

The lost coin

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[0 : 00] Let's turn to the Gospel according to Luke chapter 15 and reading verses 8 to 10. Luke's Gospel chapter 15 at verse 8.

Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, does 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 neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found a piece which I have lost. Likewise I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

We are looking at this chapter with its three parables, and our first study was a general introduction to the chapter.

And in that general introduction we saw that the three parables form a unity. In other words, that the basic lesson of the three parables is the same.

[1 : 04] And that basic lesson is the yearning love of God over the lost. And the joy of God in finding the lost sinner.

And we also saw that the parables are complementary. In other words, they are speaking about different aspects of the same work. The first parable is speaking to us about the work of the son in seeking the lost.

And the parable of the prodigal son is speaking to us of the father waiting to receive the son. And we believe that this middle parable, the one we are looking at today, is speaking to us about the work of the Holy Spirit.

And so they are complementary. And we also saw that there was a sequence in them, in that the joy, or the sense of joy, is increased in each parable.

As there is first of all the recovery of one in a hundred, and then there is the recovery of one in ten, and then there is the recovery of one in two. And last week we looked at the first parable, the parable of the lost sheep.

[2 : 16] And in that parable we saw the sheep as symbolic of the lostness of man. How? Because a man has strayed away from God, he is naturally prone to wander.

He is vulnerable. He is stupid. He is defenseless. And we saw the shepherd as the symbol of the seeking savior. How in his love for the lost, he goes out to find the one sheep that is missing from the flock.

And how that love of his is a distinguishing love, a definite love, and an inexplicable love. And then we also saw how the joy in finding that lost sheep is symbolic of the joy in heaven over one sinner repenting.

Well, we move this week on to the second parable. And that is the parable of the lost coin, or of the lost silver. And this parable is very simple.

It's about a woman who had ten pieces of silver, ten coins, and she lost one. We don't know how she lost it or why she lost it. But she lost this coin.

[3 : 28] And she lights a candle and begins to sweep the house and to seek diligently for this coin she has lost. And remember that a house in Palestine was completely different from the kind of house that we're used to.

It would be a smallish place and there would be no proper windows in it. There might be just a slit in the stonework, as it were, or whatever it was, for letting in light.

But there would be no proper window, as we know it, in that dwelling house. And also we must remember that the floor would be a dust floor or a floor of ground.

It wouldn't be a floor like we know in our houses today. And so therefore we must remember that when we're thinking of this parable. That the conditions in which this coin was lost would be very

different from the conditions that we know in our houses today.

And that's why the woman had to light a candle and she had to sweep the house. She had to sweep amongst the dust and amongst the furniture in order to find this coin that was lost.

[4 : 43] And when she found it, she called in her friends and her neighbors to celebrate the fact that she found this coin that was lost. Well, this is the story.

And perhaps the symbolism is not so clear in this parable as in the other two. And we always say that a parable must have one main theme, one main thrust, as it were.

And therefore we are not to go into all the details of a parable. We are not to find something in every detail. In other words, we are not to find any significance, I hope, in the fact of the woman sweeping the house with a broom.

There's perhaps nothing significant about that, but it's just part of the story. Yet, nevertheless, because of the situation of this parable, and because we believe that the Savior was not just repeating the same thing three times over, and the first parable speaks about the work of the Son, and the third parable speaks about the work of the Father, it would not be surprising if there was not a reference here to the work of the Holy Spirit.

It wouldn't be altogether unexpected if this parable is referring to the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. So, let us look at this parable in the same way as we looked at the first one.

[6 : 08] And let us first of all think of the lost coin as symbolic of the lostness of man. The lost coin as symbolic of the lostness of man.

The lost sheep we spoke about was a sheep that was lost by nature, and it was the sheep's nature to go astray. It was lost naturally, you might say.

The sheep follows its nature, and its nature is to wander. And so it is with a sinner. He wanders by nature. He goes astray so easily.

But you see, that doesn't give the whole picture of the sinner. The fact that the sinner is prone to go astray is only one aspect of his lostness.

And even in his parable of the prodigal son, the fact that the son rebels against his father, and goes away from his father's house, well, that's only another aspect of his lostness, or of the lostness of man.

[7 : 12] And here in this parable of the lost silver, we have another symbolic picture of the lostness of man. Because the significant thing about the coin is that it is lifeless, that it cannot move.

You see, in the case of the sheep, it can bleat. You can hear its cries. In the case of the son, the case of the prodigal son, he can, a reason, he can say to himself, as he does say to himself, how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. He can reason. But you see, the coin cannot do any of these things. It's lifeless. It's got no hope of recovery in itself.

It's helpless. And this is giving us a picture of man in his lostness. We read that passage in Ephesians, where it says, You have he quickened who are dead in trespasses and sins.

And that is an aspect, you see, of man's lostness. He cannot lift a finger to save himself. Man's total depravity. Man's total inability to save himself.

[8 : 30] That's the picture we have before us in this parable. What our Lord said in John's Gospel, No man can come to me except the father which has sent me draw him.

Ye will not come to me that ye might have life. And that is the picture we have here, of man who is dead in trespasses and sins. Just like a coin.

A coin can do nothing to discover itself. It can't draw attention to itself. It can't do anything to save itself. It must lie there until it is found.

Well, that is true of the sinner in one sense. He is lost in that sense. He is dead. He is lifeless. He cannot save himself. And that, you see, is why the work of the Holy Spirit is indispensable.

There's no way a sinner is going to return to God without the work of the Holy Spirit. There's no way a sinner will come back. And that's why it's so important to take this parable in conjunction with the parable of the prodigal son.

[9 : 38] Because if you went on the parable of the prodigal son, you would think that the son, on his own initiative, returned to the father's house. But he didn't. No sinner will return to the father's house unless the Holy Spirit works in his heart.

And because the sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, he is lost in that sense. And he's in the dark. He's lying in the dark.

And he loves the darkness rather than the light. And that is the condition, or one aspect of the condition, of the sinner's lostness. He is dead.

And he is in the dark. And that is where he is. And until his spirit finds him and brings him out of that condition, he cannot be saved. But remember, there's two things that are important when you think of a sinner in that condition.

There's two things, I think, and I hope we're not pushing the story too far. When we say this, that that coin is valuable. That that coin is still silver, even though it's lost.

[10:47] It's got the king's image on it. It's got the king's head on it. And that's true with a sinner, even though he's lost. He's valuable. There's a value attached to him.

What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And that sinner, you see, is valuable to God. That sinner has the divine image stamped on him.

He's got the divine likeness stamped on him. And therefore, although he's lost, he's valuable to God. And he's got the divine likeness, or he's got traces of the divine image that he had by creation. And therefore, he's valuable. And then another thing you've got to remember about this lost sinner is that he's still in the house. He's still in the house. The woman knew that this coin was still in the house.

And therefore, it was within reach of mercy. It was within reach of being found. And that's true with the sinner, you see. Even though he's dead in trespasses and sins, he's still in the room of mercy, and he's still on praying ground.

[11:58] He's still within the influences of the gospel. And that's especially true of sinners who sit under the preaching of the word week by week. They're under the influences of the gospel.

And that's a great privilege. And that's a great thing as far as the likelihood of being found is concerned. Because they're still within the house. They're still within that area of search where the woman knows the coin is lost.

And therefore, there's hope of recovery. So, although there's this lostness, there's these things we must bear in mind. Well, that's the coin as symbolic of the lost sinner.

But then, we also say secondly, that the woman with the light here is a symbol of the church and of the Holy Spirit.

The woman with the light who is searching for the coin is symbolic of the church and of the Holy Spirit. And why do we combine these two together?

[13:02] Well, we combine them together because scripture combines them together. The church in the Old Testament and in the New Testament is compared to the bride of Christ.

The bride of Christ, she is referred to as a woman. Come and I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb, says John in Revelation.

And the church is therefore quite often in scripture referred to as a woman, as the bride of Christ. But also, the church is referred to in scripture as a community that is a light.

It is a community of people through which God's light is revealed to the world. It's a community of people that reveals the light of God to the world.

And it's a combination of these two pictures in Revelation where we see the lampstand as referring to the church. and we see the lamp as referring to the seven spirits of God.

[14:08] So you see, the church is a lampstand and the lamp itself is the spirit. And the church is holding out the light to the world. It's holding out the spirit.

It's revealing the spirit of God to the world because the spirit dwells in the church. And you have this combination then of the spirit and the bride.

The spirit and the woman. And they're beautifully combined at the end of the book of Revelation where indeed the last invitation in the whole of scripture to the sinner is this.

The spirit and the bride say come. The spirit and the bride say come. The spirit of God is saying to the sinner come.

And the church, the bride is saying to the sinner come. Come before it is too late. This is the last invitation you've got. The spirit and the bride say come.

[15:04] And you see, the reason is that the spirit is always working through means. He's always working through means. And he's working through the church.

And he's working through Christian people. He worked through the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Could they have converted 2,000 people in their own strength?

Think of what they were before the day of Pentecost. They were cowards. They were fighting men. And then they were suddenly transformed as the spirit came.

And thousands were swept into the kingdom of God. And you see, the spirit was working through the church. The spirit was working through the apostles. And all these people were converted. It was the wind of the spirit that came through and swept away all the dirt and all the dust and found these people on the day of Pentecost. And therefore, you see, the church and the spirit are combined.

[16:06] And the church has the spirit and the spirit is working through the church. And that is what we believe is here. The woman with the lamp is the church with the Holy Spirit.

And that is the recovering work of the spirit. And it's a definite work. Through the church, the spirit recovers the lost sinner. The spirit goes after the lost sinner.

The spirit knows where the lost sinner is. He knows exactly where that sinner is. He may be in the darkest corner and he may be the dearest sinner on earth.

But the spirit goes after that sinner and the spirit finds that sinner and the spirit brings that sinner to the light. And that the spirit brings that sinner back to his true owner.

And therefore, the spirit is doing a work of recovery. And his power is irresistible. His work is effective. He doesn't fail in his work.

[17:10] He makes a people willing in the day of his power. He quickens into life. He quickens the sinner and he brings the sinner to life. And he returns the sinner to the sinner's rightful owner.

He returns the sinner to God. And so that sinner, that lost coin, takes its place in the church of God. It takes its place in the community of God. And so we see here the work of the Holy Spirit, which is indispensable to the salvation of any sinner because the spirit must do the work.

We cannot do it. Not the most eloquent of men can do it. Only the spirit working with the word, only the spirit working with the church, can save sinners and bring them out of their lost condition.

And then the third thing we have here is this celebration that the woman had with her friends and neighbors as symbolic of the joy of the sinner being found, the joy in heaven.

[18:22] Rejoice with me for I have found my lost coin. And one in tenth, one in tenth, a tenth of her savings must have meant quite a lot to this woman.

The fact that she had lost one tenth of her savings was a considerable loss to her. It was a greater loss than having lost one sheep, like the shepherd, one sheep in a hundred.

But this woman had lost one coin in ten. So she thought it was worth a celebration. She thought it was worth having a party over.

And so she calls in her friends and her neighbors to celebrate with her and to celebrate and to be thankful for the recovery of this lost coin.

And so we are told in the same way there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. And more than one comment here has pointed out the rather strange reference here to the fact that it is joy in the presence of the angels of God it doesn't say joy in the heart of the angels but it says joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents and who is in the presence of the angels of God?

[19:46] Well it is God himself who is in the presence of the angels of God because these angels surround the throne of God and therefore in the presence of the angels is God himself.

so this rejoicing is in the heart of God himself. He is rejoicing over the recovery of the lost sinner. There is joy in the heart of God over the sinner that repents.

And this is consistent with the teaching of scripture everywhere. God says he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. As surely as I live I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Why will you die O house of Israel? God is longing to see men saved. God is longing to see people recover from sin.

He is longing to see them coming back from the path of rebellion and sin and wickedness and coming back to the rightful owner and it rejoices his heart to see a sinner restored to him.

[20:56] And that's his longing and that's his desire. And he sees the fulfillment of all his love and he sees the fulfillment of the sacrifice of Christ as the sinner comes back and therefore there is rejoicing in God's heart as well as in the angels over every sinner that repents.

And let us never forget that. The joy that is God's when one sinner turns forward when one sinner is restored when one person is converted from the error of their ways that is the joy that is in God's heart.

Well what do we learn from today's parable? What do we learn as far as our task as believers and our church is concerned?

Well we learn this and it's an important lesson for our day because there are so few in our churches today who even accept that they are lost sinners.

sinners. And if you don't believe that you're a lost sinner then there's no need of a gospel or a saviour that saves. If you're not a lost sinner there's no need for a gospel and there's no need for a saviour and especially there's no need for a saviour who does everything or a God who does everything as these parables teach us.

[22 : 28] That's what it shows us and surely this is the great impasse that we have in a church today. If there's no sin then there's no need and there's no need of a saviour and therefore we don't need the gospel we don't need salvation.

But the picture that is put before us here is of a sinner who is entirely lost helplessly lost hopelessly lost but you say well if you're going to preach that to sinners and preach that to people today surely you're going to drive them to despair surely you're going to make them despair of ever being saved if they cannot save themselves.

Well surely that's the best thing that could happen to people because if you begin to despair of yourself then you'll begin to look for help in some other direction.

If you know that you cannot save yourself surely that's the first thing that's going to make you look for help in some other direction. I've told this story before in this church but one of the preachers uses this illustration and he speaks about a group of gamblers who were having a game of gambling in the top story of a block of flats and the fire alarm goes while they're having this game. but one of them has the key to the fire escape in his pocket and so they don't worry about it. They think everything will be okay. They can finish their game and then they can open the door of the fire escape and they can go down.

[24 : 10] But a little later on this man begins fumbling about in his pocket and he finds that there's no key there and then he gets into a state of panic and every one of them gets into a state of panic because they realize that they haven't got the key to escape with them and so they flee out of the building as fast as they can.

And that's true with a sinner you see. As long as he thinks he's got the key to his salvation in himself he will do nothing about it. He will not be worried. But as soon as he begins to realize that there's no hope in himself that he cannot do anything to save himself that is when in his despair he's going to cast himself upon another.

And we've got to be brought to the point of despair of ourselves before we can come to Christ. And therefore there's a sense in which we want to make sinners despair because when they despair of themselves they will come to Christ.

And that is why we seek to preach the gospel and to preach the law so that men will turn from themselves and turn to Christ. Christ. And that's why we put that store by preaching.

People think that preaching is a thing of the past because of television and so on today. But you see it is God's means of saving sinners.

[25 : 37] And it's the Holy Spirit that is using preaching even in our day to save sinners. And that's why our evangelism must be church based. because it's the church who has been given the Holy Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit is working through the church. And the Holy Spirit is working through preachers. And that's his main means of working in convicting sinners and bringing them to Christ.

And that is our best means. And that is God's means. And that's the means that we must use and the means we must honor. You might say to me why should I pray for revival?

What is revival going to do for me or for my church or for Oban? Well, why you should pray for revival is this, that when the Spirit comes in power there will be many who will be brought into the church.

There will be many who will be brought to despair of themselves and many who will come to Christ in this way. And so therefore we are to seek the Spirit coming because he is the great means through which sinners are converted and brought to light.

[26 : 48] This is the way in which God is working. Do not despise God's method. God's method is the method that is laid before us in Scripture that the Spirit is working through means to the conversion of sinners.

He's working through preaching. He's working through the church. He's working in this way. Are we working according to God's method in seeking to reclaim the loss?

We must remember this that God will bless his method not our method. And his method is to save sinners in this way. Well, can we say that we are yearning over sinners?

Can we say that we're longing over them? And can we say that we'll rejoice just like God rejoices over seeing sinners converted from the error of their ways?

Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his ways will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. Is that our longing today?

[27 : 54] Is that our yearning? And will we rejoice as there is rejoicing in heaven over every sinner who turns his feet homeward, who turns from the dark cross of sin and seeks God and finds salvation in him?

May God bless to us our meditation. Let us conclude this morning by singing in Psalm 87, the whole psalm to the tune of York. Psalm 87. Upon the hills of holiness, he his foundation sets, God more than Jacob's dwelling stalls, delights in science gates.

The whole psalm. page 111-3-5-6-6-6-6-6-6- raised, number 205-6-7-6-7-7-7-7-7. ■ As I see, I will thus listen to my prayer, Hey Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[30 : 48] Thank you. Thank you.

Amen. Thank you.