

V. E. L. C. R. O. Principle
Luke 15
Valuing Every Person As A Gift From God

We find an encouraging word from Luke 15.

Verse 1 is a great reminder of how our LORD has designed us.

Like a magnet attracts metal, so is our Spiritual need attracted to our Creator.

All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to Christ Jesus.

They were drawn to Him because He cared about them.

Christ had shown compassion while the religious condemned and complained.

Verse 2 we see the response of the religious Pharisees and Scribes.

...they were complaining saying this man welcomes sinners and eats with them.

Christ Jesus listening to them seized a teachable moment and gives us three stories about seeking the lost.

The three parables are told in a sequence and shows us why Christ had such a passion for life.

Each story is about something lost and when found there is a celebration that reflects the heavenly party that happens when one lost person becomes a born-again believer.

Our first story (15:3-7) concerns a man and his 100 sheep.

I. It is the story of the lost SHEEP.

Let's take a look at the life of a shepherd in Christ's day.

The pasture was on open range land and the shepherd would get up early to lead his sheep to the open pasture. As the grazing season wore on and good grazing became more difficult to find, the shepherd would have to travel longer distance from his home to provide for his sheep. For that

reason, shepherds would often have to spend the night in the open range land with his sheep. Wanting to protect them he would often secure them into a sheltered place then he would lay down and sleep across the entrance. That way keeping his sheep in and the scavengers out. (John 10:1-18)

One evening as the shepherd was checking his sheep for injuries and counting to make sure they were all there for their night's rest – he discovered one was missing.

NOTE – There is always going to be that “black sheep in the family.”

There is this one who seems to always challenge us.

Once the shepherd discovers that a single sheep is missing, he secures the 99 and goes after the one which is lost.

The Word of God says, ***He searched for it until he found it.***

When the shepherd returns it to be with the other sheep, next – he calls together his family, friends, and neighbors so they can celebrate the rescue of the lost sheep.

So why don't we just forget this “black sheep” who seems to be difficult, always wondering away or causing grief?

To answer this, we need to look at four principles about being a shepherd.

FIRST PRINCIPLE – The shepherd searched because he was **INTELLIGENT** and understood the condition of the lost sheep.

SECOND PRINCIPLE – The shepherd when he realized there was a lost sheep didn't procrastinate – but he was proactive and **IMMEDIATELY** went searching for the sheep.

THIRD PRINCIPLE – The shepherd was **INTENTIONAL** in looking for the one lost sheep.

FOURTH PRINCIPLE – The shepherd was **INSISTANT** and refused to give up until he found the lost sheep

II. The Story of The Lost **SILVER** coin.

It seems that a woman lost one of her ten pieces of silver.

No mention of a husband leads us to believe she was a widow.

The pursuit of the one lost coin would also lead us to believe that the ten coins stood between her and starvation.

As soon as she discovered that one of the ten coins is missing, she immediately begins the search for it.

We see she refused to postpone her search until it was better time or more convenient.

She lit a lamp and begin her search before the break of day.

We also see the theme throughout her search.

She sweeps her house.

She was determined to not give up or let up.

She searched carefully until she finds it. (15:8)

III. The Story of the lost **SON**.

We are told the man had two sons.

No wife/mom is mentioned indicating these boys was all he had.

The younger son comes to his dad and asks that his father go ahead and divide up the family estate while they were all alive.

He knew he was going to inherit his portion, anyway, so why not go ahead and do it now.

NOTE – Under Jewish law, the younger boy would not inherit the estate and thus would end up working for his older brother.

The older brother would become the executor of the estate.

In our Text we already see the attitude he had toward his kid brother.

Knowing all this could be the reason little brother came to dad to begin with.

The attitude and action of big brother could have been the reason the younger wanted to get out from under the roof.

The father says ok and divides up his estate.

It was his choice and he had the right to do what ever he wanted to do with it.

Little brother gets his share and decides it is time to hit the road.

Little brother heads out to explore the world.

This is the first time he has ever been on his own. He can do what-ever he wants – he can sleep in till noon if he wants. He can stay out all night and nobody is going to say a thing.

Because of his choices and lack of self-discipline he wakes up one morning and realizes it is all gone.

No more funds.

No more fun.

No food.

No family.

No friends.

No job.

Our Text tells us he volunteered to feed the pigs so he could at least share the pig slop. (v16)

NOTE – Steven Farah introduced me to a phrase that says:

Sin will *take* you further than you want to go.

Sin will *cost* you more than you wanted to pay.

Sin will *keep* you longer than you wanted to stay.

Little brother's bad choices caused him to sink lower than he could ever imagine possible.

It was only natural that he begins to think about home.

Driven by despair he thinks about his dad's hired hands and they are not eating pig slop or sleeping in a barn.

Little brother is now forced to take a good look at himself.

He came to his **SENSES**.

He was living in a pig **STY**.

He was eating pig **SLOP**.

He **SWALLOWED** his pride.

He confessed his **SIN**.

He had relinquished his birthright to be a **SON**.

He wanted to go home and become a **SERVANT**.

Now we see the living father.

While he was still a ways from the house dad saw his son.

What did his father do when he saw him?

Verse 20 tells us. ***So, he got up and went to his father. But while the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him.***

Did you catch the key phrase in this verse?

His father saw him and felt compassion for him.

The embracing and kisses are followed by gifts as his father said to his servants:

Get the best *robe*.

Get me a *ring*.

Get a pair of *sandals*.

The ring was most likely a “signet ring”

It was engraved with the family crest.

It was the final seal on a legal contract as one who had the authority over the family transactions.

The ring symbolizes the son may have wanted to be a servant but the father in his grace restores this prodigal to sonship.

Anyone of these previous events would be more than little brother could have expected.

He had messed up his life.

He had caused so much pain.

He had put a hardship on those he cared about.

Yes, any one of them would be plenty.

But his father demonstrated a love and compassion that covers all these wrongs.

On top of all this, dad is throwing a party and inviting everyone around to come – just because of me!

Dad had a reason for the party, and we are told about it in verse 24:

Because this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and now he is found.

What a happy ever after story.

Well we wish it would have been, but we have verses 25-31.

There is a twist to this story, and it is found in these verses.

Remember dad had two sons.

We have looked at baby brother and the events of his life.

Now Christ Jesus moves the spotlight to the older brother.

The older brother refuses to join the party.

He calls one of dad's servants outside and ask him ... what is going on?

He had heard the sound of the party clear out to where he was working.

When he asked the servant, he was told that his little brother has come home.

His dad has welcomed him back safe and sound.

WHAT! This little twerp that has grieved our family so much is back home and I am supposed to act like nothing has happened.

The older brother refused to go in.

He was still bitter at his brother.

He was upset with his father for how he was treating him.

It is just not fair!!!

The older brother points out how hard and faithful he has been to his dad.

He had done everything dad had asked him to do.

Do you sense any hostility in his voice? (v30) ***But when this SON of YOUR'S came, the one who had DEVoured your assets with PROSTITUTES, YOU slaughter the best calf for HIM!***

NOTE – The only mention of prostitutes in this story is by the older brother. While it is true that the younger brother may have traveled down that path, he did not mentioned anything about the details of his sin.

I believe there is a scriptural reason for this. It is found in 1 John 1:9 which proclaims that ***when we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive these sins, cleansing us from all unrighteous things and remembering our sins no more.***

Little brother had received total forgiveness from everyone except his older brother.

Dad gives his explanation to his eldest son for the celebration ... This brother of **YOURS.**

Conclusion

Luke 15 has a progressive of the lost and found.

First – One sheep out of a hundred.

One sheep wandered away so the shepherd when looking for it.
And there is a party.

Second – One Silver coin out of ten.

One silver coin was lost and an all-out house cleaning was done until it was found.

And there was a party.

Third – One son out of two.

One son wandered away and God found him and brought him back to the family.

And there was a party.

What is the missing component of these lost stories?

First the shepherd went looking for the sheep.

Second the widow when looking for the lost silver coin.

NOTICE – it this **Third** story *No one went looking for the lost son!*

The value we place on things / people determine the level of commitment we put on our search.

The human received the least value in Luke 15.