

THE PARABLES of JESUS

Session Three • Wednesday, October 2, 2019

Losing as winning. Grace made known in the loss. Luke 15:1-32.

I. Parables of the lost or of loss.

A. Sheep. Coin. A youngest son. An oldest son. A forlorn father.

1. The backdrop: grumbling Pharisees and scribes, the assumed “already found.”

B. Lostness commends us to God’s grace. Lostness seems to be Jesus’s “cup of tea.”

1. Samaritans. Women. The demon-possessed. Physically ill. Blind. Widows. Lepers. Little children. The hungry.
2. Social outcasts, lost in the sight of the privileged few—if only they would find themselves.

II. Sheep and coin. Luke 15:3-10.

A. Neither the sheep nor a coin are able to “find itself.”

1. They are passive in the story. The actors are the shepherd and the searching woman. (Romans 5:8)

B. The finding is always cause for joy.

1. Rejoice with me. There is more joy in heaven over one lost person than ninety-nine “assumed found.”
2. Not a single word of merit or earning anything in either parable. Just lost. Just found. (Ephesians 2:8) *“For by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not (lost) your own doing.”*

III. Parable of Two Lost Sons and the Runaway Father: Festivals of Death (Capon).

A. Death #1 - The father from the younger son.

1. Drop dead dad! Luke 15:12.
2. The father dies to control, estate, or a desire to cut the son out.

B. Death #2 - The prodigal.

1. A wasted life, a squandered life. Luke 15:13-16.
2. Literally and figuratively dying.

C. False death? - A false death. He is still scheming. Luke 15:17-19.

1. Still keeping score, still measuring, manipulating, rationalizing.

D. Death #3 - In the experience of grace in a running father.

1. Still far off, his father saw him and he ran... Luke 15:20.
2. Dying to plots, schemes, control in the face of mercy, love, and forgiveness. Grace is experienced in a mutual death: the son's exposure and the father's willingness to die.

E. Death #4 - A fatted calf. Luke 15:22.

1. To drop dead in order to provide for the party.
2. All done once and for all by the Lamb who was slain.

Next week:

The Department of Ethics and Moral Responsibility, the eldest son, Luke 15.