

'THE REALLY GOOD LIFE'

(Life of Christ Series)

Gospel of Luke

Lost & Found

A primary purpose of church is to be a spiritual oasis where God's people may come together for growth in grace through worship, praise and prayer. Sometimes singing promotes spiritual maturity; frequently it happens during Bible study; often fellowship is the catalyst of grace between us. But for some their *delight in the Lord* pours forth at the *lost and found* box where they are reunited with their prodigal possessions. For periodically absent-minded saints, forgetting where they put things is a scenario God allows for growth in fervent prayer, humility, trust, praise and peace through the *lost & found* routine. It is a blessing to reunite people with their keys, jewelry, sunglasses, Bibles, and clothes (!) periodically. On occasion, people even leave their spouses and children behind (that is by accident isn't it☺? I'm not surprised people forget things – we are busy people with lots of things to keep track of – but the mystery to me is when lost things go unclaimed indefinitely. Sometimes weeks and months pass without a single inquiry about things in the old *lost and found* box, which turns it into a *lost box* or worse yet an *unwanted box*. It makes you wonder how important those things (even Bibles) were to the one who left them behind.

Thankfully, abandoned people are always quickly retrieved by those who drove away prematurely; but what if somebody just left a spouse or child at church and never bothered to return for them or help them find a way back home?! You would just have to question who is the actual prodigal. If a diligent search isn't at least attempted, it would not be the one who left 'it' that's the prodigal! In the *lost and found* parables of Jesus in **Luke 15**, it is clear that the Lord is diligently seeking the lost (who want to be found) to become safely His forevermore. However, if spiritually lost men, women, boys and girls run and hide, evade and resist their Rescuer's attempts to save them then they have no one but themselves to blame in eternity. After a while we reluctantly empty the *lost and found box* and throw out the unclaimed things that are broken or soiled.

God, too, at the end of one's *hide and seek* life from His grace must cast away the unclaimed life. He reluctantly does so respecting the wishes of any lost soul who doesn't want His Son in this life. It's quite touching sometimes to see someone other than the actual owner request one of the long abandoned items (clothes, toys or even an old tattered Bible), adopting it as their own. This whole world is a *lost box* of forgotten, broken, lost souls destined for the ultimate *lost box* of hell and the Lake of Fire. Bible teaching churches are the *found box* for all those who stop running away, hiding, and evading His love and grace. As the good shepherd, God the Son came from heaven seeking every last one He died to save; like the homemaker, the Holy Spirit searches and sweeps away the dirt of sin from the redeemed child of God and like a devoted dad, the Father in heaven waits to welcome back the truly repentant one who has come home to stay.

The Lost & Found Parables

(The Lost & Found Sheep, Silver & Son)

Luke 15

The 3-in-One Parables

This trilogy of parables by Jesus reveals the heart of our triune God regarding all people who are not yet His children through faith in Christ, His Son. The parable of the lost sheep not only reveals the wayward path from God that all lost souls are taking; it also pictures **the Son of God as the good Shepherd taking the initiative to rescue** those He came to save. The second parable of the lost coin not only reveals the evasiveness and uncleanness of us before we are brought to salvation; it is also a picture of how **the Holy Spirit enlightens our soul with the Word of God and makes a clean sweep of our life** so we can be redeemed and spent serving the living God. And lastly, the parable of the lost son not only shows the waste and folly of a life apart from God; it reveals **the broken, longing heart of our heavenly Father** over those who have rejected Him, holiness and heaven for the muck and mire of this world. The Son seeks and saves; the Spirit convicts, cleanses and claims; the Father receives, reconciles and rewards the truly repentant sinner.

There are also three important spheres to which a true Christian belongs: **1) Parable #1** – he or she needs to know that they are part of a big flock (*1 of the 100*) – Christians are part of the ‘universal church’ of believers around the world at any given time; **2) Parable #2** – he or she is a valued member of a precious smaller family of believers called the ‘local church’ (*1 of the 10*); and **Parable #3** – he or she needs a close friend (spiritual brother or sister) for personal accountability and blessing (*1 of 2*).

In all three parables there is exceeding joy (*in heaven, on earth and in the heart*) when the heavenly ‘Seeker’ becomes the ‘Finder’ of a repentant sinner who comes home to Him. With the Father, it’s true: ‘*Finders – Keepers*’ forever!

‘Finders, Keepers; Losers, Weepers’

(Jesus’ Parables about Lost Things)

Luke 15 (Part 1)

THE PROBLEM OF LOSER SHEPHERDS

(The Setting for Jesus Teaching)

Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. ² And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.” ³ So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

Vs. 1-3

THE PARABLE OF A LOST SHEEP

(The Son of God Seeking Run-Aways)

⁴ “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? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ 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!’ ⁷ 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.

Vs. 4-7

THE PARABLE OF A LOST COIN

(The Spirit of God Seeking Hide-Aways)

⁸ “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? ⁹ 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!’ ¹⁰ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Vs. 8-10

THE PARABLE OF A LOST SON

(God the Father Seeking Cast-Aways)

(NEXT TIME)

Luke 15:11-32