

Parables of Luke – part 2

Remember that Parables use common situation to make a powerful spiritual point, but common sense isn't common—we need background to correctly interpret these.

--An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

--Central theme is always the King and His Kingdom – if our interpretation diverges then we have missed it.

--The interpretation must have made sense to original hearers or we do not have right conclusion.

Lk. 15 Parables about the heart of the Father

--Would you consider the heart of the Father an important thing to know?

--Would you consider the heart of the Father toward sinners an important thing to know?

--We are given 3 classes of sinners that God saves and a fourth that can't be saved because they think that God owes salvation to them.

One sure thing to keep you from being saved is to think you don't need it!

--**VV. 1-2** –There are going to be people in heaven that you would never expect and others in Hell that you would never expect:

--Remember, these people think more like Hindus than Christians.

--NO one there thought the Pharisees would miss heaven and no one thought that tax collectors would ever see heaven.

--Jesus is about to turn their thinking on its head.

--Do you know the heart of the Father? He's hunting sinners!, He's watching for them, He longs for them—we know that because of what Jesus teaches us through these parables.

1. The Average Sinner – Like a sheep – Knows some things but basically dumb about the things of God.

--They got themselves lost, but really didn't know better.

--What is God's attitude and heart toward a person like this? He loves them and will go after them.

--Such important lessons here about God's heart for the individual. He's searching for them.

--These first two are "Of course you would" stories– 100 sheep and lose one, leave the 99 and find the one—of course you would! These are precious, like pets; income producing but also like family.

--**VV. 3-7** – They saw how a shepherd would do this, but never saw God doing this.

--They did not see God as loving, gracious or merciful—only rigid, distant and unforgiving.

--99 persons who need no repentance? = Do you know or have you known a single person who has needed no repentance? There is no such thing!

--So, there are sinners God rejoices over and sinners that keep God from rejoicing.

2. The Mindless Sinner – Like a coin that has no power over what happens to it, sinners but their lostness is really someone else's decision or carelessness.

--**VV. 8-10** – "Of course she would" = Understand, in this culture a woman had no way to earn this money back.

--Ten coins were worth ten days wages apiece – Why are we valuable? Why do you pick up a dollar on the street? Is it really valuable, or have we assigned it value in our society?

--We are valuable because God assigns us value—He decides that we are –We do not have intrinsic value – God assigns the value from within Himself.

Sort of like a picture of a loved one; anybody else who does not know them might throw such a picture away because it has not intrinsic value. But you assign it value from within yourself.

3. The Intentional Sinner – the one who knows better and does it anyway.

--The first two weren't really rebels, just people who are separated from God because of sin and have Savior who hunts them.

--The first two are "Of course you would" stories, the last one is "Of course you wouldn't" -- A father would never accept back a son like this in that culture.

--This is really a story of a "Man who had two sons" V. 11

--We tend to focus on the prodigal but it's actually the Father who is the main focus – He's the One that we are misinformed about.

--V. 12 – Of course you wouldn't do this in this culture – you would never shame your father and your ancestors in this way. Of course, a father would never do what this father does.

This underscores the issue of free will, the son would have had no free will if this were a true story that took place back then. He would have been disciplined and not allowed to have his money under any circumstances.

--On the other hand, God respects our "no" as well as our "yes" – there are a lot of rebels out there who eat, have jobs, breath God's air and eat God's food all the while are shaking their fist at Him.

--V. 13 – He liquidates lands, animals, and other things in just a few days; it was a "fire sale": he got far less for it than what it was worth.

--He devalues what was passed down to him—we may see that in our culture, but that did not happen in that culture.

He's fully aware that what he's doing is completely against the rules, but he doesn't care and tries to distance himself as far from what represents those rules as possible.

--Have you ever known a person like that? Have you ever been a person like that? (how did you get here?)

--Ladies and Gentlemen, God loves sinners, even the ones who do shameful things and who shame God in the process.

--We tend to have mercy on the previous two lost cases: mindless and ignorant, but the fully aware and yet rebellious we hope gets what he deserves.

--VV.14-16 – Rabbi proverb: "When the Israelites are reduced to Karob pods, then they repent"

--He has completely shamed and defiled himself and has become completely unredeemable in the eyes of his culture.

--V.17 a – He's not like the previous two who had no real sense to begin with, they became defiled, lost, separated but in ignorance—he did with full knowledge of the senses he was willingly leaving – Rom. 1:21-22.

--VV. 17-20a – His only chance of living! His hope is to be a hired laborer of his father's who lives from day to day—slaves had it far better because they were provided for and had security in their living conditions.

--This is the only way that he can gain respect: he's headed back to a father who would not allow him back into his home and a society that would always reject him—he will be the community whipping boy so that he, his father and the society and its norms can regain their honor

--He will be the example that all the other parents will use to say, "you don't want to turn out like him."

--He would not be allowed in his father's house for years or maybe never! II Sam. 14:24

--He would never be redeemed but the society would redeem its respect through his tortured existence.

What happens next is the final “Of course you wouldn’t moment” **V.20b**

1. Fathers never ran anywhere for anyone or any reason. That required you to gather your robes around your waist, which means you would see his legs—you only saw the legs of servants in this culture. It would have been very shameful for him.

2. If you did not allow the son to receive his well-deserved shame, you took the shame upon yourself!

--The father would have lost his standing in the eyes of this culture. (understand, he’s still worth millions and still owns all that he does, but society thinks he’s shameful from here on)

--The father doesn’t care about the shame or what society thinks.

--The heart of the parable is the heart of the father: verbs— “**felt compassion, ran, embraced, kissed.**” (aka – unconditional love – what does unconditional mean??)

--**VV. 21-24** – Reinstated as a full son, based on what? *Repentance.* “**that no one should perish but all should come to repentance**”

--Who paid the price for his reinstatement and bore the shame for the remainder of his life? The father.

--A relationship with the father was all he needed to reinstate him.

Fourth Sinner --- the older brother who thinks the Father owes him his position and stuff.

Vv. 25-30.

--Older son thought the father owes him these things; the older son saw himself as a slave to the father; the older son has no concept of grace and unconditional love.

--The older son represents works religion wherever you find it: “**I’ve been a good person, I’m better than most, I’m better than him, not realizing that your relationship to God is strictly by grace not works**”

--The father didn’t have to do or leave anything to older son, it was strictly based on love and relationship that he had anything as well.

--He’s never reconciled to the father, he’s beyond the father’s reach because he doesn’t want to be reconciled; he’s lost but he doesn’t want to be found.

--**VV. 31-32** – “We had to rejoice”? I wasn’t aware that God had to do anything! He only has to do what He decides He has to do.