

Tales of Life
Scripting your story through the Parables of Christ

"The Lost Parables: Stories about Separation from God"
Luke 15:1-32

There are really 5 episodes in this story of lostness.

Episode 1: The religious complainers

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."

A critical spirit obscures our view of the divine work of God.

- "muttered" v. 2a or "complained" or "grumbled" or "griped" or "bad-mouthed" or "criticized"
- What they said "This man welcomes sinners" v. 2b
- What they missed: his association with sinners was not an affirmation of their acts; his welcome of sinners did not silence his witness to them; his friendship with sinners did not fog his convictions about sin.

Episode 2: The story of the lost sheep

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: 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? 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.' 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.

Episode 3: The story of the lost 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? 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."

Episode 4: The story of the lost son

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he

ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

1. Lostness is a spiritual condition that affects every human being.
 - The lost sheep
 - The lost coin
 - The lost son
 - Romans 3:23; Isaiah 53:6
2. Participating in the redemptive work of God is a discipline that can be developed and measured.
 - The awareness
 - The search
 - The recovery
 - The celebration
3. The surprise ending calls into question our kingdom focus as servants of God.

Episode 5: The surprise ending featuring the disgruntled son

²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' ³¹ "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'" Luke 15:1-32 NIV

- The empty insiders
 - When service to God becomes a JOB
 - When we lose sight of God's delight
4. Where are you in the story?
 - Are you the looker (i.e. woman, shepherd, father)
 - Are you the lost (i.e. coin, sheep, prodigal son)
 - Are you the loudmouth (i.e. the Pharisees, teachers of the law and the grumbling older brother soured by a critical spirit)