

UTAH SUPPLEMENT

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Finding the Lost

Luke 15:1-10 New International Version (NIV)

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ “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? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ 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”.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins^[a] and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

We humans sometimes reduce God to little more than a benevolent force or presence in the universe. That is not the God that Paul knew. In the past Paul persecuted Christians but God came looking for Paul until Paul turned around and came home to God. Listen to these parables and you will discover Jesus describing how God’s love for us is active and unrelenting. God comes searching for us the way God did with Paul, the way the shepherd and the woman went looking for what was valuable to them. This is why Jesus spent so much of his time, his love, his healing and teaching on sinners.

Perhaps you have had times when you were discouraged, or weary, or lost, or had times that were difficult and dark. And in the middle of that perhaps you had someone reach out to you offering hope, love and encouragement. If you have had that then you know why being found, being valued is worth rejoicing over.

Maybe you have had some kind of an encounter with the Holy, a moment that was lit up with God’s presence. Those times might have come when you were in prayer, in nature, or in church. The hope is that you have had at least one utterly convincing moment in your life in which you know – down deep – that God knows you and loves you. Those are moments of grace, and like it was for Paul. Grace can turn a life around. It can turn *your life* around. When you have those moments of grace, when sinners like all of us turn again and again and open our lives to God, when we know I once was lost and now I am found, well there is rejoicing among people on earth and angels in heaven.

Christianity, at its heart, is about this: It is being loved and found by God. It is about a God who is seeking you, and finding you and carrying you back home. It is about a joy so great that even God shouts, about you and me, “Come rejoice with me, for this one was lost, but now is found.”

Edited by Jay N Mitchell, Deputy Grand Commander