

Title: THE LOST AND FOUND, LUKE 15:1 – 10
(Chatham, NJ; 9/11/16, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: Jesus tells these parables to define his work of seeking and saving the lost, but specific truths are fundamental to understanding them.

Purpose: To explain the truths behind the parables and to demonstrate that God's desire to save us is the most important.

Introduction:

1. We find great delight in these stories as did the tax collectors and sinners.
2. Today we want to explain some fundamental truths that form the foundation for understanding them.
3. Jesus tells them in order to define his mission.
4. More importantly he explains the desire of God to seek and save the lost.
5. Let's begin with some fundamental truths.

I. The World Is Lost

A. Sin enslaves and kills

1. Psalm 14:1-3 is partially quoted in Romans 3 leading up to Paul's conclusion that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23.
2. Jesus teaches that sin enslaves us, John 8:34.
3. Paul describes our condition as dead in Ephesians 2:1-5.
4. Seeking lost sheep or coins makes no sense unless this is a fundamental truth.

B. All must repent

1. Luke 13:1-5 makes this abundantly clear
2. His statement about the righteous not needing to repent is meant only to emphasize God's concern to go after the lost
3. Perhaps he refers to "the faithful" as those who don't need to repent
4. We know the Pharisees needed also to repent for they were as lost as any of the sinners that Jesus associated with.
5. Jesus emphasizes a fundamental desire of God.

II. Acceptance and Table Fellowship Do Not Mean Tolerance of Sin

A. Jesus receives sinners, verse 2

1. Tax collectors had the dishonorable reputation of collecting more than the official fees, not to mention that they worked for the Romans
2. "Sinners" were those who didn't practice the ritual purity standards of the Pharisees, and it probably lumped in all others who simply lived unrighteous lives
3. Table fellowship was regarded as a token of "mutual acceptance and solidarity."
4. Jesus appears to be undermining moral seriousness
5. Psalm 1:1, "Blessed in the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers" sides with his critics

B. Not Tolerance, Forgiveness

1. We err if we construe Jesus' actions as condoning sinners' behavior
2. Today people misinterpret his behavior in this way: tolerance has come to mean we accept the sinful lifestyle of others
3. Jesus eats with them because they need what he can do for them
4. Mt. 21:28-31, the tax collectors and prostitutes repented at John's preaching
5. People conveniently forget what Jesus tells the woman caught in adultery, "Go, and from now on sin no more."

6. Paul informs even the Gentiles that God calls “all people everywhere” to repent, Acts 17:30
7. Jesus rubs shoulders with them and accepts them but not their sins; he wants to redeem them.

III. The Real Significance of These Parables

A. God really wants to find the lost

1. He wants all men to be saved, 1 Timothy 2:2-3
2. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezekiel 33:11
3. He also speaks through Ezekiel prophesying that God will seek the sheep that have gone astray

B. The shepherd and the woman

1. The shepherd goes after the one lost sheep
2. Leaving the 99 does not assume he leaves them unattended – we know this because God sets up the office of overseers in the church
3. 4, Jesus appeals to them: “What man of you . . . does not . . . go after the one that is lost until he finds it?”
4. If this is normal for a shepherd, how much more will God do the same?
5. The woman cleans the house until she finds her coin
6. 8, again, “What woman . . . does not . . . seek diligently until she finds it?”
7. More likely this is a poor woman with little money though some believe these were dowry or wedding coins
8. In both cases precious things were lost, searched for, and found

C. Cause for rejoicing

1. Each person rejoices by gathering their friends to celebrate
2. “Joy in heaven” and “joy before the angels of God” may indicate that God himself rejoices when a lost soul is found
3. This is consistent with the Prodigal Son

Conclusion:

1. Get this point: God really wants to find the lost.
2. He wants you to come home.
3. God’s kindness in leading us to repentance cannot be overemphasized.
4. Come to Jesus; have your sins washed away; anticipate a full restoration of life when he returns to take us to be with him.