

Ir-nt-18
He Was Lost and is Found
(Luke 15; 17)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(The material in this section reveals the loving heart of Jesus Christ, and why He yearns after each human soul).

I. When the Pharisees mock Jesus for associating with **publicans and sinners** (Luke 15:1) He responds with three related parables.

II. The first reveals His qualities as a “Good Shepherd” who not only cares for the entire flock but *always seeks the One*.

A. The Jews knew the Messiah would come of the lineage of David, the chief example of a good shepherd, who endangered his own life to save one lamb from the wildest of beasts (Compare 1 Samuel 17:34-35 and Luke 15:2-7).

B. Other prophets had verified the Messiah would similarly be a Good Shepherd (Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:11; Ezekiel 34:23).

C. In giving this parable, Jesus seems to speak with patience, for **even these haughty Pharisees are among the Lost Sheep whom He has come to save**.

D. After Christ’s death, his apostles continued to refer to Him as the chief shepherd, “that great shepherd of the sheep” (Hebrews 13:20).

III. Through the Lost Coin, *Jesus emphasizes the value of each one lost* (Luke 15:8-10).

A. There is likely more meaning than most of us realize to the silver coin used in this parable.

B. Bridegrooms gave wedding gifts to the bride and ten silver coins were often one of those gifts. To them it was as a wedding ring. Because marriage was so important in the life of a woman, **a good bride would highly value such a precious gift**, for losing it would be seen as disrespect and even unfaithfulness. To show their appreciation, many brides would decorate their veils with the coins. *So there is sacredness* as well as monetary value seen in such coins.

(See Donna B. Nielsen, *Beloved Bridegroom*, pp. 28-9).

C. We can better understand now why loss of such a coin would cause such stress, and finding it would bring such joy.

D. *Thus this parable also relates to Jesus, who was Israel’s Bridegroom*. Those under His covenant, who were expected to watch over Israel, should have diligently sought His lost treasures (His covenanted people). **But they had not. Instead they mocked Jesus for doing so**.

IV. Finally, the Lord uses the tender relationship between Father and Son, showing each *lost soul is yearned for out of deep love*. As God the Father yearns for each of us.

A. In a musical based upon The Prodigal Son called “Take the Mountain Down,” its writers, Marvin Payne and Steven Kapp Perry, make an insightful addition. After the father reminds his usually faithful but envious son, “*All that I have is yours,*” the father adds something like this (which caused great emotion in my heart).

“But if the treasure you receive from me ignores the love I have for your brother, then you have missed the greatest part.”

Indeed the greatest treasure Our Father can give to any of us, His children, is his deepest love. And each of us must come to feel His same love for each other, or all that the Lord has to give us is worthless!

V. Thus a primary theme of these parables is the JOY that is found in the saving of each soul. **The Lord clearly has no joy in the falling or destruction of any.** There is no hint of revenge in His heart. And the greatest JOY He feels is when any One who is headed for destruction turns, and is saved!

These parables set the stage for Jesus’ later expression of such sad longing, “Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:37).

VI. Jesus eventually reveals **the full great worth of the souls of men.**

A. As pointed out in all these parables, the Lord seeks after each lost soul because men are of such great value.

B. But He personally reveals the amazing height of their potential.

1. **John records this incident. After Jesus identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd. Jesus says, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30). The crowd then starts to stone Him because He equates Himself with God.**

The Savior’s response is extremely pertinent! “Is it not written in your law, ‘...Ye are gods?’ *If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came [that is all of Israel], and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, ‘Thou blasphemest:’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’”* (John 10:34-36). (punctuation, emphasis and inserts added for greater clarity).

He is reminding the Jews of the 82nd Psalm. The Jews knew the Psalms well, for they sang them regularly. *In the 82nd Psalm the Lord tells men that they have the power to become as God,* though most, due to unbelief and unfaithfulness, will “die [as] men” and never reach their full potential.

The 82nd Psalm is a potent message when understood. **Jesus verifies its truthfulness and then uses its message** to show He could not be condemned because of its vital teachings.

I have found it helpful to create footnotes for future reference between John 10:34 and Psalm 82.

VI. Jesus gives the Parable of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19).

A. Ten lepers were healed. Only one returned to give thanks. And this was a Samaritan!

B. Note how often Jesus used Samaritans to represent the most faithful and believing.

- The Samaritan woman at the well (John 4).
- The Good Samaritan (Luke 10).

- The one and only thankful leper (Luke 17: 11-19).

C. It is likely that the Lord, while honoring the faithful among the Samaritans in His day, *is also giving prophecy of the future.*

D. Remember the Old Testament is saturated with prophecies regarding a “*remnant of Israel who will return to faithfulness in the Latter-days.*”

E. Two questions are appropriate.

1st Q: Who were the original Samaritans?

Answer: Israelites who either had intermarried with Gentiles or lived among them and so were suspect of pollution.

2nd Q: Who would make up the returning remnant of the Last Days?

Answer: The scriptures repeatedly reveal the Lord would gather *a remnant of Israelites who have lived among the Gentile nations, some of whom may have intermarried.* Note, then, this *remnant is like* the Samaritans.

- a. It is highly likely that when Jesus spoke of the Samaritans in these parables, *He was actually speaking of that remnant of Israel re-gathered from among the Gentiles in the Latter-days --- of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For that is what we are, and furthermore, we are doing the work of which Jesus spoke.*

It is WE that are meant to accept the gospel and spread its waters of life, as prophesied by *the Samaritan Woman at the Well*

It is WE who are to be the *Good Samaritans*, like Christ, and heal all those who are spiritually wounded and afflicted, until the Savior returns!

It is WE whom Christ expects, of all those healed, to return and thank Him fully, but by serving Him with all our hearts, might, minds and strength.

There are many Christians who truly love and have faith in Jesus Christ and who do many, many good works. But it is the faithful among The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who have returned and made new covenants with Him as the Son of God. *He has laid upon our shoulders the greatest responsibilities: of showing our deepest gratitude by taking His most precious messages and His holy ordinances to others in our generation, but also to all the generations of the deceased.*

In conclusion, a *true understanding* of these parables of Jesus, and of His accompanying acts, more fully reveal the great love God the Father and His Son, Jesus the Christ, have for all the children of Our Father in Heaven, but especially for those who are Lost!