

# The Lost Sheep & The Lost Coin

Luke 15:1-10

## PPT Title

### The Lost Sheep & The Lost Coin

**Main Point:** Jesus came to look for lost people and save them.

**Key Verse:** *The Son of Man came to look for the lost and save them.* – Luke 19:10

**Props:** A large box labeled “Lost & Found.” Various items to place in the box (a baby doll, a pacifier, a jacket, a cell phone, a book, etc.).

### BACKGROUND



**Say:** Jesus loved to show people what His Father is like. He knew better than anyone that God is a wonderful, loving, faithful, merciful God. But as He traveled and taught, Jesus saw that many people didn’t understand God. Their wrong ideas about God came from the Pharisees and the rule makers and the teachers of the law. Often, it seemed like these religious men didn’t want ordinary people to see God as a Father who loved them and took care of them. The Pharisees and rule makers wanted people to think that knowing God required a lot of effort and education. It was almost like the Pharisees had their own exclusive little club—a club that allowed only the most important, educated, obedient people to be members!

That’s why the Pharisees got so angry when Jesus hung out with tax collectors and other people considered to be the worst sinners. They didn’t want Jesus to teach these people about God. They didn’t want these “sinners” to think they were important to God. They didn’t want sinners to believe that God could save them.

But from the very beginning, Jesus said that He came to earth to hang out with sinners, the people who most needed to hear that God loves them. He told them as often as possible to turn away from their sin and follow Him. Jesus taught sinners about the kingdom of God and how they could be part of it. He gave them everything they needed to understand His Father’s heart.

That’s why Jesus used so many parables. Remember, a parable is a simple story that contains big truths about the kingdom of God. Everyone who wanted to know about God could understand His parables— children, adults, shepherds, teachers, people with an education, people who never went to school, Jews, gentiles, EVERYONE! And in the two parables we’re going to look at today, God’s wonderful, loving heart is revealed in a big way. We will see that God loves sinners and delights in saving them. Let’s read together in Luke 15:1-10.

**Teacher Note:** The central idea of the Parables of the Lost Sheep & the Lost Coin is that God actively seeks those whose sin has taken them far away from His presence. We see God pursuing His rebellious people throughout scripture. In Genesis 3:9, God searched for Adam and Eve, calling out to them, “Where are you?” He didn’t wait for His fallen children to come to Him, but actively pursued their companionship. God pursued Moses from the day of his birth, finally meeting with him in the burning bush and changing Moses’ heart. God pursued the fugitive Jonah right into the ocean.

In the New Testament, Jesus moved toward His disciples when they were caught in a terrible storm on the Sea of Galilee, rising above storm and hardship to pursue them and command their storm. When Lazarus died, God pursued him even beyond death to awaken him with His voice of life. And, in the greatest pursuit of all, God sent His only Son, Jesus, into the world so we could receive life through Him.

God loves us, seeks us, pursues us, longs to bring us into His kingdom. And when we choose to be found, to turn from sin and enter into His loving embrace, He welcomes us into His kingdom and fellowship with great celebration. Here is the central truth of God's pursuit of us: *We love because He first loved us.* — 1 John 4:19

## JESUS WELCOMES SINNERS

**Say:** *The tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were whispering among themselves. They said, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."* – Luke 15:1-2

**Teacher Note:** This passage highlights the differences between the way common people heard Jesus and the way the Pharisees heard Jesus. Why was there such a disparity? In Matthew 23, Jesus detailed all the ways in which the Pharisees were hypocrites. The word He used over and over to describe them was "blind." These men, who "love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues" (Matthew 23:6) would be subject to great woe because they "...shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces" (Matthew 23:13). The common people heard in Jesus' words an open invitation into the kingdom. The spiritually blind Pharisees, meanwhile, heard a threat to their elite religion, which had been tailor-made to keep out the riff raff.

**Say:** Jesus always seemed to have a crowd of people around Him, didn't He? Think for a minute about some of the reasons why a bunch of people would gather around a person who was teaching. If that teacher was handing out \$10 bills, he would probably have a pretty big crowd surrounding him. Or, if he was acting out his words with puppets, he might attract some people who wanted to see a puppet show. Or, if the person was talking about something really, really exciting and out of the ordinary, people would gather around him simply to hear his ideas.

Jesus wasn't handing out money or putting on a puppet show to attract crowds. People followed Him and gathered around Him and listened to every word He said because the subjects He talked about were so amazing. Jesus talked about the kingdom of God and how it was growing and growing. He talked about what life in the kingdom looked like. And He talked about how anyone could enter the kingdom of God if they turned from their sin and received God's forgiveness.



These ideas were so different from what the Pharisees had always taught the people. Maybe that's why the Pharisees grumbled at the same words that made ordinary people celebrate. Maybe that's why the crowds followed Jesus everywhere while the Pharisees and rule makers stood off to the side, talking to each other about how many headaches Jesus was giving them. There were four main reasons why the Pharisees complained so much about Jesus.

**#1) The Pharisees didn't like Jesus getting all the attention.** The Pharisees loved being the guests of honor at banquets and loved having the best seats in the synagogues. But at the banquets and parties Jesus attended, He was the guest of honor, not the Pharisees. And the guests at these events were not the kind of important people who would make the Pharisees look better.

**#2) The Pharisees wanted only people who were just like them to be saved.** Jesus hung out with anyone and everyone who came to hear Him teach, and told

them that anyone could enter the kingdom of God.

**#3) The Pharisees focused on rules.** The Pharisees felt important because they were the only ones who understood all the complicated rules and regulations they required people to obey. When Jesus taught about God, though, He used simple words and parables so that everyone could understand.

**#4) The Pharisees talked more about sins you could see than about the condition of people's hearts.** Jesus told His followers that sin results from a heart that is far away from God. The Pharisees wanted people to think that your heart and your thoughts didn't matter, as long as you looked like you were leading a sinless life.

**Application:** God wants us to be less like the grumbling, proud Pharisees and more like Jesus. That means thinking of others as more important than ourselves. It means telling everyone about Jesus and helping them understand that they can be part of God's kingdom. It means focusing on the simple truths of God and keeping our hearts close to Him. And it means celebrating when anyone believes that Jesus died to pay the price for their sins. We aren't part of an exclusive club, we're part of the kingdom of God, which is big enough to hold everyone in the whole world!

Now let's keep reading in Luke 15 to see what happened in the two parables that Jesus told the grumbling Pharisees.

### LOST...AND FOUND



**Say:** *Then Jesus told them a story. He said, "Suppose one of you has 100 sheep and loses one of them. Won't he leave the 99 in the open country? Won't he go and look for the one lost sheep until he finds it? When he finds it, he will joyfully put it on his shoulders and go home. Then he will call his friends and neighbors together. He will say, 'Be joyful with me. I have found my lost sheep.'*

*"I tell you, it will be the same in heaven. There will be great joy when one sinner turns away from sin. Yes, there will be more joy than for 99 godly people who do not need to turn away from their sins."* — Luke 15:3-7

**Say:** Jesus heard the Pharisees complaining about His willingness to hang out with sinners, to talk to them, to eat with them, to be the guest of honor at their parties. And He couldn't resist telling them a little story—a parable—about a sheep that was lost and then found again.



Raise your hand if you have ever played the game hide-and-seek. Nearly all of you, it looks like. In hide-and-seek, if you're it, you pretty much HAVE to go looking for the people who are hiding, right? What would happen if you covered your eyes, counted to 100, said "ready or not here I come" and then just walked away from the game? Everyone who was hiding would sit there and wonder if you were ever going to try and find them. Maybe they would eventually give up on you and just go home to watch television. When it's your job to look for people, you're not going to give up before you even start.

But that's exactly what the Pharisees thought Jesus should do. They thought He should give up on sinners. They thought He should stay far away from the tax collectors and other people they didn't approve of. They wanted Jesus to stop looking for people who needed to hear about God's kingdom and start acting more like the prideful rule-makers.



But Jesus didn't agree with what the Pharisees were saying. And the Parable of the Lost Sheep was the perfect way to show them how wrong their thinking really was. Jesus knew that every single Pharisee would look for a sheep that had gone miss-

ing, because sheep were valuable. If even one ran away from the flock, it would be a painful loss for the owner. But once that missing sheep was found, even the harshest Pharisee would be very, very happy. He wouldn't kick it or beat it on the way back to the pasture. He wouldn't scold it for being a naughty sheep. No, even a Pharisee would be kind to the tired and frightened sheep, placing it on his shoulders for the long trip home. Then he would tell all his friends that the missing sheep was back where it belonged. He might even throw a party to celebrate the fact that his searching paid off!



**Say:** Psalm 95:7 says, *He is our God. We are the sheep belonging to His flock. We are the people He takes good care of. Listen to His voice today.*

The lost sheep in Jesus' parable is like a sinner who has wandered far away from God. He feels lost and alone in the big, cold world. He thinks there is no shepherd to care for him. But in reality, the Good Shepherd—Jesus—is always looking for lost sinners, just like a shepherd keeps searching for runaway sheep. Then, when one of those sinners turns his heart away from sin and back to God, when He accepts the rescue that Jesus offers him, this parable says that all heaven celebrates.

The Pharisees didn't want anything to do with those who sinned (even though the Pharisees were sinners, too!). But Jesus is the Good Shepherd who won't stop looking for His lost sheep. That's why He spent so much time hanging out with sinners, eating with those the Pharisees hated, and teaching the people who never thought they could be part of the kingdom of God.

**Say:** Now, when Jesus was finished telling the Parable of the Lost Sheep, He told another similar story, the Parable of the Lost Coin. Maybe the Pharisees kept grumbling while Jesus told His story of a sheep who was lost and then found. Or maybe they were confused by the simple words He used to teach a big truth about God's heart. The second parable goes like this:



*"...suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. She will light a lamp and sweep the house. She will search carefully until she finds the coin. And when she finds it, she will call her friends and neighbors together. She will say, 'Be joyful with me. I have found my lost coin.'*

*"I tell you, it is the same in heaven. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who turns away from sin."* — Luke 15:8-10

There wasn't a single Pharisee listening to Jesus that day who wouldn't search for money that was lost. They valued their riches and their coins too much. The woman in the story lost a single coin, but she only had ten coins in all. So this one coin was very important to her. If a Pharisee misplaced wealth, they would look everywhere for it. They would search and search until they found it. Then, they would celebrate.



**Put the lost and found box filled with items on a table or chair next to you. Say:** How many of you would search high and low for something that was really important to you? I have a box of lost items here. **Pull out the first item. Say something like:** This \_\_\_\_\_ might look unimportant to you, but the boy/girl who lost it is really, really upset. This \_\_\_\_\_ is his/her very favorite \_\_\_\_\_. No other \_\_\_\_\_ could ever take its place. The boy/girl who lost it keeps visiting the lost and found box every day, hoping the \_\_\_\_\_ will turn up. Even though day after day after day, this \_\_\_\_\_ isn't in there, the constant searching eventually pays off! The \_\_\_\_\_ is finally found! After all that searching, the \_\_\_\_\_'s owner isn't just going to go home and forget all about the long search. He/she is going to tell everyone that his/her favorite \_\_\_\_\_ finally showed up.

The Pharisees would probably take one look at our box of lost and found items and think to themselves that there is nothing of importance in it. But to the kid who owns these items, they are very valuable! Similarly, the Pharisees looked at the crowds of sinners listening to Jesus teaching about the kingdom of God and thought that there was no one of value in those crowds—only sinners.



The Pharisees couldn't understand that to Jesus, every sinner is a prize worth searching for. In Luke 19:10, Jesus said, *The Son of Man came to look for the lost and save them.* To the Pharisees, this sounded like a waste of time and a whole lot of trouble. But to Jesus, it was the most important thing in the world. Because He dearly loves every single person, whether they have wandered away from God or are close to Him. Sinners were of no value to the Pharisees, but to God they are His much-loved children. That's why Jesus was willing to do anything to find the lost sinners of this world. He was willing to hang out with them and teach them and tell them that His Father loved them more than anything. He was even willing to die on a cross so that they could be forgiven for the sins that separate them from God.

**Application:** If we are lost, it's not because God lost us. It's because our sin has caused us to wander far away from Him. God will never stop loving us, even if we run away from Him. And He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on a cross to pay the price for our sins once and for all. Jesus rescued us. And if even one lost person believes that the Son of God died so their sins would be forgiven, then they will be lovingly returned to a right relationship with God, and all heaven will have a party to celebrate!

**PPT Key Verse**

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**PPT Main Point**

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