

*Four
Parables
From Jesus*



The Lost Coin

“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”
Luke 15:10

I confess that I am a *loser*. I don't necessarily see myself as the 'L on the forehead' type of loser, although I am sure that certain close family members could make a persuasive argument against my claim. More specifically, I am a loser of *things*. If I were a magician, my act could be labeled *The Great Mis-Placer*. If I had been around when the ancient city of Atlantis first went missing, chances are good I would have been a suspect. I have lost Christmas and birthday presents. I have lost mail. I donated my favorite jacket to the good people of Boston, MA, having left it on a park bench. Possibly my most

egregious offense occurred years ago when I left my 5-year old daughter at a movie rental store. Fortunately, my wife and son were waiting in the car and noticed I was traveling lighter than when I had left. I frantically returned and she was behind the sales counter with the clerks. In my defense, she made two sales while I was gone (I may be kidding about the sales).

Just as I was elated to have found my daughter safe and unharmed when she was returned to me, we are told the angels in heaven likewise rejoice when one sinner repents and returns to the fold of the righteous (Luke 15:7,10). Jesus used multiple parables to describe the joy found in the hearts of those who had found what had previously been lost. Three such parables

This parable teaches that His kingdom would not take place right away. First, He would have to go away for awhile and His followers would need to be faithful in His absence. When He returned, He would inaugurate a kingdom more powerful, just, and rewarding than anything they could expect.

We are in a similar situation today. We have been given everything needed to increase the Master's investment in us. When we fully realize the Master's willingness to invest what He has for our salvation, I believe, like the first two servants, we will experience more thankfulness for His gifts, more gratefulness for His mercy, and more willingness to do everything to increase His investment in us. We know He is coming back; we know He will be king; and we know He will expect us to be faithful with His investment until His return.

...Stanley Trotter
Greenwood, Arkansas



One Phone Call Can

- ** Show your concern
- ** Learn of a need
- ** Encourage the downhearted
- ** Lift the depressed
- ** Strengthen the weak
- ** Cheer the sad
- ** Comfort the lonely
- ** Reassure the suffering
- ** Promote a good work
- ** Render a service

And with today's technology can also be done with an email or text.

John 15:8

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

...Via Sepulveda Church of Christ Bulletin



Volume 32 - Number 3 - May/June 2013
BC is published every other month. Send all inquiries, address changes and subscriptions to the editor: Scott Gage, PO Box 3425, Fayetteville, AR 72702-3425 Voice & Fax 479-521-6809 Email: Lsgage129@cs.com

www.basicchristianity.net

small matter, take charge of ten cities.” The second came, and he had gained five more. The master said, “You take charge of five cities.” The third servant came and said, “Here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you because you are a hard man.”

These parables were parallels to real situations and applications of Jesus’ message.

There are many lessons to be learned from this parable, but let’s look at these first two servants. These two were servants just like the others; they had each been given one mina, the same amount as the rest of the servants; and they all knew the master was returning and what was expected of them. The master had entrusted all of them with an amount of his money. To be a servant, to be trusted with the master’s money, this was surely not the norm, but these first two servants seemed to understand the weight of the situation. The master could have invested it himself in a financial institution; he could have had a friend use it, but he entrusted it rather to his ser-

vants. These two servants realized what the master had done for them. For him to have trusted them, lowly servants, with his assets must have triggered an attitude of humility and gratefulness for their master. This in itself would incline one to make an extra effort to reward the master by making good use of his money.

How about the rewards? The one was given charge over ten cities and the other five cities. This was, of course, unheard of...from being a lowly servant to being in charge of cities! Plus, the third servant’s mina was taken from him and given to the one with ten. We can see the dynamics here between the responsibility given and the rewards. Who could imagine the magnitude of these rewards given for a simple request to use wisely what was entrusted to them.

The third servant was addressed by the master, his mina taken away, and he was punished. The people listening to this parable understood the meaning and the impact of this lesson. These parables were parallels to real situations and applications of Jesus’ message. These people were expecting an earthly kingdom to be set up quickly and to be rid of Roman domination.

are found in the beginning verses of the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 15. God in his infinite wisdom has chosen to provide multiple verses that are similar in nature in order to hammer home important points. The three parables found in Luke 15 address the same subject, but use different commonplace objects to make the same point.

Luke 15:8-10 recounts Jesus’ parable of the lost coin. We would be safe in assuming that the majority of people Jesus encountered in his daily walks of life lived a modest existence, probably having little more than the essential possessions. They were in all probability a mobile people, being able to pull up stakes quickly and relocate if necessary. Therefore, a collection of ten silver coins could very well have represented a family’s life savings. Today, a loss of 10 percent of our personal savings would certainly be noticed and lamented. Chances are such a financial loss would have been a more significant setback 2000 years ago.

We have all misplaced something of sentimental or monetary

value before, causing us to search frantically for it until hopefully it has been found. With whom do we share the good news about what was lost having been found? In most cases, it is our immediate family and chances are they were help-

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ing us search for what was lost. Obviously the lost coin in this parable is metaphorical for a lost soul; a soul that once followed the narrow path of righteousness but one that allowed sin to dominate his life to the point that he turned his back on God and His commandments. The neighbors referenced in this parable certainly can represent the church. It is vital for a congregation to receive with open arms a member who has strayed, but having recognized the error of his ways has returned to the fold. Our response should be the same as the angels in heaven (Luke 15:10).

At first glance, it makes sense that jealousy could in some way be justified in regards to the fuss made over the return of a lost

one. Just like the 99 sheep that did not stray (Luke 15:4-6) or the brother of the prodigal son who had been unswervingly loyal to his father, it would be easy to take the stance that a little credit is due to those who have not strayed from the Word. For example, let's say a group of Boy Scouts were on a campout

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and all but one paid attention to the Scout leaders' orders and followed those orders that allowed them to make it safely back to the camp site after a long hike. Unfortunately the one didn't pay attention and became lost. He had to forge surging creek waters, and ate tree bark and various edible fungi to sustain himself during his ordeal. Many hours later, in the waning light of day, having survived in the shadows of wildlife hoping for a good meal, he stumbles into camp, tired and dirty, and

he is greeted by his overjoyed scout master while the remaining members of the troop, who all had done the right thing, looked on. Everyone had reached their intended destination, but the last one to arrive received the greatest welcome. Why? Because his arrival at the correct destination had for some time been in doubt.

Those who stray from the Truth also leave their destination in doubt. The apostle Paul tells us God wants all of his children to go to Heaven (1st Timothy 2:1-4). A tear surely is shed each time one of His creations rebels in disobedience. We are fortunate that forgiveness is eternal through God's amazing grace. Therefore we should not be the least bit surprised the heavens shake with unbridled joy when a former disciple regains his way. Likewise, the earthly church, of which our savior Jesus Christ is the head (Colossians 1:18), should mirror the acceptance of God when those who have strayed return home.

...Scott Carty
Fort Smith, Arkansas

The Workers in the Vineyard - Luke 19:11-26

“For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.” Luke 19:26

In Luke 19, after Jesus had the encounter with Zacchaeus in Jericho, He continued on, telling them a parable because “He was near to Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once” (NIV).

Verse 12 begins: He said, “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’ But his servants hated him and sent a delegation after him to say ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’ He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they gained with it.”

So far, this parable has given us some facts and some things which we are not told. This man to be crowned king was of noble

birth and was an owner of servants. We do not know how many but apparently more than ten. We know that the man was going to be gone for a time but we don't know for how long and that while he was gone, the servants were to use this mina wisely which the man had given them.

According to the New King James, one mina was worth about three month's salary, quite an amount to be entrusted to slaves or servants. These servants were likely owned by this master. This situation was certainly not a usual occurrence in the daily routine of the master/servant relationship. We know that this master would be returning and that when he did, he would be a king. The text says that these servants “hated him” and did not want him to reign over them and tried unsuccessfully to stop him.

Verse 15 says: “He was crowned king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.” The first servant called had gained ten more minas. “Well done, my good servant, because you have been trustworthy in a very

you think?” If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? What would we think if Jesus asked us the same question? Would we want to stay in our comfort zone and ignore the

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problem? Or would we take time to help the one astray? I think of the situation when I see someone on the side of the road whose car is broken down or has a flat tire. Do we take the time to check on them and make sure they are ok? Or do we assume someone else is coming? It is a struggle for us when we see these real life situations. We sometimes feel it is inconvenient or risky to try to help someone we do not know. But, when we are in those situations, we hope that someone will take the time to help us.

In verse 13, Jesus talks about rejoicing over the one sheep that was found rather than the ninety-nine who did not go astray. As Christians, we should be joyful when someone comes back to the Lord. The hard part comes when Satan tries to lure them

back to their pattern of sinful behavior. We must do our part to encourage them and pray for them when they face temptation.

Jesus finishes in verse 14 by saying that it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. God loves us beyond all understanding. He wants us to do His will and not choose the path of destruction. We should remember these words when we see someone who is in need.

In our lives we encounter many different situations. People in the world today are often lost and do not know which way to go. That is why we must turn to our Savior Jesus Christ and let His light shine through us. Within the next few days, we will encounter someone who is struggling. Instead of viewing it as an inconvenience, let us view it as an opportunity to spread God’s love.

...Ryan Lefleur
Greenwood, Arkansas



Parable of the Good Deed - Luke 10:25-37

“So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?’ And he said, ‘He who showed mercy on him.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do likewise.’” Luke 10:36-37

We hear regularly in the news about deeds that happen in this old world, bad and a few good. The Lord allows opportunities for these to happen. We have the freedom to choose whether to do a good deed or not to do it.

Jesus teaches us through the parable of the Good Samaritan that we should do good deeds for mankind because of our brotherly love. Have you missed any opportunities to do a good deed? I know I have. Years ago I was in the Wal-Mart checkout line, in front of me was an older lady that was putting some of her groceries back because she didn’t have the money to pay for them all. I wasn’t thinking with enough love at the time to pay for them myself. I was in too big of a hurry to get through the checkout line and be on my way.

Why did the Priest and the Levite pass on the other side of the road to avoid the certain man in need? Neither had enough love for his fellow man. We are told that when the Samaritan man came upon him, he had compassion and took care of his needs. He loved his neighbor. Jesus tells this story as an example of how we should conduct ourselves.

If we love the Lord as we should, we will also love our neighbor as ourselves. We read in Acts 9:13 that the Lord asked

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Ananias to perform a good deed for Saul and restore his sight; but Ananias was reluctant to help Saul at first, because he knew of his relentless efforts to stop Christianity. When the Lord told him of Saul’s conversion he obeyed. This is a very good bible example of brotherly love when Ananias greeted Saul of Tarsus as Brother Saul.

A good deed doesn't have to make headlines; it can be as simple as a phone call or a visit to check up on a friend or neighbor. I know how I feel when I've not been well and a friend checks up on me. To give of our time can be a kindness worth much more than we imagine.

One of my faults is that I'm not always kind enough to God, family and friends. I harden my heart and I become unkind when

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I'm not feeling well or down about some predicament I've gotten myself into; I'm usually kind to myself with pity, so much that I don't always see the needy one in front of my nose. Once again the Lord has to intervene and bring me back to the reality that I need to serve, not be served.

Another issue I must deal with is prejudice against my neighbor. Any prejudice is in direct contradiction with brotherly love. If I don't have brotherly love I won't do good deeds. For what-

ever reason, if I don't accept a person into my circle, I'm probably prejudiced against him. He might be of a different race than me; he might be younger, could be a different gender, whatever the difference is, the Bible teaches me the word neighbor knows no prejudice.

Now I must practice what I preach.

...Cleve Linam
Greenwood, Arkansas



The Parable of the Lost Sheep

“Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.” (NKJV)

Have you ever been standing in line at a local store and it seems like the cashier is spending all her time on one customer? I am sure we all have faced situations like this where one person frustrates a big group of people. For this reason, we should take a look at the parable of the lost sheep from Matthew eighteen.

Notice that verse 10 says that we should not despise “these little ones.” As a school teacher, I

can attest that there is always at least one student who does not seem to understand either the class content or the rules and procedures. Teachers become frustrated because they assume students are trying to disrupt class. It would be easy to ignore

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the issue and go on with the class. It also would be easy to overreact to the situation and become upset at that student. However, we have to teach individuals, not just the group as a whole. The same concept applies in our Christian lives. We must help the individuals, not just the big groups of people.

Verse 11 says that the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. The key word in that sentence is “was.” When someone we know is struggling, it is an opportunity to carry out Jesus' teaching. Sometimes we think people are hopeless. But as long as we are in contact with those people, we have an opportunity to lead them to Christ. In verse 12, Jesus asks “What do