

New Testament Lesson # 18
May 6-12
Luke 12-17; John 11
“Rejoice with Me; for I have Found My Sheep Which Are Lost
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(The Teachings in these chapters, while are seemingly disconnected, actually have very significant connections, when fully understood)

I. Not only had the earlier prophets foretold that the Messiah would come as a Good Shepherd, but they foretold that He would come in a time when their regular shepherds, who should have been caring for the sheep, were both heedless and cruel.

A. Ezekiel had prophetically warned of these very times: “The diseased ye have not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick...neither have you brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them” (See Ezekiel 34).

B. Ezekiel also foretold the Lord Himself would come to find His lost, uncared for sheep. “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd” (v. 23). The Savior would work with His true servants, but He Himself would be the Son of David, who would come to rescue them.

II. So it was not surprising when Jesus encountered these false shepherds in the flesh, those who held the religious seats of power, and that He would unveil their wickedness.

A. Of them He said that they loved vain things such as long clothing and sitting in the chief seats of the synagogues, but cared not for the sheep (Mark 12:38-40).

B. The Pharisees and Sadducees cared very little for those who were under their dominion, or what **was supposed to be their stewardship as shepherds**. Rather, they cared to seek out the “chief room” (Luke 14: 7).

III. So the Lord rebuked them through a Parable --- of the Great Supper

A. “When thou are bidden ...to a wedding feast, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee, and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room....

“For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11).

B. He then tells them when they make their own feast, to call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:12-14).

IV. When the Pharisees with gall, mocked Jesus for associating with publicans and sinners (Luke 15:1), He responded with three also related parables. They all teach of different aspects of the kind of shepherd the Lord really desires, and had come to establish!

A. He begins with the Parable of the Lost Sheep.

This parable shows that **the Lord Loves, in addition to the ninety and nine**, that One, who has strayed. **He loves every One of His sheep**, and will seek All who are Lost.

- V. 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. 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 disrespectful and even unfaithful. 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. Now we can better understand why loss of such a coin would cause great stress, and finding it would bring such Joy.
 - D. **Thus this parable 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 treasure (His covenanted people). But they had not. Instead they mocked Jesus for so doing.

VI. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the Lord used the tender relationship between Father and Son to show that **each lost soul is yearned for out of deep love by God the Eternal Father**.

- A. It also emphasizes that those who remain faithful, **should not envy the love of the Father, but should feel the same kind of Joy in the return of the Prodigal**.
- B. 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 carries significant power when understood).
"But if the treasure you receive from me ignores the love I have for your brother, then you have missed the greatest part."
- C. **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!**

VII. The Lord also warned the Unworthy Shepherds in His Kingdom that they were to lose their Stewardship (Luke 16).

- A. The **key message of the Parable of the Unjust Steward is that the steward had lost his stewardship**.
"for thou mayest be no longer steward" (Luke 16:2). And Jesus had just made it clear that the **religious leaders had been Unjust Stewards**.
- B. The Savior had been repeatedly warning the Religious leadership of this day that they were unworthy stewards, or shepherds. As the Unjust steward, who lost his stewardship cunningly sought for a place somewhere else, so they might be wise to look for some other place. For they soon would not be among God's servants. The Lord would set up a new kingdom, with new leadership --- the Faithful Apostles. And these false shepherds would lose their place as rulers in God's Kingdom.
- C. Of course, in many ways, he was being facetious. Underlying His warnings were that "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other;... Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). So they could no longer pretend to serve God when they were actually serving Mammon.

- D. While He was saying they should be wise to seek another place for they will soon be cast out, He was also saying that in the end, this will be a disappointment to them. For He then adds, “He who putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery....” He is not making an extraneous comment. This fits all He has been saying because He is Israel’s Bridegroom. They had covenanted with Him, but are not faithful. And even if they seek another Master, it will be accounted in the Father’s eye as Adultery for abandoning their true Bridegroom, Him!
- E. Finally, He tells the story of Lazarus and the beggar. This parable also fits the context of all He has been saying. Because of their position, they have been living in luxury. (Much evidence has been given of the great wealth possessed by the religious leaders of Jesus day.) But while they have lived in luxury, they have cared not for the poor who suffered spiritually and physically. But the tables will soon be turned. And those they have spurned due to their poverty and sins, will repent and be given a great place in Heaven, while these instead will “be tormented.”
- F. Jesus even further prophesied that **even after He has risen from the Dead**, most of them will not be persuaded of the Truth, nor repent (Luke 16:31).
- G. The Capstone of all these teachings comes after Jesus’ Resurrection. By then He has called Peter to lead the New Israel, with his companions as New Leaders. And what does the Savior stress above all to Peter? “Peter, lovest thou me? Feed my lambs! Peter, Lovest thou me? Feed my Sheep! Peter, Lovest thou me? Feed my Sheep!”
Until they perished, His apostles did indeed care for the Father’s Sheep.

VIII. The Likely Truth of 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! I have previously shown how often Jesus used Samaritans to represent the most faithful and believing. There was a reason for this. **The Samaritans were prophetic of us in the Latter-days!** The Samaritans were Israelites who were mixed among the Gentiles. And that is a prophetic description of Us.
- B. The ten lepers had all been healed. But only the Samaritan returned to give thanks! This is likely a witness that in the Latter-days, **those Israelites who had been mixed among the Gentiles, but were found, and now healed**, would be those who would truly give thanks, that is through their works of Obedient Discipleship.
While all mankind has been healed --- from the consequences of sin --- so that all will be resurrected, there are not many who have dedicated their lives to serving the Lord, and are in fact doing His Kind of Work. That is the Spiritual Work which truly Heals.
For His Kind of Work is to seek after all the Lost and to Spiritually Heal Them. **Only we have the true authority and keys to do so.**

IX. Our Call is to gather Israel on both sides of the Veil. So Our Call is to become Good Shepherds.

Our call is to “to help Him find His Sheep which are Lost.”

And it is our good pleasure, not to feel envy of any who repent and come in. Rather it is for us to “Rejoice with the Lord in finding those who are Lost.”

If we truly love the Lord and His Children, this is indeed a Joyous Work!