

VIII. L.E.A.D. in Biblical Perspective
Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship
“Lessons on Evangelism from the Parable of the Lost Coin”

Luke 15:8–10

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

February 4, 2018 • Morning Sermon

Let’s look in Luke 15. This is God’s Word and it’s the truth. Luke 15:1–7 says [1] *Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. [2] And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” [3] So 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? [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 his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ [7] Just 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.*

[8] *“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? [9] And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ [10] Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

What is the third oldest University in the United States? The third oldest University started in the 17th Century and it is Yale University. It is an Ivy League school and the competition to get into that school is absolutely extraordinary. This year they offered a class that became percentage wise and numbers, the most enrolled class in their entire history. In fact, almost 25 percent of the student body enrolled in it and because of that they have said they won’t offer it again due to the fact it upset the other professors who lost many of their students to this class. So what is the title of the class that gets the largest number of enrolled students in the history of the school and causes angst among professors? I plan to tell you the name of this class at the end of this study and there are two reasons why the name of this class is so important in light of what we are currently looking at.

We are looking at a ministry theme called L.E.A.D. which stands for Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship. Your lifestyle doesn’t evangelize for you have to share the Gospel but to build a sharing of the Gospel as a lifestyle and uniting this with discipleship as we see when Jesus says ‘Come (salvation) and follow Me (discipleship).’ We are into life on life, and life to life discipleship. To go along with that, our five E’s are everyone evangelizing everybody everywhere every day. It is a way of life to be ready for those Divine appointments and opportunities.

We have been through a number of texts to affirm our God-given mandate which is to fulfill our God-given mission (to make disciples) with our God-given message (the Gospel). One of the ways we will look at this is by looking at these three parables in Luke 15 about the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. It is important to look at the context of this which actually starts back in Luke 9. Jesus, from Luke 9 on is on His way to Jerusalem to save sinners, to die on the cross and on His way He does what He has been doing for the past three years –

conversational event and hospitality evangelism. They have gatherings where a lot of sinners are invited, He eats with them and shares the truth of salvation with all these mostly “sexually immoral, promiscuous” sinners and tax gatherers who were considered both traitors and thieves among the Jewish people.

The Pharisees and Scribes can't stand this but Jesus continues doing what He has been doing all the way up to Jerusalem. The Pharisees and Scribes keep doing what they have been doing and that is they critique Him and grumbling against Him. This grumbling is the very word used to identify what the people did in the wilderness against Moses. Their complaint against Him is that He receives tax gatherers and sinners and even eats with them. To them that is horrendous and so they tell people 'how can you possibly think this is the Messiah. Look how contaminated He is by eating with them.' So in Luke 15 Jesus responds to them.

I want to suggest to you that in my studies of this that Bishop Ryle has about convinced me that this is not three parables. They complain to Jesus and then it says in Luke 15:3, *[3] So he told them this parable:* and when you get to the lost coin and the lost son He doesn't say and here's another parable. Bishop Ryle makes a good point when he says that this is one parable with three installment stories to it.

In installment number one of the lost sheep He is giving us the picture of the principle. Jesus says five times in the Bible 'I have come to seek and to save the lost.' All three of these installments emphasize He has come to seek and save the lost. In the first one of the lost sheep Jesus is the Shepherd and the lost are the sheep. When one is lost and wandered away Jesus does something unthinkable. You would not leave the 99 to go get that one in open country because the 99 would wander too but this Shepherd values that sheep so much that He does.

Jesus likes to use this because the prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah constantly refer to Him as a Shepherd. We see this in Psalm 23 and in Ezekiel 34 where it says the Messiah will go after the sheep that have strayed, the lost. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, the Great Shepherd and the Good Shepherd, who came to seek, find and bring them home rejoicing. In the parable of the lost sheep when He found the one lost He picked them up and carried them home rejoicing. He didn't just say 'come on home.' He calls everyone on earth to do what they are doing in heaven which is rejoicing over that one that has come home. We are not to be like the Scribes and Pharisees who are grumbling on the earth but we are to rejoice as He rejoices. Clearly He is the Shepherd and those who are lost are the sheep who must be found or they will stay lost. The one we will look at in this study is the lost coin and in the next study it will be the lost son.

I think the commentators have something here. We have a message that God came to seek and save the lost. When Jesus returned He said 'As the Father sent Me (to seek and to save the lost) so send I you' to also seek and to save the lost. The sheep that get found are the ones who go seek and save the lost by bringing them to the Savior. Now we go to a woman who has lost a coin. It's fine to look at Jesus being depicted as the Shepherd, the woman and the father in these three installments but maybe there is an either/or, or a both/and that certainly these three give us a picture of Jesus seeking to save the lost. Jesus not only came to receive them and welcome them but He came to look for them, save them and bring them home. In fact, as a Good Shepherd I'm going to the cross to die for them because the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

So what about the woman and the father in the next two parables? I think the commentators make a good point in that the father in the parable of the lost son represents God the Father who has sent His Son to seek and to save the lost, a true Elder Brother to go and get

the lost ones. The woman represents the Spirit of God empowering the bride of Christ, the church of Christ, to go with intense diligence to seek and to save the lost. So in this study we are going to look at this second parable about the woman and the lost coin.

Clearly, I'm buying into this that this is one parable with three installments and each one has a different message. The lost sheep tells us the principle that Jesus has come to seek and to save the lost. The lost coin tells us the process by which the Spirit of God empowers the bride of Christ to continue to do what the Father sent His Son to do but there are clear overlaps between the lost sheep and the lost coin. Here we see in the lost sheep the principle that there is joy in heaven when one sinner is brought to salvation and that He came to seek and to save the lost. Then we see the process of how to do this with the woman and the lost coin and then we see the promise when it is done with the lost son.

So let's take a closer look at the narrative here in Luke 15:8–10 about the woman and the lost coin. Clearly, we have a single woman but we do not know if she is widowed, divorced or just single because the text doesn't say. We do know she has ten coins. This coin is translated drachma and is comparable to the Roman denarius. It is basically worth one day's wage. We know that she has lost one of these ten coins but we don't know how she lost it. We also don't know why she has these ten coins. I can suggest that she could be a widow and these ten coins are her life savings which could be why the whole thing is so valuable. This is all she has. If she is a widow with no husband or son then she would be in dire straits unless people take pity on her or this could be a single woman who if she wants to get married would have to have a dowry and this could be her dowry. If she this were a dowry then the coins would have likely been on a chain around the headdress and somehow one of them got disconnected and lost. She thinks the coin was lost in the house and has to find it.

As she begins to look for this lost coin she lights a lamp. Houses back in those days did not have a lot of light due to a lack of windows and small doors. To find the coin she needed light but still didn't find it after lighting the lamp but she doesn't quit looking for it because it is too valuable. So now she grabs a broom. When I read that it brought me back to my childhood because my mother swept and mopped the kitchen at least three times a day. It is amazing what you come up with when you sweep and mop a floor. So the woman sweeps to find the coin but still doesn't find it. She still doesn't quit. It must have slipped into a crevasse, cranny or crack.

Did you notice the three steps she took? One, she light a lamp. Two, she grabs a broom and sweeps. Three, she searches diligently and to translate this more accurately, she gets on her hands and knees and starts looking everywhere for the coin, including the cracks and crannies. Then she finds it and she is so excited that she found it that she calls all her neighbors. Since this is just a woman I am guessing they had a 'ladies night out' to celebrate that she found this coin. It could be 'I found it so now I can get married' or 'I found it and I still have something to live off of.' Her finding this lost coin caused great rejoicing for her and her neighbors and then Jesus repeats lessons of what He said in the lost sheep in Luke 15:10 when He says [10] *Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*

I would give anything for God to allow me to preach a sermon and be like Peter where 3,000 or even 5,000 come to Christ but I want you to know that when you share the Gospel and God uses you to pray with someone to give their life to Jesus by the power of the Spirit of God, for the grace of God to the glory of God that sets off a party in heaven also. That is a time of rejoicing – when one sinner repents.

Now I'd like to look at the similarities that it has with the other installment. In both the lost sheep and the lost coin there is something that is lost, something that's found and something

that causes joy but you don't have joy until it gets found. And it's not found until it's recovered and that which is lost cannot recover itself. The lost sheep and the lost coin do not find themselves. The lost coin, like the lost sheep will not come back. You have to find it and when they find it they rejoice.

Secondly, finding it is being saved and being saved is identified by repentance. When Jesus finds His people and they are saved they are marked by faith and repentance. When was is saved they repent and turn from their ways, not to do better, but to flee to Jesus. He is the friend of sinners! That will lead you in a life of growing in grace and knowledge, liberating you from sin's power as well as sin's guilt. The thing lost in and of itself is helpless and hopeless yet is valued. Both the sheep and the coin is valued. Though the coin is helpless, hopeless, lost and needs to be saved, it still has the image/mark of the King on it.

Here is one more thing that is similar between the sheep and the coin. That which is lost is valued by the one who is searching for it and the search is with persistence until it is found. The reason we rejoice when someone gets saved is because we know what it's like to be lost and then found by Jesus. The reason the angels in heaven rejoice when one is found is because God's has fulfilled His mission through Jesus. We rejoice because we're the mission and know what it means to be saved and redeemed.

There are some differences though between the sheep and the coin. I think the differences are there to keep adding to Jesus' parable. Number one is that the shepherd is most likely a man and in the lost coin it is clearly a woman. So there is a gender change here. Some would say this is just good preaching because using the shepherd would most likely interest men and when you introduce the woman you have gained another half of the audience. I think that is true and it is a careful use of the illustration. Jesus does this a number of times in the Bible where He uses multiple illustrations to draw in the breadth and diversity of His audience. Another thought behind this could be, clearly the woman may be there to simply make the point of the work of the Spirit of God through the redeemed woman, the bride of Christ, the church of Christ.

Another difference is the value. In the lost sheep one was lost out of 100 which was one percent of the shepherd's portfolio. In the lost coin one coin was lost out of ten and that was ten percent of what was had. If that sheep is worth one percent and the coin is worth ten percent then what do you think a son is worth, which is what we'll be looking at in the next installment of this parable about the lost son. So in this second installment the value is being enhanced yet it's not just the value but it's the value of what is placed on that which is lost. So to recap the principle it is seek it, find it, and bring it home and that's what Jesus does.

That which is lost still bears the image, is valued and will be sought but unlike the sheep that which is lost is sought persistently with intensification. Now we're told something about the process. You light a lamp, can't find it, you don't quit. Now you get a broom, can't find it, you don't quit. Now you get on your hands and knees and begin to look diligently and consistently. Now I want to give you a takeaway to add to the takeaway from the lost sheep.

The takeaway is lost sinners cannot and will not repent and come to Christ as Lord and Savior unless He relentlessly seeks them, until they (the sinner) realize their need of Him, and that He loves them. They cannot find themselves. The Savior will not love their sin but He does love the sinner. His mark is on them and they bear His image. He is pursuing them relentlessly. He pursues them by going to the cross to redeem them as the Good Shepherd. Now enthroned in heaven He sends His Spirit into the bride of Christ, the body of Christ and He now sends us for what He came to do which was to seek the lost and bring them to the Savior. Those who come to

Him won't come until they realize they need Him and that He loves them. Those two things need to be communicated and that is called the Gospel. As Paul said in I Timothy 1:15, *[15] The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.*

Remember what Jesus said. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than 99 who are righteous and need no repentance. Do you think Jesus is actually telling us there are people in this world who are righteous, don't need to repent and don't need a Savior? He is not telling you that there are righteous people who don't need Him as a Savior but He is telling you that there are people who don't believe they need a Savior and we need to reach them. When we baptize a child of covenant parents the first vow I ask them is 'do you acknowledge that your covenant child is in need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit' and that's crucial! That is called bad news. You have no good news until you hear the bad news. The parents know they have a promise but they also know their children are helpless and hopeless until we seek them with the Gospel message and the love of Christ. Hallelujah, what a Friend to sinners!

When you go through our Pastor's class the first vow you take to become a member is 'do you acknowledge you are rightly under the judgment of God and you have no hope except for God being rich in His grace and mercy?' That is crucial. The second vow is good news. 'Do you now rest upon Christ alone for your salvation?' Who is going to say 'yes'? It is only those who know they are helpless and hopeless. I am useless in my lostness but there is One who values me, not because He needs me, but because He made me in His image. I bear His image. He has come to save people just like me, sinners. I may be helpless and hopeless but there is Hope and its name is Jesus. He is the only help and hope and that message has now been entrusted to us.

So will that message just stay with us or when we finish reading this will we go light lamps, grab brooms and get on our hands and knees? It has been given to us to take because no one will come to Him until they know they need to come to Him and there is no one else but Him and He is glorious! As the hymn, *Jesus, What a Friend For Sinners* says;

*Jesus! I do now receive Him,
More than all in Him I find.
He hath granted me forgiveness,
I am His, and He is mine.*

We are to take this message to them because Jesus is seeking them by His Spirit through us and He'll not lose a single one of them. He will gain them so the question is not if I don't step up to the plate will it not get done? No! Jesus can use donkeys to get the job done and that's why Presbyterian pastors can be blessed. If we don't step up He will use other people. He will not be thwarted. The question is, will we get the joy of heaven seeing sinners one by one being brought to the Savior to trust in Him?

The Help and the Hope for the lost is a powerful help, a regenerating help and a blessed Hope in which we bring to you. We are to bring it diligently, persistently and with increased intensity. We light lamps. We get on our knees. This is our process. We by the power of the Spirit of God persistently seek the lost to be saved. What's the mark of their salvation? They repent to turn from their sin to the Savior and put their hope in Him.

A friend of mine named Dave was in my wedding. I worked with him in high school and we had become good friends. Both of us lost in the debauchery of sin. I became a Christian and I called him to tell him. Now I realize that I was lighting a lamp when I made that call. With my

testimony I used it to share the Gospel with him. His response to me at the time was ‘Have you gone crazy?’ I said ‘No Dave, I really have come to my senses. Can I come over to talk with you more about it?’ I didn’t realize here that I was actually grabbing a broom. I lit the lamp but that didn’t work so I went over to his house and I brought my wife, Cindy, with me. We started talking with him and his dear wife and he began to ask questions. I was maybe able to answer one out of his seven questions. I realized I needed a lot of help here but I just kept sharing and he kept listening.

Then I asked Dave, ‘Can I just meet with you one on one. I want to go find some answers for you.’ We met later and I wished I could tell you it was a great success but it wasn’t. I look back on it and realized there was personal evangelism and then a little bit of event evangelism as I grabbed a broom, so to speak. Then I followed up personally as I got on my hands and knees to ask God where I could find him personally. I wished I could tell you that he believed and repented but he didn’t. My wife finished college and then I went off to East Carolina to finish my college but then transferred over to Covenant College and then two years later my wife and I were coming home for Christmas and I got a phone call from Dave.

Dave said ‘I heard you were coming home for Christmas and wanted to know if my wife and I could take you and your wife out to eat.’ I said ‘Are you buying?’ He said ‘Yeah, I’m buying!’ So my wife and I met them for lunch and I said to him ‘How are you picking up the tab, because you never picked up the tab and I’m not even sure you gave me a present when I got married so what has happened to you?’ He said ‘My wife and I have become Christians and you were the first one I wanted to tell’ and then he told me how it happened. I wish you could have seen the joy at that table. I can’t imagine what the joy was in heaven. That is where you go in that conversational, personal sharing of the Gospel.

Light the lamp! Take a broom and sweep them up somewhere where someone else may talk with them so to some event where they will hear the Gospel. Then follow up with them one on one. Get on your hands and knees. Search diligently and move into their lives to speak with them. People need to hear this; you’re lost and we have no hope except in Jesus Christ.

Many of the commentators I read all seemed to go to one illustration about seeking something lost, finding it and it’s so valuable that everybody gets joyful. Almost every one of them talk about some dog they lost. I did notice that not a single commentator said something about finding a cat and rejoicing. If you think you lost your cat I want to let you know that you did not lose your cat. Your cat is out there taking applications. You’re not your cat’s master for you are on your cat’s staff. The biggest waste of time you may have taken was the time you took to think of their name for that was just for you. It has nothing to do with them. When you come home, they see you and they might come over but my goal was to be as good as my dogs thought I was. When I would get home my dogs would shake all over, lick and look up at you with the cat in the corner thinking ‘what is that?’

I know I’m offending people who like cats but I’m just wanting to make a point. When I was a kid I had a collie named Prince. Then my wife and I had a dog named Sam which was a sheep dog. Then we had another collie named Beau and then we got a sheltie or a toy collie named Tripper. I loved those dogs. Every one of them would get lost and we would go look for them. We would light a lamp, sweep and do everything we could to find those dogs. I was never embarrassed to go looking for them because we loved that dog, even when the neighbors might have thought ‘That poor man must have a kid name Tripper who won’t stay at home.’ When we found them we rejoiced!

If we value something like that what about those who bear the image of God who are lost in sin? We have the one message they need to hear. Will we not light the lamp and tell them? Do you think this woman valued her coin? You are a treasure to Jesus and when you come to Him He will put you in His treasury forever. And He will rejoice over you.

By the way, the class at Yale that has almost 1300 enrolled in a class on happiness. It is the largest enrollment of students in a class in the world. Here are some of the most privileged students, high achievers flocking to a class on happiness. Why? It is because God made them for joy but it can only be found in Him. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The second thing this is telling us is that these students are telling us about everybody else around us. Everybody else around you, as the song says are “looking for love in all the wrong places.” They go to that class because what they have gone to isn’t working. The sexual revolution will not work. It never has in all of history. Power will not work. Consumption of possessions will not work. Celebrities have the highest rate of suicide and the biggest budget for therapists. It doesn’t work, but there is a Savior. Take to them the One who will make them truly happy and that’s Jesus, the Friend to sinners. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Spend a few moments in prayer and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. Thank You Father for the time spent in Your Word. If you are reading this today and you haven’t come to Him don’t leave this looking for anything else. The cisterns of this world are empty and polluted but there is a Savior. What a Savior, more than all in Him you’ll find for He will grant you forgiveness and His is yours and you are His. If you would like to pray with someone please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 so you come to Him who came to seek you to save you. Lord, for those who have come, when we leave here may we go light the lamp, sweep the room, get on our hands and knees to seek the lost to be saved, for I pray in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Power Point

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

Our God-given Mandate is to stay on our God-given Mission with our God-given Message.

Christ the Shepherd receives and welcomes lost sinners because He came to seek them, find them, and bring them home rejoicing. All who love Him rejoice with Him, and then they join Him.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

The Narrative

The Similarities

The Differences

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Lost sinners cannot and will not repent and come to Christ as Lord and Savior unless He relentlessly seeks them, until they realize their need of Him, and that He loves them.