

Parables of Grace
“Lost... then Found”
(Luke 15:1-10)

The Setting (15:1,2)

Audience – tax collectors – cheater
 – “sinners” – immoral person

Accusation – Pharisees & religious leaders on the attack
 – Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them
 - Feeding them – sign of generosity
 - Eating with them - unthinkable

The Parables *(Two stories teaching a similar “GRACE” theme)*

1. “LOST” SHEEP (15:3-7)

- About Shepherds
 - a noble O.T. symbol → Moses, Kings – Ezekiel 34
→ God – Psalm 23
 - considered low class in N.T.
 - Pharisees offended when Jesus called them shepherds
- About flocks - 100 sheep
 - a wealthy farmer able to hire a shepherd
 - a village flock with rotating shepherds
 - avoid blame for negligence
- About the story
 - One sheep lost / 99 left – diligent search to find a sheep that could never find its way back on its own
 - Great rejoicing - when found and when restored

2. “LOST” COIN (15:8-10)

- Using a woman in story challenged Pharisees’ social order
- Peasant villager wore dowry on necklace – lost one tenth of wealth
- Panic but painstaking search in house – with lamp and sweeping hard earth floor

The Meaning – THEMES of GRACE

1. BEING “LOST”

- fear, confusion
- blame
- a ‘spiritual’ reality (Romans 3:10)
“There is no one righteous, not even one.”

2. BEING “SOUGHT”

- relentless, persistent search
- a ‘spiritual’ reality (Matthew 9:13)
“...for I have not come to call the (self)-righteous, but sinners.”

3. BEING “FOUND”

- relief, joy, “party-time”
- a ‘spiritual’ reality (Luke 15:7)
“...more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents”

The kingdom of God is not a subdivision for the self-righteous or for those who lay claim to private visions of doubtful authenticity and boast they possess the state secret of their salvation. No, as Eugene Kennedy notes, “it is for a larger, homelier, and less self-conscious people who know they are sinners because they have experienced the yaw and pitch of moral struggle.” The men and women who are truly filled with light are those who have gazed deeply into the darkness of their own imperfect existence.

Brennan Manning, the furious longing of God. p.32