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Luke 15

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Luke 15.

Topics.

- The parable of the lost sheep.
- The parable of the woman who loses one coin.
- The parable of the prodigal son.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Jesus taught the parable of the Wedding Feast and tells those that desire to be his disciple to count the cost beforehand because anyone who is not prepared to make him pre-eminent in their heart, mind and life cannot be his disciple.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

LUKE 15:1-7

Parable of the Lost Sheep.

- **Luke 15:1-7:** Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." ³So he told them this parable: ⁴"What man of you having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? ⁵And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' ⁷Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

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Following are the two most common understandings of what Jesus is saying in this Parable.

1. Jesus is directing this parable to the prideful and self-righteous religious leaders the (Pharisees and scribes) who are rebuking Jesus for eating with sinners. Therefore, Jesus words, "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance." Means God is far more delighted in a corrupt or wicked person who comes to Christ in repentance than He is in all the self-righteous religious leaders and priests who are so full of self-righteousness that they believe they have no need to repent.
2. Those who belong to Christ are saved and will be resurrected to eternal glory and everlasting life. Jesus is saying when a brother or sister leaves their family in Christ to go and restore the faith another brother or sister in Christ who is struggling with their faith or to save a non-believer and the struggling brother or sisters faith is restored or the unbeliever accepts the Gospel of Christ there is far more rejoicing in heaven over the one whose faith has been restored or the sinner who has been saved to eternal life than there is over the ones who are strong in their faith and who already have eternal life.

Some might think that this extreme rejoicing over the faith of the struggling brother or sister being restored or over a sinner being saved is unfair for the faithful who have endured trials and tribulations. But it should be remembered that we were all sinners apart from God once. Each one of us at some moment in time surrendered our life to Christ and all the angels rejoiced for us in that moment. The parable is not about

loving one more than another, but the excitement of a brother or sister's faith being restored or a sinner being saved. The following story clearly explains what Jesus is saying, a family has five children and a runaway school bus hits one them, the child is taken to hospital and put under intensive care while the parents drop everything and race to the hospital fearing their child will die. Mum and Dad sit in the hospital room day and night to comfort the child eventually after doing more tests the doctors tell the parents the child will be OK. The parents go home in enormous joy and gather the rest of the family and they rejoice together all night that their brother or sister has been saved. The parable is not about loving others in the family less, but about one having a far greater need. For me personally both the first and second understandings of the parable can be embraced as both principles beautifully fit Jesus words.

LUKE 15:8-10

The Parable of the Woman who Loses One Coin.

- **Luke 15:8-10:** "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? ⁹And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' ¹⁰Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The lost coin was a silver drachma it was equivalent in value to a Roman denarius which was one day's wages.

The practical application of this parable: is obvious all ten coins are of equal value to the woman she knows the nine coins are safe and where they are so there is no need to go hunting for them, but the lost coin being of equal value needs to be found so she naturally does everything in her power to find it and when she does there is enormous rejoicing. Anyone who has lost their wallet and had it returned will understand this joy.

Spiritual application of the parable: The Pharisees and scribes would have nothing to do with sinners they believed they would be made unclean by being in their company let alone eat with them (v2). So when they in the previous verses, said: -

- He accepts sinners and eats with them.

It is stated as a rebuke and a statement of disgust. The Pharisees and scribes are saying that if Jesus was truly a man of God there is no-way he would be in the company of sinners let alone eat with them so Jesus tells them this parable of the lost coin. The nine silver coins are a symbol of those who belong to God whereas the lost coin is symbol of the entire world. God's desire is that all would come to Him we know this because Jesus in the book of John said:

- God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life so that the world might be saved through him (John 3:16-17).

The principle Jesus is teaching in this parable is that it is right for those who belong to the Kingdom of God to leave their family in Christ and go into the world and mix with sinners for the purpose of inviting (not coercing, forcing, or manipulating), but inviting the lost into the Kingdom of God because God is seeking to restore mankind back to Him and the only way He can do this is through those who belong to Him. If every Christian lived as the chief priest, the Pharisees the scribes and the Jewish elders did during Jesus era and only mingled with their own kind how is God going to reach those outside of their comfortable and safe religious world.

Parable of the Prodigal Son.

- **Luke 15:11-32:** And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. ¹⁴And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." ²⁰And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate. ²⁵"Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶And he (the older son) called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷And he (the servant) said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸But he (the older son) was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹but he (the older son) answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' ³¹And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³²It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."

The Pharisees and scribes have been accusing Jesus of accepting and eating with tax collectors and sinners (v2) so Jesus tells them this famous parable of the Prodigal Son which clearly shows God's love and compassion toward sinners and toward those who are lost.

Following are three common views regarding who the younger son is:

- 1 The younger son a symbol of the Gentiles and the older son is a symbol of the Jews.
- 2 In the wider sense all humanity are children of God who have gone astray and become lost therefore the younger son that got lost is a symbol of all humanity.
- 3 The younger son is a man who was united with God the Father, but has turned away from Him to do his own thing and therefore is now separated from the Father and so is lost.

A revelation of God's love: though in this famous parable there are differing views as to who the younger son is and though evangelicals have used it throughout history to reveal the compassionate heart of God toward the lost and invite them into God's Kingdom and church leaders continue to use it to comfort those who are struggling with their faith or turned away from it. There is no need to be so dogmatic that one must be right and the other must be wrong simply because the principal taught in the parable applies to whoever is separated from God and accepts

Christ whether they have turned from the faith for a time or were unsaved to begin with. All three scenarios can apply since the parable is a revelation of the love of God's heart toward any lost sinner who repents.

The younger son: for simplicity of interpretation and based on verse twelve we will consider the two sons as being symbolic of those who believe and belong to God the Father and the younger son a symbol of those who turn away for a time. While the younger son belonged to the father, he rightfully had a share in the father's inheritance, but he had no patience and therefore left his father and his family to live a life of self-indulgence and self-gratification and wasted his fathers' money on prostitutes (v30). This son wasted all the talents and gifts that his father had given him. He eventually hits rock bottom and realises that he has squandered his father's gifts by living to satisfy his own selfish desires. He is humbled and absolutely disgusted with himself knowing that he has done wrong by his father so he makes a mental decision to confess to his father the self-indulgent things he has done and ask his father for forgiveness knowing he is no longer worthy to be called his father's son.

Ponder for a moment: the younger son did not expect any favours from his father; he was fully aware that he had wasted his life and his father's gifts on his own selfish lifestyle and prostitutes. He is approaching his father with a sense of shame and unworthiness. Imagine his overwhelming joy when he sees in a distance his father running toward him. The fathers love for his younger son never waived, his forgiveness was always available all the son had to do was repent and return and the instant he did the father exalted and blessed him. Ponder now for a moment the enormous joy in the heart of the father when he saw his lost son returning home. There is nothing in life that can thrill the heart of a parent more than having a child who has run away from home return.

The celebration of the son's return: keep in mind this is a parable about God's love and compassion it's about a person who has lived and entirely selfish life and is now returning to God. The abundant grace and overwhelming love of the father is revealed, rather than scold and rebuke the son the father not only felt compassion, ran and kissed him welcoming him back into his household, he had his servant give the son the best robe and a ring symbolising that the son in the eyes of the father was fully restored within the father's house. Added to this the father gathers the family and puts on an enormous celebration feast for him. Even though the son totally wasted the blessings his father had gifted him with the father holds nothing against him but instead is so excited at his son's return he has the best calve killed to celebrate his arrival.

THE OLDER SON

Entreated: means to call or invite to come near to comfort. Sadly the older son instead of being excited that his brother had returned was jealous of the younger son he probably felt that his father did not appreciate him for his faithfulness and hard work because the older son had always served his father and faithfully obeyed him, but no-doubt feels hurt that his father had never made him feel special as he is now doing with his younger brother. It's not that the older son was a bad person in fact the father was pleased with him (v31) he has remained faithful to his father's house it's just that he feels unappreciated. The father invites the older son into his presence and comforts him by telling him that he is enormously pleased with him and that everything that belongs to the father has always been his, but his younger brother was dead and is now alive, he was lost, and is found.

The parable has the following two principals:

1. The love of God our heavenly Father and His forgiveness is always available to a person who acknowledges their sin and repents even to those who fall away from the faith and live a lifestyle that is totally opposed to the will of the Father.

- 2 Though all the family gathered together to celebrate the sons return, it can be very difficult (because of self, ego and pride) for some who have been faithful to God all their life to accept with open arms and rejoice when another brother or sister returns to the faith after spending their life living to satisfy their own selfish desires and the lust of the flesh, but this attitude manifests a lack of God's Spirit in our lives as it stems from a spirit of jealousy, self-righteousness and show a lack of love for the lost. When we feel this way about someone who returns in repentance to God it is most likely we need to repent of our lack of love and compassion before the Father in the same way as the returning brother or sister has repented of their corrupt and selfish lifestyle.

Repentance is not an excuse: repentance is not just saying, "I am sorry." When the religious leaders of Jesus generation the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes went to John the Baptist for baptism, John rather than baptise them told them to show fruits fit for repentance. There must be some evidence that shows that a person has genuinely, sincerely and honestly repented and is not simply mouthing the words. In the case of the prodigal son it would be turning from his corrupt lifestyle to live a life that brings a good testimony to the name of his father (i.e., God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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