

I Don't Know Where to Turn

“The Parable of the Lost Coin”



“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

The Parable of the Lost Coin, found in Luke 15:8-10 immediately follows the parable of the lost sheep. We are told that tax collectors, Pharisees, and sinners were gathering around to hear Jesus speak. Some wanted to hear more from this wonderful teacher; some wanted to catch Him saying something they could use to condemn Him. After all he had just come from welcoming sinners and eating with tax collectors.

Instead of condemning them, Christ told them a few stories. It was up to them to listen and hear how it applied to them. He had put the burden of truth on them. Some understood; some did not. In many of the parables, Christ told one about a male figure, and then another one about a female figure. The parable of the lost coin has many of the characteristics of the one about the lost sheep, but it gives a different approach and so maybe some would get the message from the lost coin who didn't understand the message of the lost sheep.

Have you ever lost something and then searched for it only to find after much searching and frustration it was exactly where you had put it! Sometimes when we lose something in our homes everyone is called to look for it even though they have no idea where it may be! This poor widow was all by herself. She didn't call her neighbors in until she had searched and found it. Then she had a party and asked them all to rejoice with her. The coin, according to some authorities was comparable to a day's wages. It was small but very valuable.

At first reading the parables seem very much alike and one could wonder why Christ told them. Wasn't He being repetitive? But on closer examination, He is trying to reach two different audiences. They have several important differences. The lost sheep wandered off on his own. The coin was lost. The coin is inanimate. The sheep probably realized it was outside the fold. The shepherd could perhaps hear the sheep crying. The coin could not make a sound. The coin does not lose its value because it is lost. The coin is small but the sheep needs to be carried. The shepherd had many other sheep. The woman had only a few coins.

In both cases, we have the parable ending with joy. Those who went to hear Him so they could condemn Him were not successful. There was no “joy in Mudville”* for the

Pharisees. They were striking out. They wanted something against Christ. They certainly were not happy with the attention He was getting.

The sheep could be someone in your church, or a friend, or a family member who needs help. Sometimes you may feel it is you. A person may put on a happy face, but be struggling inwardly or be lonely and in need of a friend. It is our obligation to find this person who does not call out to us. Sometimes it takes this searching by us before we get to know a person and realize their value to us and to others. Each person has a worth but we sometimes don't find it.

The initial response is that of a woman who lost some money and is really upset and hunts until she finds it. But there is more to this story than just the finding of the money. The Pharisees were grumbling over many small things. Christ said there would be rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repented. Did they get the message? We should note that the woman knew she had lost a coin and needed to find it. This is not only about the value of the coin, it is the knowledge that God knows each one of us, and He searches for us. I can't comprehend how He can keep track of each one of us, but He does, and He watches over us constantly.

We cannot find God any more than the coin can find the woman. The woman never gave up in her search until she found the coin. Perhaps we can also compare these two parables to the people. Christ told them back to back for a purpose. The sheep was probably able to call or bleat. It had known the protection of the fold, but it had wandered away. The coin being an inanimate object didn't feel any different on the dirt floor than it did in a purse. Some of the people then and today have known the comfort of knowing about God's salvation but they have wandered away. Some people have never known anything else and they need to be searched for by us so they know God's salvation. Jesus challenged the Scribes and the Pharisees to see others as God saw them. He wanted to show them as persons of worth. Regardless of how young or old, how rich or poor, we are all loved by God.

Sometimes we lose something and never find it again, or maybe it is found months or even years later. Some letters that were sent during the wars have turned up many years later. We sometimes like to be lost for a little while and see if we can handle things on our own. We can't, but we sure try!

We are like sheep sometimes, but we are also like the coin. We cannot find God any more than the coin can find the woman, so God searches for us as the woman searched until He find us. If we know Christ as our personal Saviour, we also need to help search for those who do not know Christ and His love, forgiveness and salvation.

Prayer: Lord, You are awesome in Your love for us. You are constantly with us, even when we don't deserve it. Help us to accept Your love and then go out and tell others about Your salvation as You commanded us to go into all the world and teach the gospel. Please help us to realize that we have to search for opportunities to tell others, but we also need to accept Your love for our own lives and feel the security of being found, and

being in Your fold. Help us to realize that we can do nothing on our own, but through Your loving faithfulness we can be found. Amen

1. How do we fit into this parable?
2. Are we the coin who is lost and unsure of where to go?
3. Are we like the woman searching and caring about those who are not close to God?
4. Why should the angels rejoice over on sinner?

*"Casey at the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic Sung in the Year 1888" is a baseball poem written in 1888 by Ernest Thayer.

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"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? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15:8-10 NIV

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