

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
3RD-5TH GRADE
TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 19

*The Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and
Prodigal Son*



Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Prodigal Son

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To give the students an insight into God's incredible love for the world through the stories of the lost coin, lost sheep, and prodigal son.

Key Verses

Luke 15:1-32—Main Teaching Passage

John 3:16

2 Peter 3:16

Romans 5:8

Memory Verse - Luke 15:10

"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Luke 14:11.

Ask the students if any of them have ever lost something valuable or important. Allow a couple of the students to share their story. Be sure to ask them how it felt when that object was lost. Then ask what kind of emotions they felt when they found that valuable or important thing.

Feel free to share your own experience.

Now show the students that the most valuable thing to God is you and me, and that He feels the same way about us.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In Luke 15, Jesus was responding to a complaint from the Pharisees. They were upset that Jesus would associate with, and even eat with, sinners. In response to this, Jesus told three stories about objects or people that were lost but then were found. He reminded the Pharisees that if they lost one of their sheep, even if they had 99 more, they would leave everything else behind and go to find that one lost sheep. Moreover they would celebrate when they found it and had returned it to the flock. Jesus showed them that the same is true of the Father, and that all of Heaven celebrates when one sinner is brought to repentance.

Second, Jesus told the story of a woman who lost a valuable coin. Even though she had 9 more, she cleaned the whole house, looking in every nook and cranny, until she found it. She too celebrated and rejoiced when that valuable object was returned to safety.

Finally Jesus told the story of a father whose son has run away. After having lost everything through loose living, the son finally came to his senses and realized that the slaves in his father's house were so much better off than he was. He returned home, and before he could even offer to become a slave in his father's house, his father ran to him, wept, kissed him, and then celebrated. The most valuable thing in the father's whole world, one of his sons, was lost but had been returned to him. Jesus then described how the older brother grumbled and complained, just as the Pharisees were doing, demonstrating that the older brother didn't understand the father's heart, and in the same way, the Pharisees didn't understand the heart of the Father.

All three stories follow the same progression, something valuable is lost, the owner will do anything to see it restored, and then when it is found again celebration follows.

LOOK

In some ways, Luke 15 reveals more about the way God thinks about the people in the world than any other passage. Jesus, by telling us about the lost sheep, lost coin, and prodigal son, showed us exactly what God is thinking, the emotions that He is experiencing, and the desires that He has towards us.

The Pharisees didn't understand why Jesus would want to spend time with sinners and why He didn't want to spend more time with them. In these three stories, Jesus tells us that the reason He spent time with sinners is because God loves them desperately. God loves them so much

The interpretation/
exegesis of the passage.
What does this passage
mean? How does this
passage apply to my
life?

LOOK (Continued)

that He would do anything to see them repent of their sins and come to know Him. Jesus told the Pharisees “Of course I’m spending time with sinners. They are like lost sheep, and when a sheep is lost you don’t wait for it to come back, you go and find it and bring it back!” This of course is Jesus whole purpose for being on the earth, “For God so loved the world that He sent His only Son...”

The Pharisees obviously still didn’t understand because Jesus then needed to tell them, “Besides, they aren’t just ‘sinners,’ they are *important to Me*. They are so valuable to me that I will hunt them down and do whatever it takes to find them, just like a woman who has lost a valuable coin.”

Jesus told one more story trying to show the Pharisees exactly what is going on. He says that young man is just like you and me, and the young man’s father is just like God. We can run away from God, only to find out that life without Him is horrible. When we start to move back toward Him, we find that He has been looking and waiting for us, that He runs to us and welcomes us back, not with anger, but with kisses and an embrace. When we return, He doesn’t bring us back as a slave, but as a son or daughter. He honors us and celebrates our return. That’s how God feels about you. That is what God wants for everyone in the world. He wants to pour His love out on them like a father whose child has been returned to him. That’s why Jesus spent time with sinners, that’s why He wants to spend time with you and me, and that’s how much God the Father loves you, me, and everyone else in the world, even if they don’t know it yet!

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Luke 15:10.

Ask the students to talk about the prodigal son. Ask why they think He would abandon his good father, and what it took for him to return. Ask whether or not they think God loves “bad people.” Remind them that the Bible says that we are all sinners and that God wants us all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:16).

Pray: Thank God for sending Jesus into the world to tell us about Him, so that we could repent of our sin and be welcomed into His family as a child of God.

Parent Question: In the story of the Prodigal Son, who does the older brother represent?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Luke 15 by David Guzik

LUKE 15 – THE JOY OF FINDING THE LOST

A. The lost sheep, the lost coin.

1. (1-3) Jesus responds to an accusation from the Pharisees.

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.” So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

a. Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him: In speaking to a large number of people (Luke 14:25), Jesus strongly challenged them regarding discipleship and commitment. His strong challenge did not drive people away; it attracted them to Jesus.

b. So He spoke this parable to them, saying: This, one of the most beloved chapters in the Bible, is made up of parables spoken in response to the accusation “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

i. The following parables were spoken to the Pharisees and scribes who complained. The religious leaders of Jesus’ day divided humanity into two classes: the unclean and the righteous. They decided to live, as much as possible, in complete separation from the unclean. Some rabbis of Jesus’ day took this idea so seriously that they refused to teach the unclean God’s word (Morris).

ii. “Let not a man associate with the wicked, not even to bring him the law.” (m. Mek. Ex. 18:1, cited in Pate)

iii. The following parables were spoken to the Pharisees and scribes, but in the hearing of the multitude of tax collectors and sinners who drew near to Him to hear Him.

2. (4-7) Finding a lost sheep.

“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 than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”

a. If he loses one of them: It isn’t strange that a sheep would be lost or that a shepherd would seek the sheep. It does seem strange that a shepherd would endanger 99% of his flock for the sake of 1%. Either the safety of the 99% was assumed, or the point of this parable is in the rejoicing, not in the neglect of 99% for the sake of 1%.

i. “No creature strays more easily than a sheep; none is more heedless; and none so incapable of finding its way back to the flock, when once gone astray: it will bleat for the flock, and still run on in an opposite direction to the place where the flock is: this I have often noticed.” (Clarke)

b. Go after the one which is lost until he finds it: The lost sheep would never save himself, or find the shepherd himself. If the shepherd did not take action, the sheep was doomed.

i. Many rabbis of that time believed that God received the sinner who came to Him the right way. But in the parable of the shepherd and the sheep, Jesus taught that God actively seeks out the lost. He does not grudgingly receive the lost; instead, He searches after them. God finds the sinner more than the sinner does find God.

ii. "A great Jewish scholar has admitted that this is the one absolutely new thing which Jesus taught men about God – that he actually searched for men." (Barclay)

c. He lays it on His shoulders: When Jesus finds His people He also carries them. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (Romans 5:6)

d. Rejoicing...Rejoice with me...more joy in heaven: The emphasis in this parable is not on the proportion, but on the joy of finding the lost. This was the error of the Pharisees and scribes who complained. They were not joyful when tax collectors and sinners drew near to Jesus.

e. Over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance: Though the sheep does nothing to rescue himself or repent, Jesus mentioned the need for repentance in the last few words of this brief story. It's almost as if He said, "the sheep doesn't repent, but you need to when God finds you."

3. (8-10) Finding a lost coin.

"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."

a. Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin: If the shepherd was interested in one in a hundred, it makes sense that the woman would be interested in one in ten. She did not just count the coin as lost and care nothing about it.

i. Bruce suggested that possibly, this coin was held with several others on a silver chain worn round the head as a mark of a married woman. It was a precious ornament to the woman, and made the loss all the more severely felt.

ii. In a sense, the lost belong to God whether they know it or not. "The piece of silver was lost but still claimed. Observe that the woman called the money, 'my piece which was lost.' When she lost its possession she did not lose her right to it; it did not become somebody else's when it slipped out of her hand and fell upon the floor." (Spurgeon)

b. Light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully: The woman in the story first brought light; then swept and cleaned the house, all along searching for the coin carefully and with deliberate intent. She kept looking until she found the coin.

i. This is how the church, led by the Holy Spirit, will search for lost souls. First they will put forth the light of God's word, then sweep and clean their own place, then search carefully for the lost.

ii. "One of the first things to arrest us powerfully is the worth of single souls. It was one sheep the shepherd went to find. It was for one coin the woman searched the house." (Morrison)

c. Rejoice with me: When the coin was finally found, the woman was naturally happy. In the same way, God is happy when sinners repent, in contrast to the religious leaders who complained when the tax collectors and sinners drew near to Jesus to hear Him.

i. We don't often think of God as rejoicing, but this passage tells us that He does, and in what circumstances. As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you (Isaiah 62:5). The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

ii. According to Barclay, many of the religious people of Jesus' day believed differently and even had a saying: "There will be joy in heaven over one sinner who is obliterated before God." Christians today must be careful that they do not give the same impression, especially in their often-appropriate zeal to speak out against culturally popular sins.

d. Over one sinner who repents: Lost coins find it impossible to repent, so Jesus added this so that both the religious leaders and the sinners who heard Him knew that repentance is important for lost people.

B. Finding the lost son.

1. (11-16) How the son came to be lost.

Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything."

a. A certain man had two sons: The majority of this third parable speaks of the younger of the two sons, but the older brother is clearly and importantly addressed at the end of the parable.

b. Give me the portion of goods that falls to me: In those days a father could either grant the inheritance before or after his death, but it was usually done after (Geldenhuys). The younger son asked for a special exception, motivated by foolishness and greed.

i. The father clearly illustrates God's love. His love allowed rebellion and in some sense respected human will. The father knew that the son made a foolish and greedy request, yet allowed him to go his course nonetheless.

c. Journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living: The son left the area to become independent of the father and lived a prodigal (reckless, foolish, extravagant) life. No doubt it was fun while it lasted.

d. When he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in the land: The son was completely to blame for the wasteful, foolish living and spending. He was not to blame for the severe famine, but was afflicted by it nevertheless.

e. He began to be in want...he sent him into his fields to feed swine: Driven by hunger and need, the son accepted work that was unacceptable and offensive to any righteous Jewish person because swine were unclean under the law (Leviticus 11:7).

f. No one gave him anything: The misery of the prodigal son moves our sympathy. Yet his misery drove him to the good resolution described in the following verse.

2. (17-19) The lost son's decision to return to his father.

"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."'"

a. But when he came to himself: In his misery the prodigal son was finally able to think clearly. Before it might be said that he wasn't really himself and thought as another man; then he came to himself.

- i. In his rebellion and disobedience, he wasn't himself. "In his years of riot he was not himself. It was not the prodigal who was the real man. The real man was the penitent, not the prodigal." (Morrison)
- ii. In his clear thinking he didn't think of how to improve conditions in the pigpen. He didn't blame his father, his brother, his friends, his boss, or the pigs. He recognized his misery without focusing on it, and instead focused on his father.
- b. I will arise and go to my father: Jesus didn't say that the man thought of his village or his home, but of his father. When the son returned to the father, he also came back to the village and to the house; but his focus was on returning to his father.
- i. That is how we need to come back to God – to come back to Him first and foremost, before coming back to church or coming back to Christian friends.
- c. Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants: In his prepared speech to his father, the son showed his complete sense of unworthiness and an honest confession of sin. He would not even ask to be treated as a son, but as a hired servant.
- i. "I have sinned against heaven and before you" shows a complete change of thinking. He didn't think like this before; now he made no attempt to justify or excuse his sin.
- ii. "The ordinary slave was in some sense a member of the family, but the hired servant could be dismissed at a day's notice. He was not one of the family at all." (Barclay)
- iii. The lost son demonstrated the repentance Jesus specifically spoke of in the previous parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. After his misery, he thought completely differently about his father, himself, and his home. The son asked for two things: First, "Father, give me;" then, "Father, make me." Only the second request brought joy.

3. (20-24) The father joyfully receives the lost son.

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry."

- a. And he arose and came to his father: The prodigal first thought; but he didn't stop at thinking. He didn't just feel sorry and think about repenting; he actually did it.
- i. "Some of you whom I now address have been thinking, and thinking, and thinking, till I fear that you will think yourselves into perdition. May you, by divine grace, be turned from thinking to believing, or else your thoughts will become the undying worm of your torment." (Spurgeon)
- ii. "He did not go back to the citizen of that country and say, 'Will you raise my wages? If not, I must leave.' Had he parleyed he had been lost; but he gave his old master no notice, he concerned his indentures by running away. I would that sinners here would break their league with death, and violate their covenant with hell, by escaping for their lives to Jesus, who receives all such runaways." (Spurgeon)
- b. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion: The father's love waited and never forgot. It was a love that fully received, not putting the son on probation. This was especially remarkable because the son had disgraced the family by his prodigal living.
- i. "The depth of the son's repentance is matched only by the depth of the father's love." (Pate)

c. Ran and fell on his neck and kissed him: The intensity of the father's reception was indicated by the fact that he ran (unusual for grown men in those cultures) and that he repeatedly kissed him (indicated by the original grammar, according to Morris).

d. Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight: The son began to recite his prepared speech; yet it seemed that the father didn't even hear it. Instead, he commanded that the prodigal youth be treated like a son, and not like a servant.

e. Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it: None of the four things brought to the repentant prodigal were necessities; they were all meant to honor the son and make him know he was loved. The father did much more than merely meet the son's needs.

f. And they began to be merry: It was a happy thing to find the lost sheep and the lost coin. It was much more happy to find the lost son. They had a wonderful party with special clothing, jewelry, and food. It wasn't just finding a lost son; it was as if he were back from the dead.

4. (25-32) The bitterness and resentment of the older son.

"Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"

a. His older son was in the field: The older son never lived a prodigal life, and was hard at work in the field even as the younger son came home. Drawn by the sound of the party (music and dancing), he learned from a servant that his younger brother had come home.

b. But he was angry and would not go in: The older son was not happy that the brother was so joyfully received. He complained and felt it was an insult to his own obedience and faithfulness.

i. I never transgressed...you never gave: These exaggerations are common for those who hold on to bitterness. The older son finally showed this bitterness to the father, but only after it had done its damage in his heart over many years.

ii. The older brother was unappreciative of all he did have. "Every day he had his father's company, and the blessed society of home. His father's love was round about him constantly, and everything they father had was his." (Morrison) Yet, "The proud and the self-righteous always feel that they are not treated as well as they deserve." (Morris)

iii. There was a sense in which the older son was obedient, yet far from his father's heart. In this sense he was a perfect illustration of the religious leaders who were angry that Jesus received tax collectors and sinners. "His story reveals the possibility of living in the father's house and failing to understand the father's heart." (Morgan)

c. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him...Son, you are always with me: The father also loved the older son, and earnestly appealed to him.

i. "The father did not call him son. He called him child – so it is in the Greek – and child is a word of tenderest affection." (Morrison)

d. It was right that we should make merry and be glad: This answered the complaint of the religious leaders that began the chapter. They had no reason to complain and every reason to be happy.

- i. In each of the parables, the message to the tax collectors and sinners was clear: repent, come home to the father. The message to the religious leaders was also clear: be happy when the lost are found, when they repent and come home to the father.
- ii. As a whole, we might say that these three parables suggest the searching, seeking work of the Shepherd Son, the Holy Spirit (working through the church), and the Heavenly Father.
- iii. "The truth here taught is just this: that mercy stretches forth her hand to misery, that grace receives men as sinners, that it deals with demerit, unworthiness and worthlessness; that those who think themselves righteous are not the objects of divine compassion, but the unrighteous, the guilty and the undeserving, are the proper subjects for the infinite mercy of God; in a word, that salvation is not of merit but of grace." (Spurgeon)