

**SLIDE 2****THE TRAGEDY OF BEING LOST**

Luke 15

Intro.

- A. Please turn to Luke the 15th chapter.
- B. This chapter contains three well known parables of Jesus: the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal son.
- C. I write a lot of sermons from this story.
  - 1. I think there are many good lessons to be learned from all four parts of this parable.
  - 1. A good title for this chapter is, "The tragedy of Being Lost."

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- C. The first two verses introduce the setting for the parables which follow. Lk. 15: 1-2. <sup>1</sup> Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them."
- 1. The scribes and Pharisees had an attitude problem.
  - a. Luke describes them in Luke 18:9. they trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others
  - b. They were filled with pride and self-righteousness.
- 2. In Lk. 15, Jesus shows that it is the will of the Father that sinners repent.
- 3. The scribes and Pharisees should have rejoiced that sinners were being converted.
- 4. But, instead, they complained.
- 5. As a result, Jesus delivers a parable in four parts that describe four different attitudes of people.
- 6. For our lesson today, I want us to explore these attitudes.

**SLIDE 4****I. Luke 15:4-7 — The Tragedy Of Carelessness**

- A. In this story, we find that the shepherd of 100 sheep would leave the 99 and go after the one in danger.
  - 1. When the lost sheep was found, it was a time for rejoicing and celebration.

B. As we look at this parable we see the tragedy of being lost through carelessness.

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1. We learn this from another parable of Jesus found in **Luke 8:14**.
  - a. This is part of the parable of the sower. *Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.*
2. Christians can carelessly allow worldliness to come into their lives and choke God out.

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- a. That is why Jesus tells us in **Matt 6:19-21**, <sup>19</sup> "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

C. Jesus' own application of the parable shows that there is great joy in heaven when the lost are found.

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1. That is when sinners repent and turn back to God). Look at **verse 7** again - *I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

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#### II. **Luke 15:8-10** — The Tragedy of Uselessness

A. The parable of the lost coin shows the tragedy of being lost through uselessness.

1. The coin was of no value when it was out of circulation.

I read about one person who bought an antique desk which was considered to be basically worthless.

Yet, it had a secret drawer which was full of old gold and silver coins worth thousands of dollars.

There is also a story of a small boy bought an old trunk that had a small box in it that was full of money.

When he discovered the money, he took the old trunk back to the auctioneer. The auctioneer told him, "Sonny, it all belongs to you because you bought the trunk."

The silver and gold in the old desk and the money in that trunk had been sitting there for years.

For all practical purposes it was absolutely useless.

Just like that coin that the woman lost, it was out of circulation.

2. This is sad to say, but we have Christians today who are just like these coins.
  - a. They are absolutely useless.
  - b. They have lost their usefulness.
3. Some have become useless through lack of zeal.
  - a. This is why encourage everyone:

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(1) Don't give up the race

- a) As the Hebrew writer said in **Heb. 12:1-2**, *let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,*

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(2) Don't give up the race, Don't give up the fight.

- a) I Tim. 6:12 - *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

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(3) Don't give up the pressing toward the goal.

- a) Be like the apostle Paul. (**Phil. 3:13-14**). *but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

3. Again, look at the main lesson of the parable: there is great joy in heaven when one sinner repents.

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#### III. **Luke 15:11-24** — The Tragedy of Being Lost Willfully.

- A. In the story of the lost boy, **Verses 11-13** tells us that He did all those things willfully.

He willfully asked for his inheritance.

He willfully went into a foreign county.

He willfully wasted his substance with riotous living.

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B. Now, the next three verses of this story tell us just how rapidly things can change for the sinful.

1. He was hit with two disasters at the same time:
  - a. a money shortage
  - b. and a food shortage.
  - c. Food would be hard to get anytime if you don't have any money.
  - d. But, it would have been even harder to get during a famine.
2. The "pods" the scriptures refer to were from carob trees, like our beech trees, which produces nuts that are inedible to humans.
  - a. He was so hungry that he would have eaten the pig's food and no one gave him anything.
  - b. The pigs seemed to be better off than he was.

C. **Verses 17-19** says that he came to himself.

1. In other words, he came to his senses.
  - a. Severe hardship has a way of causing us to face facts.
  - b. We need to count it a blessing when the Word of God causes us to come to our senses.

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D. **Verses 20-24** tells us that he acted on those feelings.

1. Friends, all the tears, all the remorse, all the good intentions, all the wonderful resolutions we may have, are worthless until we act upon them.
2. He, no doubt was in a weakened condition when he returned home, but somehow he made it.
3. And when he got there, the fathers heart went out to him.
  - a. He never lost interest in his son.
  - b. He was continually looking for him.
  - c. He received him with open arms.
4. This parable reveals the unfailing love of God.
  - a. God is always willing and ready to forgive.

**SLIDE 15****IV. Luke 15:25-32 - The last part of this parable is The Tragedy of Bitterness**

- A. This is not a new parable but is the last part of the same one.
1. In this we see the tragedy of being lost through bitterness.
  2. People like the elder brother seldom consider themselves lost.
    - a. They are like the scribes and Pharisees.
    - b. They are completely satisfied with themselves.
    - c. They look at themselves always right and everyone else being wrong.
  3. In **Verses 28-32**, we see some of the traits of the elder brother and people like him:
    - a. Anger - **vs. 28**
    - b. Sulking or pouting - "would not go in" - **vs. 28**
    - c. Self-righteousness - Proclaiming to the father his goodness - **vs. 29a**
    - d. Self—pity - the father never did anything for him or rejoiced over him - **vs. 29b**
    - e. Showed Contempt - "this son of yours" - **vs. 30a**
  4. We need to understand that bitterness and hate will condemn us just as quick as riotous living will.

**SLIDE 16****V. There are many principles we can learn from this parable.**

- A. This parable marvelously describes the character of God.
1. We have a loving Father that cares for us.
    - a. As the shepherd cared for the lost sheep
    - b. As the woman cared enough to find the lost coin
    - c. And as the father cared for his lost son and welcomed him home.
- B. We also learn that we need to be careful lest we be lost through:
- carelessness (as the lost sheep),  
 or lost through uselessness, (as the lost coin),  
 or willfulness (as the lost son),  
 or bitterness (as the elder brother).

C. This story should also characterize our concern for the lost.

1. As these characters showed concern for what they lost.

D. This parable shows us that it is easy for all sinners to surrender their hearts to God.

1. God is not harsh and mean and out to destroy, but is kind, loving, and ready to receive and forgive all who will repent.

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Concl.

A. I ask you, this morning, are you like the sheep or the coin or one of the two brothers?

1. Are you lost?

2. Are you dead in sin?

B. I want to tell you today, You can be found! You can be alive!

1. If you are lost in sin, you can be found by obedience to the gospel. You will be found; you will be alive.

C. If you are lost through carelessness, uselessness, willfulness, bitterness, you also can be found, you too can be alive.

D. But it comes through obeying God's word or coming back to God.

E. We give you the opportunity to do that today.

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