

The Parables of Jesus

- The Lost Piece of Silver

(Luke 15:8-10)

This parable is found only in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus and His disciples along with the religious leaders and the “publicans and other sinners” were in or around Capernaum. Jesus was preparing to take His final journey to Jerusalem where He would be arrested and crucified. This

parable is the second in a “trilogy” of parables in this time of teaching concerning Jesus’ mission to the Jewish people and restoring them back into relationship with the Father. The first parable was the “Parable of the Lost Sheep” and the third being the “Parable of the Prodigal Son.”

Even though these parables are about the lost sinners of Israel, Jesus is actually directing these parables to both the religious leaders and His disciples. It was directed to the religious leaders because of their failure to do what they were entrusted and priests to do by God. They were not caring and tending to God’s people as they should. They became self-righteous and looked down upon the publicans and other sinners. They failed to realize that they were in the same boat with the publicans and sinners – they just didn’t realize it because of their self-righteousness.

Jesus was also speaking to His disciples. They would soon to be the ones entrusted by Jesus and the Father to tend to their “flock” and bring back into the fold those who were “lost.” Jesus wanted to make sure that His disciples would never lose sight of the importance of being entrusted to that call. Jesus, through showing the failure of the religious leaders, was teaching and warning His disciples to not get caught up in the same incorrect attitude of heart and self-righteousness that the religious leaders had concerning those who had strayed from the Father.

Luke’s Gospel makes this very clear as we read the first two verses in chapter 15. In Luke 15:1, we read that after Jesus’ teaching about what “the cost” of being a true disciple of His really meant and how it would affect the lives of anyone choosing to truly follow Him, we see that strangely enough it was the publicans and sinners who were drawing nearer to Him. (*“...Then drew near to him all the publicans and sinners to hear him.”*) In Luke 15:2, we see the Pharisees and scribes that were present were “offended” by this and began to murmur among themselves. (*“And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”*)

Instead of being happy that the “publicans and sinners” were possibly being drawn back to the faith, they were “offended.” Their jealousy of Jesus and their own self-righteousness blinded their eyes to what the heart of God truly was and blinded them in seeing how much the Father loved His people which by the way, believe it or not, included the religious leaders. Jesus was trying to expose their incorrect attitude of heart and at the same time trying to teaching them, as well as His disciples, what the correct attitude of heart should be towards these “publicans and sinners.” It was to be the same heart that He and the Father have.

In Luke’s Gospel, as we had previously mentioned. This parable was the second of three parables concerning the Father’s heart and Jesus’ heart towards those who would seem to be lost if not sought after. Jesus chose to spend time on this topic. He gave three parables on it. By doing so we can truly get the importance that Jesus had placed on this particular aspect of what the correct attitude of heart should be by those who He entrusts His people to. This “attitude of heart” towards the lost would also be soon extended to all people – Jew and Gentile, male and female.

The Parable of the "Lost Piece of Silver"

- Luke 15:8-10 - *"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."*

The concept and message of this parable is basically the same as the parable that Jesus gave first in this "trilogy" of parables which was the parable of the "Lost Sheep." We know that Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees and scribes. He was directing these parables towards them and their incorrect attitude of heart towards those that were considered "lost" and have strayed away from their God.

As we delve into this parable it is important to remember the audience who was listening to Jesus. We must remember that all of the people listening were from the oriental or we can say eastern culture. Today, it is referred to as middle-eastern. Therefore, to get a better understanding of what Jesus was saying and the impact it would be making on His listeners, we need to "listen" to this parable and hear it in the same way those who were there would hear it. We need to put aside our "western" ways of thinking. Here's what I mean.

We need to begin with the main "characters" of the parable – the woman and the 10 pieces of silver. In the Eastern culture the ten pieces of silver would have been a gift from her husband. These 10 pieces of silver were not coins from the monetary system of the time. They would be pieces that were about the size of our modern day quarter. Most likely one side would bear the symbol (coat of arms) of the husband's family and the other side would bear the year that the coins were made.

The 10 pieces were most likely not expensive, but, it carried a very deep sentimental value. It represented her place in the family of her husband. Therefore, it held an important meaning to both the woman and her husband. On very special occasions the woman would hang these 10 pieces of silver in her hair. Because it had such sentimental value, the woman was very careful when wearing the ten pieces of silver. The reason being was that the consequence of losing one was very harsh.

None of the ten pieces could be replaced. If the wife were to lose one, her husband would "banish" her from the house until she found it. He wouldn't divorce her but because of the "weightiness" of the consequence, it made caring for and keeping watch over where these coins were of the utmost importance to the woman. The "tradition" of the time believed that if you lost even one piece of the ten, then you would have lost God's blessings as well.

The importance of these 10 pieces of silver can also be seen in the fact that if the husband died before his wife, the ten pieces of silver were to be returned to her husband's family. She could keep any and all other jewelry, but the ten pieces of silver went back to his family. They were to be always kept in the husband's family.

Returning to our parable, one of the pieces of silver was "lost." However, we know that the woman lost it "in the house." The pieces of silver had to be somewhere "in the house." She looked all over for it. She lit a candle and swept the house clean. To her great joy, she ended up finding the "lost" piece.

Then this woman does what seems to be a strange thing. She goes out to her friends and neighbors and invites them to rejoice with her in finding the "lost piece of silver." Why would she do that? This would seem a strange thing for her to do. No one was in the house with her. No one knew that the coin was lost but her. Yet, she openly admitted that she lost the coin to those who knew her and she invited them to rejoice with her once she found it.

Through this parable, Jesus was teaching the Pharisees and scribes, as well as His disciples, what the correct attitude of heart should be by those whom God entrusts with His people. As we mentioned, the "woman" in this parable was really referring to the religious leadership of the Jewish people and what their attitude of heart should have been towards those who had wandered from the faith and were lost. We know that Jesus was referring to those Jewish people who were "lost" because He states that they were "lost in the house." The "house" is referring to the "House of Israel," the Jewish people as a whole. The one "lost piece of silver" was referring to even just one Jewish person who was "lost" in their sin.

The Jewish people were entrusted to the religious leadership. Instead of driving them even further away with the additional traditions and self-righteousness, they should have been as the woman in the parable. They should have been going out and "finding" the lost and bringing them back to their God. Unfortunately, the religious leaders became "lost" and blinded to the truth. Therefore, they could not perform their original function.

Jesus was telling them that they were entrusted by the "husband" of the house, God the Father, to keep the "pieces of silver" - to keep and watch over the Jewish people for Him. Jesus was saying to the Jewish Leadership that every one of these "lost ones," any one of the "publicans and sinners" who were "lost" in their sin, should be considered so valuable to them that they would search high and low and do whatever it takes to find that "lost soul." It was so important to the woman to be pleasing and to bless her husband by keeping and caring for each piece of silver because she knew how much it meant to her husband.

The main point that Jesus was trying to get across to the religious leaders is found as He states that the woman went to her neighbors and the other town's people and asked them to rejoice with her because she found the coin. Wasn't this strange? After all, no one else knew about her situation of losing that one piece of silver. Instead, we see that the woman admitted her fault without being prompted to do so. It was within her heart to do whatever it took to keep those pieces of silver safe. It was all about the "lost piece of silver" and not her. It should be all about the "lost souls" and not about the Pharisees and scribes.

Jesus was telling the Religious Leaders to admit the error of their ways, admit the incorrect attitudes of their hearts and repent. He was telling them that it was okay to do so. Instead of being afraid what others may think, their main concern should now be that the "one lost coin," the one lost soul, the publican or sinner, would no longer be lost but would be "found." If they did repent, Jesus was actually saying that the people would not only rejoice in the lost sinners being "found" but that they would rejoice in the leadership's in their own repentance and being "found" themselves

As He was teaching the Pharisees and scribes this most important lesson, He was also teaching it to His disciples. They would soon be the ones entrusted to keep those who would come to believe on Him. They were also going to be entrusted to look for and find those who were lost in their sin. They were to go forth and find that "lost piece of silver," that "lost soul" and bring them back into the "Household of faith" whether Jew or Gentile.

Jesus was teaching that the attitude of heart of a disciple of His was to be one of compassion and great desire to see not one "lost soul" stay in that lost condition. This is the heart of the Father as it states in 2Peter3:9, *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* Those who have the correct "attitude of heart," heed this teaching and do it, would find that their heart would be one that would rejoice along with *"the angels in heaven"* when one who was lost in their sin is brought back into the "Household of faith," where they belong.