

## The Parable of the Lost Coin

- **Scriptures**

- Luke 15:8–10

- **Context**

- Read verses 1-2 of this chapter
  - *"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."*
  - *"Then"* – (key word) what was discussed in the previous chapter?
    - *Luke 14:1* – *"And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him."*
      - Jesus had been with the Pharisees, but now the "sinners" were gathering around Him
        - no doubt, after he left the house of the chief Pharisee
        - *"sinners"* – some commentators call them "the outcast classes" (*Cambridge Bible*)
          - often included publicans (tax collectors) and harlots
        - *"scribes"* – copyists and interpreters of the law
          - spent their time recording, teaching, and ruling on the Law (*Bible.org*)
        - *"Pharisees"* – separatists; added traditions to the law
          - "The Talmud lists seven categories of Pharisees, and only the seventh is laudable: there is the **shouldering Pharisee**, who parades good deeds; there is the **delaying Pharisee**, who lets business wait in order to do a good deed; there is the **bruised Pharisee**, who walks into a wall to keep from looking at a woman; there is the **pestle Pharisee**, who with false humility walks with his head down like a pestle on a mortar; there is the **ever-reckoning Pharisee**, who asks what good deeds he might do that would be reckoned as canceling out his neglects; there is the **fearful Pharisee**, who is in terror of God; and there is the **loving Pharisee**, who like Abraham loves God--he is admirable." (*The Pharisees* by Allen Ross)
    - Pharisees and scribes' accusation: *"This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."*
      - "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)" (*Enduring Word*).
    - *"publicans and sinners"* – draw closer to Jesus
    - *"Pharisees and scribes"* – complain because of Jesus' hanging out with the *"sinners"*
    - Jesus told 3 parables in response to the Pharisees and scribes' comments
      - parables were spoken to the Pharisees but in the hearing of all
  - Parable is one of three parables (3 lost things)
    - Luke 15:3-7 The Parable of the Lost Sheep
      - *verse 5* – *"sheep which was lost"*
      - **NOTE:** *"what man of you, having a hundred sheep" (verse 4)*
        - some commentators say – considered below a Pharisee to be a shepherd
    - Luke 15:8-10 The Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver
      - *verse 9* – *"the piece which I had lost"*
    - Luke 15:11-32 The Parable of the Prodigal Son
      - *verse 32* – *"thy brother . . . was lost, and is found"*

- Need to read all three together to get a complete picture of what Jesus was saying
- *verse 3 – "spake this parable"*
  - then Jesus went on to tell 3 parts of this parable
  - the word "*parable*" is only used once in this chapter
  - said by some to be 1 parable with 3 different phases
  - "The three parables recorded in this chapter are not repetitions; they all declare the same main truth, but each one reveals a different phase of it. The three parables are three sides of a pyramid of gospel doctrine" (*Charles Spurgeon*).
- **Parallelism**
  - common Hebrew form of teaching
  - ". . . involves the repetition of one idea in successive lines. The first half of a verse will make a statement, and the second half will essentially say the same thing in different words. The statements are 'parallel' in that they are juxtaposed, or side by side, and they often share similar syntax. The statements are 'synonymous' in that they say the same thing, with some minor variations" (*GotQuestions*)
  - also called thought rhyme
    - compare with English poetry
      - "Twinkle, twinkle little star, How I wonder what you are"
      - focus on end rhyme and rhythm ("audible similarities")
      - does not focus on "thought similarities" (*Compelling Truth*)
  - **Common Forms of Parallelism** (there are others):
    - **Synonymous** (similar thought restated)
      - *Proverbs 3:11 – "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction."*
        - "*despise*" – "*be weary*"
        - "*chastening*" – "*correction*"
    - **Antithetic** (contrasting thoughts) (pronunciation: an-ti-THET-ic)
      - *Psalms 1:6 – "For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."*
- **Outline of the Parable**
  - *verse 8 – "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?"*
    - "*one piece*" – coin (drachma)
      - "The drachma is an unusual coin of Christ's time. . . . Jesus' reference seems to be to a bride's dowry portion retained from a wedding. Such coins would be passed from mother to daughter and would explain both the presence of a coin no longer in current circulation and the woman's desperation" (*Coins of the Bible*, Stan Hudson, Bible and Spade, Vol. 9, No. 2, P 64, 1980).
  - "*ten pieces of silver*" – possibly part of a headdress
    - "The headgear of Bethlehem women is of interest in throwing light on Biblical customs. It was of two parts. First, there was what might be called a high cap on the front of which have been sewn rows of gold and silver coins. It would have to be a dire circumstance that would ever cause her to part with any of these coins. If she lost one of these, an evil meaning would be attached to the loss, and so it would be considered a great shame. Thus the woman whom JESUS told us about (Luke 15:8-10), had not merely lost a coin that

could be used for buying articles, she had lost a part of that which was an ornament to her and which was also her dowry. Reflection was cast upon her character" (*Manners & Customs*).

- *"light a candle"*
  - *Matthew 5:14 – "Ye are the light of the world."*
  - The Holy Spirit works through God's people – the church
  - Why should our lights shine? So that the lost might be found.
- *verse 9 – "And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."*
- *verse 10 – "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."*
  
- **Compare & Contrast**
  - "By identifying things in common in the parables, we can gain context to help us understand the significance of otherwise subtle elements in the story" (*GotQuestions*).
  - how were things lost?
    - sheep *wandered*
    - coin *fell* (carelessness)
    - son *left* (deliberate)
  - where were the lost things?
    - *wilderness*
    - *house*
    - *far country*
  - compare the shame
    - a shepherd who loses a sheep
      - often shepherds would take all the sheep of the town out to pasture
    - a woman who loses part of her dowry
    - a father who is rejected by his son
  - who looked for them?
    - shepherd – *"I am the good shepherd"* (*John 10:11*)
    - woman with a light – *"God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"* (*1 Corinthians 2:10*)
    - father – *"One God and Father of all"* (*Ephesians 4:6*)
  - how were they found?
    - shepherd went looking, *searching*
    - woman *shone* a light and swept
    - father *waited* patiently
  - effort put forth
    - shepherd left 99 other sheep in the wilderness
    - woman swept and searched diligently
    - father had compassion and ran
  - how much was lost?
    - 1 out of 100 (sheep)
      - *Isaiah 53:6 – "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*
      - *Matthew 15:24 – "But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

- 1 out of 10 (coins)
- 1 out of 2 (sons)
  - proportions grow significantly smaller
- rejoicing
  - **shepherd** – *"calleth together his friends and neighbours"* (verse 6)
    - *"Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."*
  - **woman** – *"calleth her friends and neighbours together"* (verse 9)
    - *"Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."*
  - **father** – killed the *"fatted calf"*; feasting (verses 23-24)
    - *"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."*
- compare what was not lost
  - **99 sheep** (in the wilderness)
    - *"ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance"* (verse 7)
  - **9 coins** (in the house)
  - **1 son** (bitter)
    - *"And he was angry, and would not go in"* (verse 28)
- what parts of the Godhead are revealed in these parables?
  - **Shepherd** – *Christ*
  - **Woman** – *Holy Spirit* working through the church
  - **Father** – *God*
- **Key Points**
  - why did Jesus tell these parables?
    - Pharisees' complaint about Jesus spending time with the sinners
  - *verse 7 – "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."*
  - *verse 10 – "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."*
  - *verse 32 – "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."*

### Sources:

- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/luke-15/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/synonymous-parallelism.html>
- <https://www.compellingtruth.org/synonymous-parallelism.html>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/7-scribes>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/2-pharisees>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek\\_drachma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_drachma)
- <http://www.bible.ca/coins/bible-coins-Jesus-used-in-the-New-Testament.htm>
- [http://www.bible-history.com/links.php?cat=39&sub=461&cat\\_name=Manners+%26+Customs&subcat\\_name=Headdress](http://www.bible-history.com/links.php?cat=39&sub=461&cat_name=Manners+%26+Customs&subcat_name=Headdress)
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/parable-lost-sheep-coin.html>