:1-7, LSB)

1. Who is Jesus directing this parable to?

The context of the passage is vital to understanding the parable.

Ask the student: what did the tax collectors and sinners do to Jesus?

Ask the student: what did the Pharisees and scribes do to Jesus? What was their view of tax collectors and sinners?

Jesus is directing this parable towards the criticisms of Jewish religious authorities who observed Him having a meal with tax collectors and other undesirable outcasts of society.

2. As you review the context of Luke 15:1-2, who does the shepherd represent? Who are the sheep?

Allow the student some time to discuss these figures of speech.

Ask the student: how did you figure out that the shepherd represented the Pharisees?

Jesus portrays the Pharisees as shepherders by asking them, "what man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"

Ask the student: what kind of Believers were the sheep? Old Testament, New Testament, or both?

This distinction is important to gain an accurate understanding of the parable. The sheep in this parable are Old Testament Believers and this view finds its basis in a variety of biblical passages (Gen 48:14-16; Num 27:15-17; Matt 9:35-36, 10:5-6)

3. What is the meaning of Jesus' question? What is the point of the parable?

Jesus' question is, "what man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"

Ask the student: what did the shepherd do when he found the lost sheep? How did Jesus say this response is similar to heaven's response?

Ask the student: what was Jesus saying to the Pharisees and scribes? If they were supposed to be shepherders, where was their joy?

The negative attitude of Jewish religious authorities answered Jesus' rhetorical question and incriminated them for their lack of agapē love, first to God for their failure to shepherd His people, and secondly to people for their failure to care and esteem sinners as their neighbor.

Parable of the Lost Coin

8) "Or what woman, if she has ten drachmas and loses one drachma, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9) And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma which I had lost!' 10) In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:8-10, LSB)

4. Who represents the lost coin?

Ask the student: what verse tells you who represents the lost coin?

The lost coin represents a non-Believer. Verse 10: In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

5. What is Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees and scribes? How is this criticism different from the Parable of the Lost Sheep?

Ask the student: how does the woman incriminate the Pharisees and scribes?

Directed at Jewish religious authorities and their love for money, this parable points out that the Pharisees have no interest in seeking the lost.

Ask the student: how does the lost sheep and lost coin differ in who they represent?

The Parable of the Lost Sheep was focused on Old Testament Believers and the Pharisees' failure to lead them to the Messiah. The Parable of the Lost Coin is about the Pharisees' failure to seek out those who have no faith.