

# LOST BUT FOUND



## **LOST BUT FOUND**

**Jesus told the lost son (prodigal), the lost sheep, and the lost coin as one, inter-related parable.**

## **LUKE 15:1-32**

**15 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. <sup>2</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."**

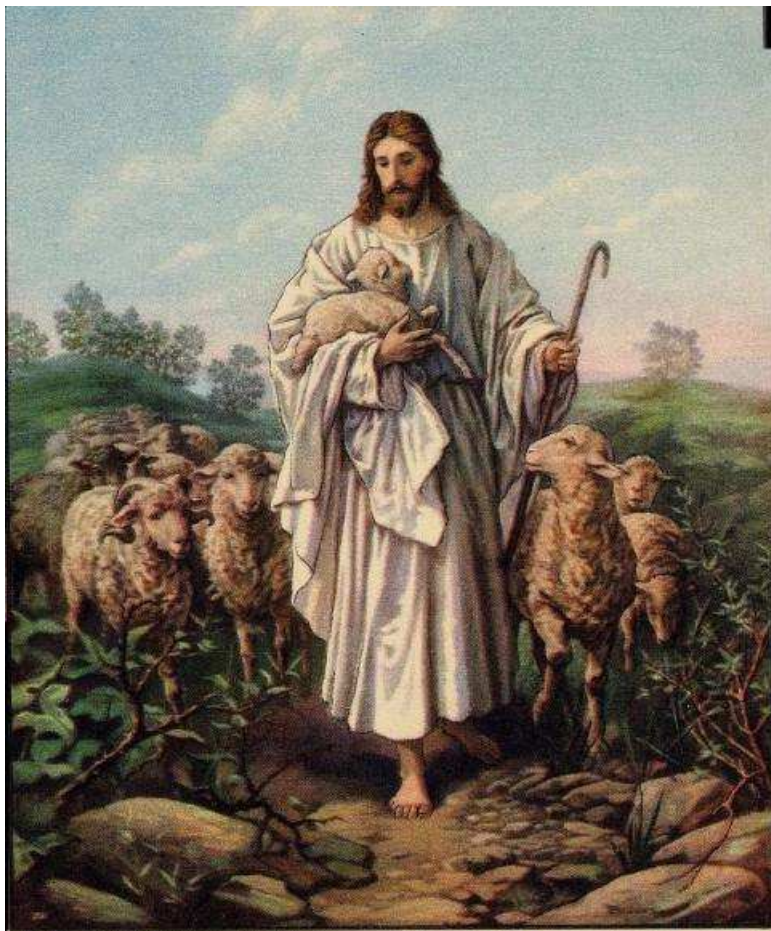
## **The Parable of the Lost Sheep**

**<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders <sup>6</sup> and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ <sup>7</sup> I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.**

# LOOKING FOR THE LOST SHEEP



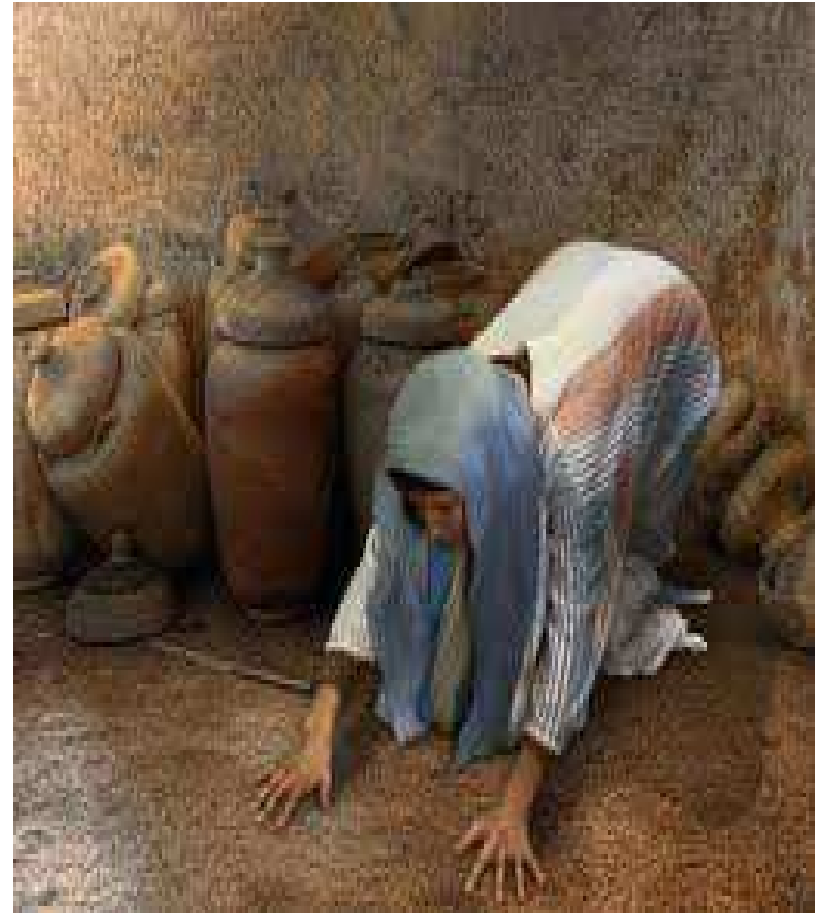
# LOST BUT FOUND



# The Parable of the Lost Coin

**“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?<sup>9</sup> And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’<sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”**

# SEARCHING FOR THE LOST COIN





## **The Parable of the Lost Son**

**<sup>11</sup> Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup> The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.**

**<sup>13</sup> "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. <sup>14</sup> After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup> So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. <sup>16</sup> He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.**

**17**“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! **18** I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: **Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.**’ **20** So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

## **John 10:11-19 (NIV)**

**11** “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **12** The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. **13** The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

**14** “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—**15** just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. **16** I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. **17** The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. **18** No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

**19** The Jews who heard these words were again divided

## **Luke 15:1-32 (NIV)**

### **The Parable of the Lost Coin**

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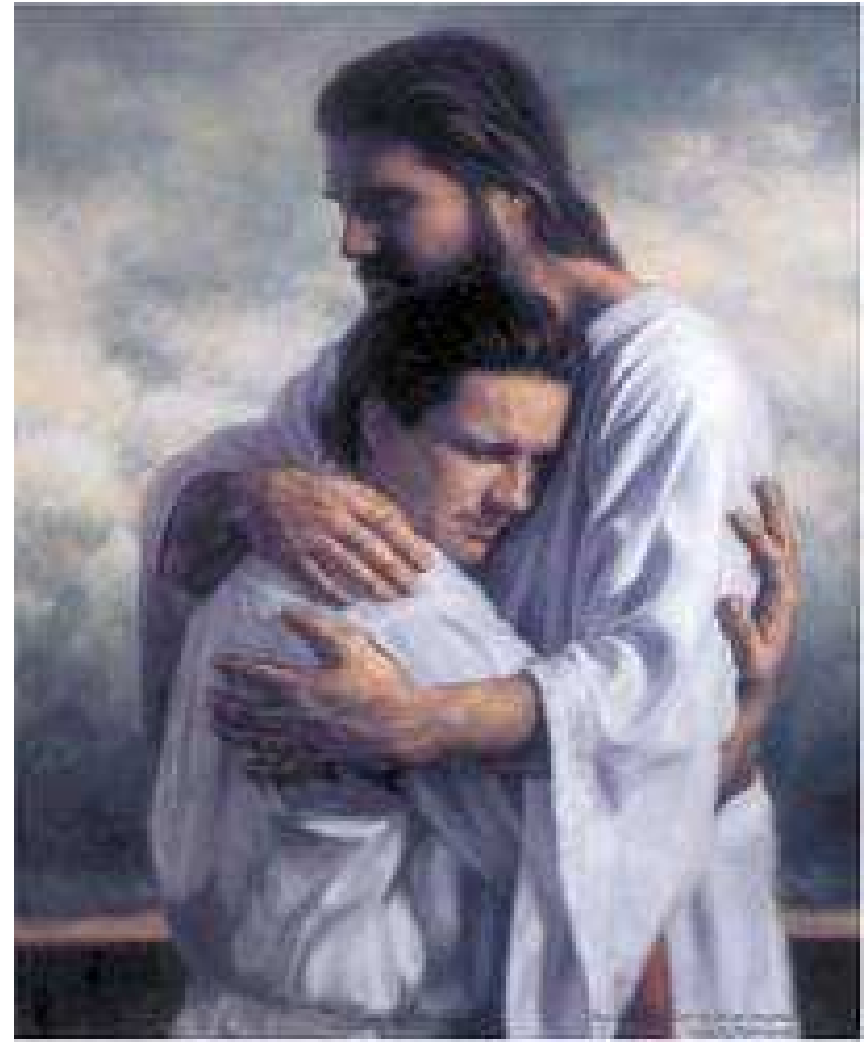
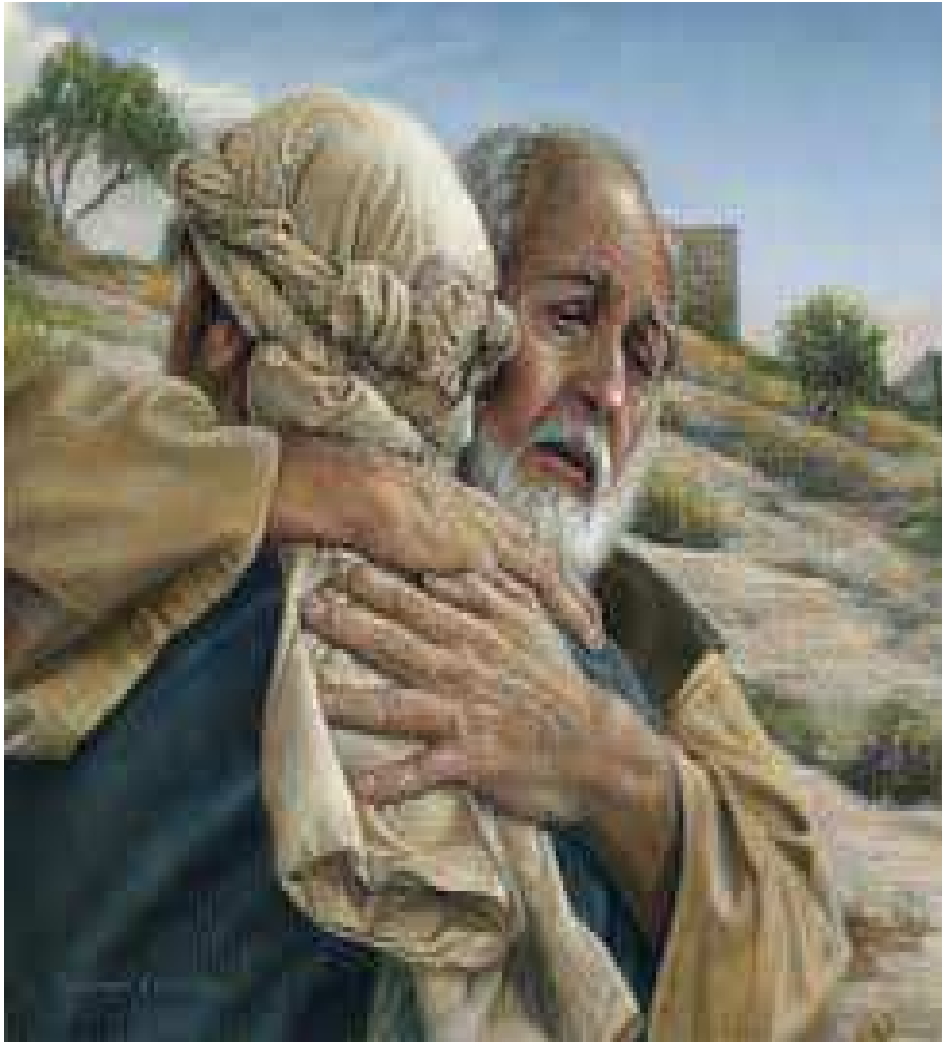
**21** “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’”

**22** “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23** Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. **24** **For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.**”

**25** “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. **27** ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

**28** “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. **29** But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. **30** But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ **31** ” ‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. **32** But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ ”

**FOR THIS SON OF MINE WAS DEAD  
AND IS ALIVE AGAIN**





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In the first parable, **The Lost Sheep**, Jesus compares the audience of Pharisees to unclean shepherds who have lost the sheep (**us**). He continues to describe the good shepherd (**himself**) finding and restoring the sheep (**us**) with joy.

In **The Lost Coin**, Jesus compares the Pharisees to a careless woman who has lost a precious coin. He continues to describe the good woman (**himself**) who searches diligently for and finds the lost coin (**us**).

A sheep may wander off: a coin doesn't!. But the coin loses nothing of its value by being lost. A sheep, however, may be wounded or the sheep's wool damaged. In *The Prodigal Son*, the third parable, the son may be messed up by his experience in the far country.. This may partially explain why Jesus chose an lifeless object to carry a theme. In human terms, "the lost consider themselves worthless or damaged, no hope"—**But not so with Jesus.**

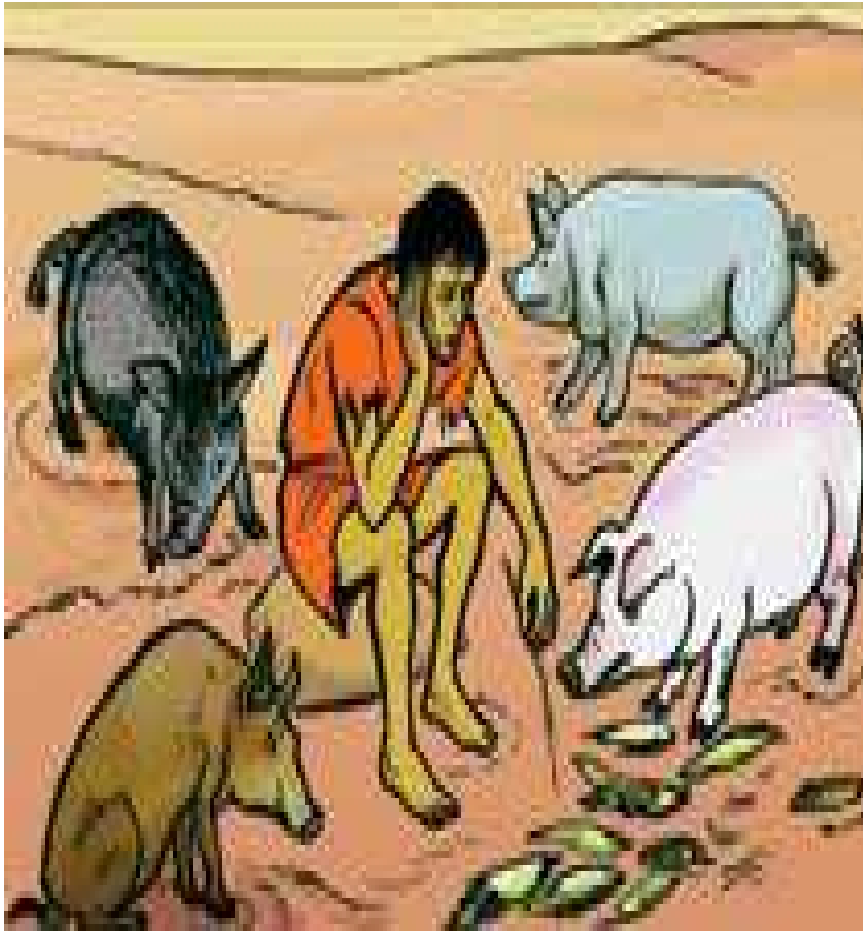
**In all of the three parables, Jesus is responding to the Pharisees' question why he eats with and accepts sinners. Jesus redefines repentance: Jesus compares himself with the good shepherd. A lost sheep can take two to three days to find and restore. When a sheep realizes that it is lost, it freezes and can only "bleat" (cry out). Yet even when the sheep hears the voice of his shepherd, it can't move because it's terrified. This is why the shepherd must carry the sheep back to the fold.**

**In the beginning, the prodigal Son says to his father, “Give me my inheritance” which Jesus’ audience would translate as “I wish you were dead”. Further, the audience would *expect*, the father in response, to angrily slap the son with the backside of his hand. Yet what did the father *actually* do? With a word, God spoke the universe into existence; yet, the father knew no word that would change his son’s heart. The text says that the father divided his life, not just his property, between his sons. This image describes the devastating effect on the father.**

Later, in the far country, the prodigal faces starvation. With his money gone and in the midst of a famine, he finds himself in a pig pen. The text says, "...and no one gave him anything." He experiences two types of starvation: body and soul. As his body starves, he is *driven* to find food. But, in contrast, as he experiences his friends' rejection, his soul becomes *crippled*. Life has lost its meaning.

**Driven to eat, the prodigal remembers that his father has more than enough food. So the prodigal formulates a plan. He will confess to his father that he has sinned and that he'll become a hired hand in order to pay back his debt. Deep down he senses, however, that his plan only addresses his bodily hunger, not his soul's hunger for *never-failing* acceptance. Having experienced rejection first hand, he now knows the deep pain it causes. And, as a result, he is now more aware of the pain that he's caused his father. But to this his crippled soul has no answer.**

# LIFE HAS LOST IT'S MEANING





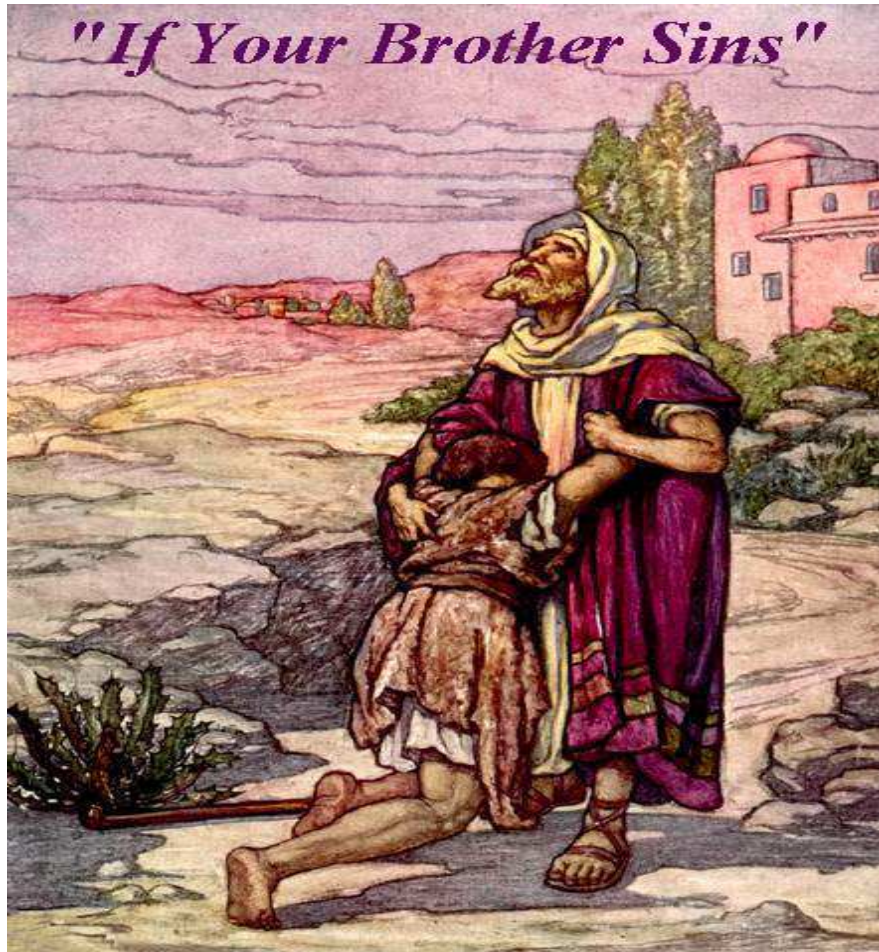
**As the prodigal approaches his village, he unexpectedly sees his father sprinting toward him past on-looking villagers—not with anger on this face but joy. Before the prodigal utters a word of his confession, the father hugs and repeatedly kisses him.**

**Overwhelmed, the prodigal spontaneously utters “I’m not worthy” having experienced the bread of life, grace in its truest form. **The prodigal’s planned words of repentance transformed into an experience of accepting his father’s love.** Joyfully, the father proclaims that his son is alive—perhaps for the first time.**

The father, aware that his son is starving - seeing his tattered clothes and wasted frame, chooses to first address his son's starving soul. The father provides three uneatable things for his son's soul: *Shoes* signifying that he accepts him as a son, not as a hired servant as the prodigal planned; *a robe* indicating how special he is to him; and *a signet ring* empowering him to transact business within the village.

There will be no Jewish tradition that permanently rejects (or shuns) a villager who loses his money among foreigners according to the laws in **Deuteronomy 21**. The father will surely protect his son.

# THE FATHER WILL SURELY PROTECT HIS SON



Throughout this parable and reflected in Jesus' life, the father chooses to suffer himself rather than cause soul pain to others. **This 'substitutional' suffering** can be seen as Jesus protects the woman caught in adultery in John 8:3 The crowd wants to stone the woman but Jesus redirects their anger—and perhaps the woman's anger toward himself. As a result, rather than the woman being stoned, **Jesus becomes a marked man—his teaching and actions sending him to the cross.**

# REPENTANCE THE THEME OF THE PARABLES

- The transformed person better appreciates God's love and increasingly desires God's deep and lasting reconciliation with one another and with the earth.
- It's in the Lost Sheep parable that it becomes clear that the overall theme is about *repentance*. Further, it become clearer in the Lost Sheep that Jesus' mindset is one of *joy*, not of anger or despair.

## **In John 10:11-19**

- **<sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**
- **<sup>12</sup> The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.**
- **<sup>13</sup> The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.**

# I KNOW MY SHEEP

- **14 “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—**
- **15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.**
- **16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also.**
- **They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.**
- **17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.**
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# JESUS' MISSION

- The Pharisees, whom Jesus is addressing, precisely tried keeping themselves righteous and justified before God.
- But Jesus' point is that the Pharisees as leaders had focused so intently on their own self-righteousness that they had lost sight of directing others to God and rejoicing in their being found and restored.
- The Pharisees grumbled and condemned Jesus for going to the sinners. What Jesus was condemned for by the Pharisees, **Jesus considered his mission—a mission he considered an honour and a joy.**



# REPENT



# REPENTANCE THE THEME OF THE PARABLES HERE

- **Costly Grace**: A good woman (**Jesus**) pays a high price to find the lost (**us**). Without her sustained effort the coin will be lost forever.

**Sin**: Humankind is compared to a lifeless coin--lost and nearly hidden on the floor of a dark room.

**Repentance**: The lost coin is completely lifeless and yet embodies repentance.

- But here the total responsibility of the rescue operation rests on the actions of the woman (**Jesus**), Thus again repentance equals being found
- The sheep's bleating provides some help to the shepherd who seeks his lost one. In this case Jesus Christ is a good Shepherd.

**The worth of women**: In the Middle Eastern culture in the time of Jesus a speaker cannot compare a male to a woman without giving offense. The Pharisees thought women were beneath men, but Jesus represents God here as a woman. In the process, Jesus elevates the worth of all women by so closely identifying himself with a woman.

# What does repentance mean?

- **Repentance meant turning from sin, then returning to God. If the sinner would follow these three steps, the sinner could return to God:**
  - (1) confess the sin,
  - (2) believe that Christ is the Son of God
  - (3) not committing sinning again.

Remember, as one parable - Jesus tells the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. At the end of both the lost sheep and the lost coin, the text says, **“There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents...”** Unexpectedly repentance is the theme.

- But even more vexing is what did the sheep do that resembles repentance?
- What did the coin do that resembles repentance?
- In the prodigal son, it's not surprising this same theme continues. So what did the son do that resembles repentance?

**Clearly, neither the sheep nor the coin plays any active role in their own restoration.**

**It's the saving action of the shepherd who finds and restores the sheep.**

**It's the saving action of the lady who finds the coin.**

**And in the lost son, it's the father's costly demonstration of unexpected love that restores the relationship.**

**Repentance is therefore redefined as “accepting being found,” a response to the saving actions of the father.**

**Reflecting on the prodigal son parable where Jesus' costly demonstration of unexpected love, his long suffering, not only creates a relationship bridge for us—but he crosses that bridge and joyfully carries us home.**

**The Good Shepherd image may more clearly show the heart of God and better explain the need for the cross—a picture that weds both a good and joyful shepherd (**Jesus**) and a previously terrified sheep (**us**) WRAPPED around his shoulders as he JOYFULLY goes about his mission of restoring his sheep.**

**LUKE15: 7,10,24.**

**7** "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

**10** "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

**24** "for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

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