**Seeking the Lost**

**Introduction:**

Most of us are very concerned when we lose something that we consider valuable. We will exert time and energy in an effort to locate it. Finding it is an occasion to rejoice.

Jesus, throughout his time on earth, was concerned for the lost. (Luke 19:10) “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” NKJV He knew the value of a soul and would eventually give up His life for the souls of mankind. But not everyone possessed the compassion for the lost that He did. This is where our story begins. Luke 15:1-2 “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’ ” NKJV

Among those waiting to hear Jesus were tax collectors and sinners. Tax collectors were despised by many of the Jews and were considered “outcasts.” “Sinners” would have included even harlots. The Pharisees [strictest sect of the Jews] and the scribes [copyists of the Law] grumbled [complained] that Jesus welcomed these outcasts. They were insinuating that Jesus must be a sinner, too. So Jesus told three stories to illustrate how precious even one soul is and that Jehovah doesn’t even want *one* to be lost. Today we will look at two of them.

**Text:** Luke 15:1-10

**Body:**

1. **The Lost Sheep** Luke 15:3-7 “So He spoke this parable to them saying: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing, And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents that over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” NKJV

* God’s love for people is often expressed with the figure of sheep.

(Isaiah 40:11) “He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.” NKJV

* Sheep are rather dumb animals. They will eat a little grass here, and then without looking up, will go a little further and eat some more. After a while, it looks up and is lost, far from the shepherd.
* Men are often like sheep. They don’t stop to think where they are going and pay no attention to what direction they are headed. They wander away from the shepherd because they stop listening to His voice. (Hebrews 2:1) “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.” NKJV
* As seen in the parable, just as God is very concerned for the lost, so should we be. We must seek the lost and show them the way home. (Galatians 6:1-2) “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” (James 5:19-20) “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. NKJV
* God desires that everyone be saved. (II Peter 3:9) “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” NKJV God rejoices when a lost sheep is found; so should we.
* Sadly there are always those who are self-righteous, who do not think they need to repent of anything. This only brings sadness to the Father. (Matthew 9:13) “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” NKJV

1. **The Lost Coin** Luke 15:8-10 “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” NKJV

* Coin – drachma, denarius That was one day’s wage for a laborer; it was the price of a sheep. These coins were commonly worn as ornaments by 1st Century women. That may have been the case here.
* Her house would have had dirt floors possible covered with reeds. A small coin would be very difficult to find. The house would also be dark necessitating the lighting of a lamp.
* We note that this woman is totally absorbed in finding the coin. She is diligent and passionate about finding it. She does not give up!
* The coin represents the sinner who doesn’t know it’s lost. It doesn’t realize the danger it’s in. [Example: Like one in a canoe that is unaware of the waterfall ahead] (I Corinthians 6:9-11) “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” NKJV
* Just like the woman in the parable, God knows the value of each sinner and the potential for good that he possess. He has entrusted Christians with the responsibility of going into all the world and preaching the gospel. (Mark 16:15) “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” NKJV
* The joy in heaven at the repentance of one sinner contrasts with the grumbling of the Pharisees at Jesus’ receiving of sinners.

**Conclusion:**

These two parables stress God’s concern for the lost and His efforts to recover them. Heaven rejoices when even *one* sinner is saved. So should we.

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