



# The Lost Sheep & the Lost Coin

Luke 15:1-10

Why does Jesus use the word "lost" to describe people who do not follow Him? Of course, God knows where every person is. God did not misplace them! The word lost means that the people have lost their way. They are separated from their heavenly Father, their Creator.

Jesus uses parables to explain how valuable each lost person is to the loving, caring God who created them.



## Day #1: Valued

One day the Pharisees and religious teachers saw Jesus teaching a group of people.

**+** *The tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were whispering among themselves. They said, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." - Luke 15:1-2*

The Pharisees and leaders looked down on the people that Jesus chose to spend time with. The leaders couldn't believe Jesus would share a meal with people who obviously struggled with sin in their lives. The leaders made it clear that these people were not worth much in their eyes.

But Jesus saw things so differently than the Pharisees and leaders. He saw what His heavenly Father saw. To Jesus, each and every person is a treasure - a treasure worth dying for.

Jesus told several parables to explain how much He valued the people around Him. In one parable, He compared the people to a precious sheep who wandered away from its shepherd. Though it had willingly wandered away from the shepherd, the shepherd cared about it. The shepherd left his field full of obedient sheep to go after the one who had wandered off. To that shepherd, one sheep was too many sheep to lose. Even the disobedient sheep was loved because the shepherd was so loving.

**\*** What kinds of people are valued in our world? What kinds of people are not valued in our world? If we see people the way that Jesus sees them, whom should we value?

## Day #2: Carried

Let's think for a moment about the shepherd who went out to get his lost sheep. The sheep was the one who wandered away. The sheep left the grassy hills and the protection of his shepherd in order to go his own way. The sheep wandered into the dangerous wilderness. The loving shepherd, who had done nothing wrong, left the lush land and entered the wilderness to save his wayward sheep. He risked his life to rescue the sheep. When the shepherd arrived where the sheep was, he lifted the sheep and carried the helpless animal on his shoulders. Carried by the shepherd, and not on its own strength, the sheep was brought back into the green pasture.

Does this sound at all familiar? This is the story of Jesus - and us. Each of us wandered away from the Father when we decided to sin. We left God's protection and blessing to go where it was dangerous and barren. Like the shepherd, Jesus had done nothing wrong. But He chose to leave heaven to come into our wilderness - the sin-filled earth.

**+** *He Himself carried our sins in His body on the cross. He did it so that we would die as far as sins are concerned. Then we would lead godly lives. His wounds have made you whole.*

*You were like sheep who were wandering away. But now you have returned to the Shepherd. He is the Leader of your souls. - 1 Peter 2:24-25*

When we have faith in Jesus, He carries the weight of our sin, just like the shepherd carried the weight of the sheep. And just like that sheep was fully depending on the strength of the shepherd to carry him home, we must depend fully on the sacrifice of Jesus to bring us into God's kingdom.

**\*** Who do you know that is like a lost sheep - separated from God? In your own words, how does God feel about that person? How does God want you to feel about that person?

## Day #3: Unconditional Love

Jesus did an amazing thing by telling the parable of the lost sheep. In these few words, Jesus gave us a glimpse into the heart and mind of the almighty

### Day #3 continued:

Creator of the universe! If we read carefully, we can see what God thinks about every person.

Listen as Jesus compares His Father to the shepherd who found his wandering sheep:

✝ *When he finds it, he will **joyfully** put it on his shoulders and go home.* - Luke 15:5

The shepherd in the parable did not yell at the sheep when he found it. He did not punish the sheep or drag it back to camp. The shepherd lovingly, joyfully picked up the sheep and carried it home.

And what would the shepherd do once he arrived home?

*Then he will call his friends and neighbors together. He will say, "Be joyful with me. I have found my lost sheep."*- Luke 15:6

The sheep meant so much to the shepherd that he called his friends and family and told them the good news: His sheep had been found.

\* These are the words that Jesus chose to explain what His Father is like. What does this parable tell you about how God feels about you?

*The Lord your God wins victory after victory and is always with you. He celebrates and sings because of you, and He will refresh your life with His love.*" - Zephaniah 3:17 CEV

## Day #4: Found Coin

Jesus told a similar parable to the Pharisees and religious leaders in Luke 15:8-10:

✝ *Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. She will light a lamp and sweep the house. She will search carefully until she finds the coin. And when she finds it, she will call her friends and neighbors together. She will say, "Be joyful with me. I have found my lost coin."*

*I tell you, it is the same in heaven. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who turns away from sin.*

What is the most valuable thing you have ever lost? Maybe it was a stuffed animal you couldn't sleep without, a video game, or even money. Think of how you felt while you were looking for it. If it was truly important, you may have felt all knotted up inside when you thought you might have to live without it. Often the entire family will be in on the search. It may take days or weeks to find it. How did it feel

### Day #4 continued:

to find the item? You felt great relief and joy. You probably ran to tell everyone that your treasured possession was finally found.

This parable compares the joy of finding that lost item to God's joy when one sinner changes his thinking and agrees with God about his sin and **receives** God's forgiveness. Our Creator is overjoyed to have His children back at home with Him - where they belong.

\* As a reminder of this parable, hide a coin and ask your parent to find it. Then let your mom or dad hide it and you search for it.

Pray and ask God to help you view lost people the way He does: valuable, dearly loved, and worth searching for! He wants all lost people to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4). Ask God to help you lead others to Him.

## Day #5: Seek the Lost

Through these parables, we see the love that God has toward lost sinners. Though He does not love our sinful actions, He loves every person. He wants us to turn away from the sin that separates us from Him. He wants us to enter His eternal kingdom.

Over and over in the Bible, we see that God actively goes to sinners. He went to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He went to Cain after Cain killed Abel. He went to Jonah after Jonah had disobeyed. Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus. God is actively seeking to save lost people. Those who follow Jesus are invited to do the same.

✝ *Jesus came to them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. So you must **go** and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end."* - Matthew 28:18-20

We cannot wait inside our church walls and hope that lost people find us! We must follow our Savior's example. We must go out to where the lost people are.

\* Are you willing to go wherever Jesus leads you to tell lost people about Him? Do you know of a place where lost people are? Pray and ask for the right way to speak to lost people so they will be drawn to Jesus.

