

Sermon, September 14, 2025
Luke 15:1-10.

The Question Behind the Parables: Who is the lost?

In both parables, the lost sheep and the lost coin, **the “lost” represents sinners**, those who have wandered away from God, either knowingly or unknowingly.

The lost are anyone estranged from God, spiritually disconnected, morally wandering, or simply unaware of their need for grace. (lost coin).

Jesus told these parables **in direct response to the Pharisees and scribes**, because they criticized Him for associating with tax collectors and sinners (Luke 15:1–2).

According to the scripture, the lost were sinners, including tax collectors. The Pharisees were also the “lost,” but they did not know; instead, they criticized Jesus for welcoming and eating with them.

The Pharisees were not the only ones who were lost, but every one of us is, whether we see it or not. Some of us are like the wandering sheep, some are like the misplaced coin, and don’t even realize that we are missing.

Why did Jesus come to the world?

Jesus answers this Himself in Luke 19:10: “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Jesus did not come to congratulate the righteous or to affirm the self-sufficient. He came **for the broken, the wandering, the ashamed, the rejected, and yes, even for the religious who are blind to their own need.**

Jesus came to show that salvation is a gift from God, not earned, not deserved. **He shows us that no one is too far gone. Heaven rejoices over one soul that turns back to God. How about the Pharisees and Scribes? Didn’t they know that Jesus was doing what he was supposed to be doing?** It is tempting to look back and wonder how they missed it, but this underscores a crucial message:

Religion without relationship can blind us to the very grace it is meant to reveal.

The Pharisees and scribes knew the Scriptures, but they missed the heart of God. They hold on to the Law but rejected the One who fulfilled it. Their pride, self-righteousness, and the desire for control made it nearly impossible to see the radical love offered by Jesus.

Jesus did not come to fit into their systems. He came to **reveal the heart of the Father**, a heart that goes out searching in the dark for the lost.

Wholeness in the Parables.

“Jesus gave a parable of 100 sheep as a wholeness... 10 silver coins as wholeness.”

These numbers are complete sets, and when even one is missing, the set is incomplete. These parables speak volumes about how each person matters deeply to God.

You are not just “one of many.” You are not replaceable. **Jesus sees you; He seeks you and rejoices over you.**

People of God. We are the church of Christ, and we must humble ourselves and not point fingers at other people, thinking we are better than them.

We are **saved by grace alone** (*sola gratia*), not because of our merit, knowledge, or tradition. Therefore, we must **extend that same grace** to others. If Jesus left the 99 to seek the 1, **we too are called to seek out the forgotten, the marginalized, and the hurting**, not to judge them. This message is not just about God's love for them, but it is about God's love for all of us. Having

received such grace, we are now called to carry it to others. Let us be people who rejoice when the lost are found, not because we are better, but because we remember that **we were once lost too.**

**"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I am found,
I was blind, but now I see. "**

Prayers of the People

L: Gracious God, we come to you in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need.

L: Merciful God, pour out your grace upon your church. Forgive us for the times when we have been unfaithful and renew our commitment to your gospel of love. Empower us to live as a community of mercy. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

L: Merciful God, we ask forgiveness for the ways we have neglected and harmed this earth and its creatures. Confirm our commitment to care for all you have made, and grant us wisdom and strength to take action toward restoring your creation to its fullness. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

L: Merciful God, govern all who hold positions of power and authority. Instruct them to make just decisions that serve the common good. Make them instruments of your mercy in the world, working to heal divisions and promote peace. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

L: Merciful God, we lift up all who suffer. Bring healing, comfort, and peace to those who are sick, grieving, or in pain (*especially*).

Give us compassionate hearts to accompany those who are hurting and courage to work for justice and mercy. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

L: Merciful God, bind us together as a community of forgiveness and love. Supply us with humility to seek forgiveness when we have wronged one another and generosity to extend mercy when we have been wronged. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: Merciful God, we remember in love those who have departed this life. Console those who mourn, and give them the hope of resurrection. God of grace,

C: receive our prayer.

L: We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.

C: Amen.

All: God of love, have mercy on us. Pour out your Spirit upon us. Center us in worship. Hold us in grace. Strengthen us in love. Send us forth in mission. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.