**The Lost Sheep**

Luke 15:1-10

Key Verse 7

 “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

**Introduction**

 In this passage Jesus welcomed sinners and ate with them. Then the religious leaders complained about it. Jesus helped them to understand God’s heart toward sinners. We can learn God’s broken heart and deep love for sinners and his eager desire to save them.

**1. Read verses 1-3. Who gathered around Jesus and why? (1, Mt 11:28) What did the religious leaders do? (2) How does Jesus try to help them? (3)**

**1-1. Read verses 1-3.**

 “Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” 3 Then Jesus told them this parable:”

**1-2. Who gathered around Jesus and why? (1, Mt 11:28)**

Now the **tax collectors and sinners** were all gathering around to hear Jesus.

* In speaking to a large number of people in the previous passage, Jesus strongly challenged them regarding discipleship and commitment. But His hard teachings did not drive people away, rather it attracted them more to Jesus.
* Tax collectors and sinners such as prostitutes were considered as public sinners.
* People despised them and didn’t want to associate with them. They were isolated in the community, having been rejected by the religious leaders and all other people.
* They gathered around Jesus because he welcomed them and gave them comfort and rest**.**

Matthew 11:28 reads,

 “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

* Jesus associated with them by eating with them and becoming their friends.
* They came to hear Jesus’ word. They could hear the word of God and good news from Jesus. They must have heard only words of judgement from the religious leaders.

**1-3. What did the religious leaders do? (2)**

But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law **muttered**, “This man **welcomes sinners and eats with them**.”

* They complained about what Jesus was doing and got angry at him.
* In their thoughts, it is not right to accept sinners and treat them well. Rather they should be condemned and rejected.
* They couldn’t understand what Jesus had in mind. They didn’t understand what the Scripture really taught them, although they studied word of God diligently.
* As a result they were misrepresenting God and his word.
* They became the enemies of God even though they thought they were doing right.

**1-4. How does Jesus try to help them? (3)**

 Then **Jesus told them this parable**:

* Jesus still wanted to help them to understand what God really wanted.
* Jesus was merciful to them and helped them with long patience.
* Many rabbis of that time believed that God received the sinner who came to Him the right way.
* But in the parable of the shepherd and the sheep and in the parable of a woman who lost a coin, Jesus taught that God actively seeks out the lost.
* He does not grudgingly receive the lost. Instead, He searches for and seeks after them. God finds the sinner more than the sinner does finds God.
* Also rejoicing at the time of finding a sheep and a coin is emphasized in both parables. The religious leaders might have had a different image of God as that of one is legalistic or angry. But this passage tells us what He does, and in what circumstances. As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you ([Isaiah 62:5](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Isaiah+62:5&t1=en_nas)).

**2. Read verses 4-6. What will a shepherd do when he loses one of his sheep? (4) Why does the shepherd look so diligently for the lost sheep? What will he do when he finds it? (5, 6)**

**2-1. Read verses 4-6.**

 “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’”

**2-2. What will a shepherd do when he loses one of his sheep? (4)**

 “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he **leave the ninety-nine in the open country** and **go after the lost sheep until he finds it**?

* The shepherd didn’t give up the one lost sheep even though he still had ninety-nine sheep.
* He was so sad and couldn’t take rest because of the lost sheep.
* He continued to search for the sheep until he found it.

**2-3. Why does the shepherd look so diligently for the lost sheep?**

* To the shepherd each of the sheep was so precious to him.
* To him one sheep was not just 1% of his 100 sheep. Each sheep was 100% to him. Losing one sheep meant losing all his sheep.
* He put the same value on one sheep, as much as the other 99 sheep.
* He didn’t give up until he found the lost sheep. He couldn’t be set free from sadness and anxiety until he found the sheep
* He made all effort to find the sheep. He checked all places even some dangerous places.
* To God each person is so precious.
* Jesus died for all people but he died for each of us. He knows each one’s name.
* God has a broken heart toward lost sinners.
* He can’t find rest until he finds all lost souls.
* He never gives up. God continues looking for each lost soul until he finds him.

**2-4. What will he do when he finds it? (5, 6)**

 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’

* He was so happy and joyful and wanted to share his joy with his friends and neighbors.
* ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep’. His joy overflows.
* His joy is the joy of finding a lost sheep. It might be the greatest joy that a shepherd can ever experience.
* This shepherd’s joy is the joy that God has when he finds one lost sinner.
* God’s heart overflows with joy when one sinner comes back to him.
* God’s biggest joy is the joy that he has when one lost sinner is found.
* We can let God rejoice by helping one lost sinner to repent and be saved.

**3. Read verses 7. What will happen in heaven if one sinner repents? How does this illustrate the Father’s heart for sinners? (7; Romans 5:8)**

**3-1. Read verses 7.**

 “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

**3-2.What will happen in heaven if one sinner repents?**

***there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.***

* God will rejoice more with one sinner who repents than 99 righteous persons who do not need to repent.
* Finding one lost soul brings God the greatest joy.
* Jesus demonstrated God’s heart that He was so happy when tax collectors and sinners came to him, knowing God’s heart.
* But the religious leaders complained about it.
* If we know how much God rejoices with one sinner’s repentance, we will welcome all sinners and do everything to help them to repent.

**3-3. How does this illustrate the Father’s heart for sinners? (7; Romans 5:8)**

***But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)***

* God loves sinners so much. What God wants is not to judge sinners. Rather he wants them to repent and come back to him.
* God is anxiously waiting for sinners to come back to him and repent.

**4. Read verses 8-10. What will a woman do when she loses a silver coin? (8) How will she express her joy after she finds it? (9) What will happen among the angels of God over one sinner who repents? (10) What does this tell us about the source of God’s joy?**

**4-1. Read verses 8-10.**

 “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

**4-2. What will a woman do when she loses a silver coin? (8)**

 “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t **she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds** it?

* In Jewish society women used to decorate their hair with ten silver coins whenever there was a wedding. If one coin was missing, they couldn’t decorate their hair with just nine coins. So one silver coin was so precious and had great value.
* The woman searched for the coin until she found it.
* Each soul has unique and great value to God.
* God doesn’t want to lose any of his sheep.
* To parents each child is so precious. Parents will never be happy if they loses one of their children even though they might have so many children.

**4-3. How will she express her joy after she finds it? (9)**

 And when she finds it, **she calls her friends and neighbors** together and says, ‘**Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin**.’

* She was so joyful and invited her friends and neighbors to celebrate.
* She had to spent more money than one silver coin to celebrate.
* God sacrificed his only son on the cross to save each of us. We don’t deserve to receive God’s favor but God let his son die to save us.

**4-4. What will happen among the angels of God over one sinner who repents? (10)**

 In the same way, I tell you, **there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents**.”

* One sinner’s repentance will bring great joy to all, including the angels in heaven.
* One sinner’s repentance is the greatest news in the kingdom of God.

**4-5. What does this tell us about the source of God’s joy?**

* The source of God’s joy is one sinner’s repentance and coming back to God.
* When we understand this, we can know how we can bring joy to God.

**Conclusion**

 God loves and values each sinner so much. He continues to look for lost souls until they repent and come back to him. One sinner’s repentance brought greatest joy to God. May God help us to know God’s love for sinners deeply and be able to help many lost souls to repent.

**One word: God’s heart for one lost sinner**