

What about the Lost?  
Luke 15:1-10

The world sees God as someone who stops people from having a good time.

This completely misunderstands His work.

But “religious” people often seem to do this, turning Grace into Law.

In Luke 15, Jesus is criticized for welcoming sinners. He responds by correcting those who criticize, using three related parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.

All three have a common structure:

1. Something is lost
2. Someone wants it back and works to restore it.
3. Celebration follows restoration.

While they share a structure and theme, each shows us a different aspect.

#### The lost sheep

It is in the *nature* of sheep to wander. A shepherd isn't surprised when they do.

It is the *nature* of people to wander. We may be disappointed when they do, but we're not surprised.

When they do wander, do we give up, or do we try to help those we love?

It's easy, when we are feeling judgmental, to blame the sheep. But a time of crisis is not a the time to find fault but rather the time to help. Later you correct the straying.

What do *we* do when the straying sheep return?

In Jesus' teaching, we rejoice!

#### The lost coin

The coin did nothing to become lost. Someone lost it. You can't blame the coin!

Who is the seeker?

“Who are the father, the shepherd and the woman? They are God the Father, Christ and the church. Christ carries you on his body, he who took your sins on himself. The church seeks, and the Father receives. The shepherd carries. The mother searches. The father clothes. First mercy comes, then intercession, and third reconciliation. Each complements the other. The Savior rescues, the church intercedes, and the Creator reconciles.” (Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.207–8.)

The woman, that is the Church, lost someone.

What do we do when we lose one of the Church's treasures? We seek it.

Christ restores the lost.

He is the Shepherd, but also our Lamb:

“The Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their Shepherd” Rev. 7:17.

He went out to the wilderness alone.

He faced death for His undeserving, wandering sheep.

Our resurrected Shepherd still tends His flock, watches for His prodigal children, and bids His Church to seek the lost.

Heaven rejoices when the lost are found

Jesus’ parable shows strange economics: the celebration seems to cost more than the value of what was found.

It cost God everything to recover you.

There is great joy in heaven over each one that is found.

How do we hear these parables?

Either we are lost and need to be found (in which case, listen to your Savior’s voice again) or you have already been found.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we all have turned – everyone one – to his own way; and the LORD has laid upon him the iniquity of us all” (Is 53:6).

Heaven has already rejoiced over you and continues to rejoice.

God now invites you to celebrate with Him. When God multiplies His joy, He increases yours as well.

And for now, let’s light our lamps and sweep the floor to seek the lost coins.