

Just like the lost sheep and lost coin, this parable is in response to the Pharisees and Scribes from Luke 15:1-2

**The Rebellion  
(11-16)**

**Foolishness (12-13)**

**Luke 15:30**  
-Prostitutes

**James 1:21**  
-filthiness and rampant wickedness

**Famine (14-16)**

**Pigs** - unclean animals for Jews  
-Lev 11:7; Deu 14:8

**Pods** - seeds of the carob tree, common around the Mediterranean and used for pigs' food -sweet chocolate-like flavor

**The Return  
(17-24)**

**Realization (17)**

His **need** drove him to this realization.

**Resolve (18-19)**

"against heaven" - a way of referring to God without speaking His name.

**Reunion (20-21)**

-What does the running of the father tell us about the nature of our God?

"kissed him"  
-Suggestive of forgiveness  
-2 Sam 14:33

-Will we ever reach a place in our lives where God will not accept us back?

**Rejoicing (22-24)**

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**Luke 15:11-32 (ESV)**

**11** And he said, "There was a man who had **two sons**.

**12** And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the **share of property** that is coming to me.' And he **divided his property between them**.

**13** Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he **squandered his property in reckless living**.

**14** And when he had spent everything, a severe **famine** arose in that country, and **he began to be in need**.

**15** So he went and hired himself out to one of the **citizens of that country**, who sent him into his fields to feed **pigs**.

**16** And he was longing to be fed with the **Pods** that the **pigs** ate, and no one gave him anything.

**17** But when **he came to himself**, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger!   
*Who does the "father" represent?*

**18** I will arise and go to my **father**, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

*The son has a speech prepared*

**19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."

**20** And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, **his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.** <sup>(1)</sup>

**21** And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <- He doesn't let him finish his prepared speech.

**22** But the father said to his servants, '**Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.**' <sup>(2)</sup> <- Ring was symbol of sonship and the ability to approve transactions.

The older son would have received a double portion (2/3) and the younger son a single portion (1/3)  
-Deut 21:17

Nothing can bring us to our senses faster than the perception of **need**  
-Matt 5:3

Implication is that these were Gentiles. How would the Pharisees have regarded this man's life?  
-Luke 15:2

This parable presents the same main ideas as the lost sheep and lost coin:

**1. God is interested in the lost**

-Luke 19:10

**\*Are We?**

-Matt 8:1-4  
-Matt 9:9-13  
-John 4:1-41  
-Gal 2:11-14

**2. God rejoices when the lost are found\***

\*In contrast to the disposition of the Pharisees and scribes-Luke 15:2

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**The Resentment**  
(25-32)

**(1) Why Does He React this Way?**

While the older brother has the outward appearance of one who is aligned with the will of the father, it is obvious from his reaction to the celebration for his brother that he is still focused on his own self-interests instead of on the interests of his father. Notice how many times he uses personal pronouns in his response:

-“I have served you”  
-“I never disobeyed”  
-“You never gave me”  
-“I might celebrate”  
-“My friends”

**(4) Do we ever fall into this same trap? What could cause us to resent others in the body?**

-1Co 12:14-26

**(5) What should we want?**

-To take as many people with us as possible to heaven.

\*Luke 15:7, 10

\*2Pet 3:8-9

-To function as a healthy, unified body  
... meeting the needs of others.

\*1Co 12:26

-To boast in God, because there is nothing else for us to boast about.

\*Romans 3:27

\*Ephesians 2:8-9

**23** And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate.

**24** For this my son was dead, and is alive again; **he was lost,** (1) **and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.** (2)

This summarizes the main idea of all three parables in Luke 15.

**25** “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.

**26** And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant.

**27** And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’

**28** But **he was angry** and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him,

**29** but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years **I have served you, and I never disobeyed** your command, **yet you never gave me a young goat**, that **I might celebrate** with **my friends**.

**30** But when this son of yours came, who has **devoured your property with prostitutes**, you killed the fattened calf for him!’

**31** And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

(2)

**32** It was fitting to **celebrate and be glad**, for this your (1) **brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’**

This again summarizes the main idea of all three parables in Luke 15.

**(2) What does he want?**

It is human nature to want to be recognized, celebrated, or to boast about our accomplishments. This can lead to jealousy when we are not recognized but others are. It can lead to self-doubt or low self-esteem, because we are trying to rely solely on ourselves.

**(3) Who was Jesus pointing to with this character?**

-Luke 15:1-2

-Matthew 23:5-7

The Pharisees were resentful and jealous of Jesus because he was:

-Drawing attention away from them

-He was focusing on sinners in his ministry

- He was violating their oral traditions

## Just like the lost sheep and lost coin, this parable was in response to the grumbling of the Pharisees and Scribes in Luke 15:1-2

### Luke 15:1–2 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

*The complaint of the Pharisees, and particularly of those among them who were also scribes, is more than a superficial attempt to find fault. To join in table fellowship with irreligious “sinners” is to cast doubt on one of the essential assumptions of Pharisaic teaching. This sect was dedicated to upholding the purity of Jewish faith and life. Implicit in their teachings was strict adherence to both law and tradition, including necessary rites of purification and separation from all whose moral or ritual purity might be in question. The Galilean people had a reputation (not always deserved) for disdaining such scruples and disregarding the traditions.*

*The Pharisees’ complaint is specifically directed to the act of eating and drinking because in their society table fellowship implied mutual acceptance. No act, apart from participation in the actual sinful deeds of the guests, could have broken the wall of separation more dramatically. Yet the Pharisees are not yet ready to argue with Jesus himself. In the previous incident they did not even express their thoughts openly (v. 21). They direct their question to Jesus’ disciples and also (in Luke only) charge the disciples themselves, not just Jesus, with this unacceptable conduct.<sup>1</sup>*

*(Comments on calling of Levi – Luke 5:29-30).*

Grumble - G1234 - διαγογύζω – diagogguzo - dee-ag-ong-good'-zo  
From G1223 and G1111 ; to complain throughout a crowd:—murmur.

**PHARISEES**—separatists (Heb. persahin, from parash, “to separate”). They were probably the successors of the Assideans (i.e., the “pious”), a party that originated in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes in revolt against his heathenizing policy. The first mention of them is in a description by Josephus of the three sects or schools into which the Jews were divided (B.C. 145). The other two sects were the Essenes and the Sadducees. In the time of our Lord they were the popular party (John 7:48). They were extremely accurate and minute in all matters appertaining to the law of Moses (Matt. 9:14; 23:15; Luke 11:39; 18:12). Paul, when brought before the council of Jerusalem, professed himself a Pharisee (Acts 23:6–8; 26:4, 5).

There was much that was sound in their creed, yet their system of religion was a form and nothing more. Theirs was a very lax morality (Matt. 5:20; 15:4, 8; 23:3, 14, 23, 25; John

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<sup>1</sup> Leifeld, W. L. (1984). [Luke](#). In F. E. Gaebelein (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, pp. 883–884). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

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8:7). On the first notice of them in the New Testament (Matt. 3:7), they are ranked by our Lord with the Sadducees as a “generation of vipers.” They were noted for their self-righteousness and their pride (Matt. 9:11; Luke 7:39; 18:11, 12). They were frequently rebuked by our Lord (Matt. 12:39; 16:1–4).

From the very beginning of his ministry the Pharisees showed themselves bitter and persistent enemies of our Lord. They could not bear his doctrines, and they sought by every means to destroy his influence among the people.<sup>2</sup>

**SCRIBES**—anciently held various important offices in the public affairs of the nation. The Hebrew word so rendered (*sopher*) is first used to designate the holder of some military office (Judg. 5:14; A.V., “pen of the writer;” R.V., “the marshal’s staff;” marg., “the staff of the scribe”). The scribes acted as secretaries of state, whose business it was to prepare and issue decrees in the name of the king (2 Sam. 8:17; 20:25; 1 Chr. 18:16; 24:6; 1 Kings 4:3; 2 Kings 12:9–11; 18:18–37, etc.). They discharged various other important public duties as men of high authority and influence in the affairs of state.

There was also a subordinate class of scribes, most of whom were Levites. They were engaged in various ways as writers. Such, for example, was Baruch, who “wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord” (Jer. 36:4, 32).

In later times, after the Captivity, when the nation lost its independence, the scribes turned their attention to the law, gaining for themselves distinction by their intimate acquaintance with its contents. On them devolved the duty of multiplying copies of the law and of teaching it to others (Ezra 7:6, 10–12; Neh. 8:1, 4, 9, 13). It is evident that in New Testament times the scribes belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, who supplemented the ancient written law by their traditions (Matt. 23), thereby obscuring it and rendering it of none effect. The titles “scribes” and “lawyers” (q.v.) are in the Gospels interchangeable (Matt. 22:35; Mark 12:28; Luke 20:39, etc.). They were in the time of our Lord the public teachers of the people, and frequently came into collision with him. They afterwards showed themselves greatly hostile to the apostles (Acts 4:5; 6:12).

Some of the scribes, however, were men of a different spirit, and showed themselves friendly to the gospel and its preachers. Thus Gamaliel advised the Sanhedrin, when the apostles were before them charged with “teaching in this name,” to “refrain from these men and let them alone” (Acts 5:34–39; comp. 23:9).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Easton's Bible dictionary*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

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### God is Interested in the Lost

Illustration – Wife / Sign-Language Interpreter / Acceptance of deaf children

#### Jesus Cleanses a Leper – Matthew 8:1-4 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup>When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. <sup>2</sup>And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” <sup>3</sup>And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. <sup>4</sup>And Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”

- Leper's were considered “ceremonially unclean,” and anyone who touched a leper was defiled. This did not stop Jesus from touching this man and making him clean.

#### Jesus Calls Matthew – Matthew 9:9-13 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup>As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.  
<sup>10</sup>And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. <sup>11</sup>And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”  
<sup>12</sup>But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup>Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

- Tax-collectors were despised for many reasons in Jewish society
  - Prone to corruption
  - Contributing to enslavement of Jews by Roman authority
  - Possible Gentile contamination
- Jesus accepted Matthew in spite of his profession

#### Zacchaeus - Luke 19:1-10 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup>He entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup>And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. <sup>3</sup>And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. <sup>4</sup>So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. <sup>5</sup>And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” <sup>6</sup>So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. <sup>7</sup>And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” <sup>8</sup>And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold,

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Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.”<sup>9</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.<sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

**Jesus and the Woman of Samaria – John 4:1-41 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup>There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”  
<sup>8</sup>(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)<sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)...<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”<sup>17</sup>The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’;<sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”...<sup>39</sup>Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me all that I ever did.”...<sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his word.

**Paul Opposes Peter – Galatians 2:11-14**

<sup>11</sup>But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. <sup>12</sup>For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. <sup>13</sup>And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. <sup>14</sup>But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

- Only recorded confrontation between the Apostles of Christ was dealing with acceptance (in a meal setting).

**God rejoices when the lost are found**

**(1) The Rebellion**

**Dividing Portions**

**Deuteronomy 21:15–17 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> “If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him children, and if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved,  
<sup>16</sup> then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved as the firstborn in preference to the son of the unloved, who is the firstborn,<sup>17</sup> but he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the firstfruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his.

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## **Reckless Living**

### **Luke 15:30 (ESV)**

<sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!

### **James 1:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

## **Need**

### **Matthew 5:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

## **Pigs – Unclean Animals**

### **Leviticus 11:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> And the pig, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you.

### **Deuteronomy 14:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> And the pig, because it parts the hoof but does not chew the cud, is unclean for you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch.

## **(2) The Reunion**

## **Kissed Him**

### **2 Samuel 14:33 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.

### (3) The Resentment

#### Why does he react this way?

The more time I spend in scripture, the more that I'm convinced that all of the teachings of Jesus and his disciples ultimately come down to a choice between following self and following God. While the older brother has the outward appearance of one who is aligned with the will of the father, it is obvious from his reaction to the celebration for his brother that he is still focused on his own self-interests instead of on the interests of his father. Notice how many times he uses personal pronouns in his response:

- "I have served you"
- "I never disobeyed"
- "You never gave me"
- "I might celebrate"
- "My friends"

#### What does he want?

It is human nature to want to be recognized, celebrated, or to boast about our accomplishments. This can lead to jealousy when we are not recognized but others are. It can lead to self-doubt or low self-esteem, because we are trying to rely solely on ourselves.

#### Who was Jesus pointing to with this character?

##### Luke 15:1–2 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

##### Matthew 23:5–7 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, <sup>6</sup> and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues <sup>7</sup> and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.

The Pharisees were resentful and jealous of Jesus because he was:

- Drawing attention away from them
- He was focusing on sinners in his ministry
- He was violating their oral traditions

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**Do we ever fall into this same trap? What could cause us to resent others in the body?**

- Another member of the body is recognized for what they do, but we are not....

**1 Corinthians 12:14–26 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

<sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup> which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; *if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*

- What if someone comes to our body whose life is a mess? They might receive more attention from some. How do we feel? Do we judge them harshly because of our jealousy?
- We resent needs of others because we are focused on:
  - Our own discomfort in reaching out to others
  - Our belief that no-one else could possibly have the same level of problems, stress, or busyness that we have.

**Luke 15:31–32 (ESV)**

<sup>31</sup> And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup> It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’ ”

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**What should we want?**

- To take as many people with us as possible to heaven. This means that we rejoice when **anyone** turns their life over to Christ. We have to realize that we are **ALL** lost without the blood of Christ!

**Luke 15:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

**Luke 15:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

**2 Peter 3:8–9 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

- To function as a healthy, unified body ... meeting the needs of others

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**Philippians 2:1–4 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

***Kimberly's Response*** – I told the congregation that she was an atheist who was facing a crisis. From then until the end of the service I was wondering how our congregation would react to what at best was an awkward situation. What do you say to an atheist? I was overwhelmed at the outpouring of love toward her, and I think she was too.

- To boast in God, because there is nothing else for us to boast about

**Romans 3:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith.

**Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.