

# DISCIPLES ARE FOUND

**+** **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

In telling the parables of the lost sheep, coin, and son, Jesus expressed God's heart, one that seeks after lost people.

**+** **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Luke 15

**+** **SETTING:**

The kingdom of heaven that Jesus brings reorients all of humanity's priorities, understandings, and thoughts. By realigning human hearts to God's ways about what it means to be blessed and how to practice righteous deeds, Jesus turns His disciples' attention to why He has come to bring about this radical reorientation: namely, to seek and save those who are lost (Luke 19:10).

# DAY 1

## READ:

**Luke 15:1-7**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Luke 15:3-7**

## NOTES

When people's pets escape from home, people scurry out in their vehicle, driving through the neighborhood in hopes of finding their pet right away. Neighbors are notified, calls are made to pet shelters, and flyers suddenly appear around the neighborhood. The picture of the animal is printed out, the number of the owner is prominently displayed, the pet's name and description are carefully listed so that all those who might see this wandering animal would know that it has a home and is missing.

There is a sense of urgency in locating a missing pet. Time is of the essence. Since the pet could be in danger or continue to wander further away, the urgency feels high.

Jesus said that this is what His mission was: to urgently come to those who are lost. In a world where spiritual leadership often neglects those who stray from the fold, Jesus said that this was the very task that He came to do.

Today, there are people all around us who have spiritual questions. Many have grown up in religious homes and have had experiences of church that left them wanting. Adrift and lost, Jesus invites us to be ministers of reconciliation, taking the good news of the forgiveness of sins through His death to those who desperately need to know that there is great joy in belonging to God.

**With whom might you share the good news this coming week?**

# DAY 2

## READ:

Luke 15:1-10

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 15:8-10

## NOTES



## KEY DOCTRINE #65: ELECTION

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

If you have ever misplaced your wallet or purse, you know how diligently you look for it. When personal information, credit and debit cards, and any other personal items might be lost, we retrace our steps. We look diligently in all of the places where we might have left it. We search high and low, often going back two, three, even four times looking to ensure that we did not overlook a single spot. With each passing search, there is a slower, more deliberate effort to make sure that our wallet or purse is found. We recruit others, asking for their help, wanting them to search alongside of us until we locate the missing item. And when it is found, we heave a collective sigh of thankfulness, a shout to the others that they can stop looking, and a sense of relief that the lost item has been found and is now safe and secure.

The sense of diligence in finding sinners is described in Luke 15:8-9. A woman who loses a coin lights a lamp so that she can see in the darkest corners of the house. She sweeps the floor from corner to corner, leaving no spot untouched. And when she finds it, she calls out with great joy that the lost coin has been found. This is what Jesus does in coming to us—He finds us when we are lost and brings us home to God with great joy.

**How can you be diligent in seeking after those who do not know Christ as their Lord and Savior?**

# DAY 3

## READ:

Luke 15:11-24

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 15:11-13

## NOTES

There's no place like home. After a long trip, coming home feels wonderful. The smell is familiar. The bed feels just right. The routines return back to normal. But if you return to your childhood home after many years of being away, it doesn't feel like home. The trees have grown. The neighbors have moved. Things feel different. The fond memories of the place where we grew up don't match with the reality of our sight.

Even with our experience of certain holidays, we hope for that nostalgic feeling that we once had. We long for the comfort, the happiness, the sense of belonging we had at one time. And when it doesn't happen like it once did, we feel a disappointment.

In the Bible, the theme of exile—the idea that we are far from home, in a distant land—is a strong one. From the days of Eden to Abraham's descendants going to Egypt to the Jews being exiled to Babylon, the story of the Bible is the story of people being separated from God and living in exile. Even the prodigal son goes to a distant land and ends up exiled when famine strikes.

We are all like the prodigal son. We all long for home. The memory is strong, but yet it remains illusive. But Jesus leaves His "home" and comes to us so that He might bring us home. And at the end of the Bible story, home comes to us. The New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, and home never leaves us again (Revelation 21:1). Instead, we are promised that we will be home forever.

**What longings do you have for heaven?**

# DAY 4

## READ:

Luke 15:11-32

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 15:11-24

## NOTES

After reading the first two parables, where the shepherd goes out to find the lost sheep and the woman diligently searches to find the lost coin, you might expect to read that when the prodigal son leaves home, someone will set out to find him and bring him back.

If you have ever had a child go missing in a store or shopping mall, you know the frantic feeling of finding them. Knowing they are helpless, vulnerable, and unable to find their way back, your heart races and you begin to search for them.

We would expect that someone—maybe the older brother—would go looking for his younger sibling after leaving home. But instead, he lets his brother go wandering out from the land of promise to a distant land.

Christians celebrate the gospel, which tells us that Jesus Christ left the land of promise and came in search of us. He went to the distant country. He sought out the ones who squandered all of the Father's good gifts. And He paid our debt that we accrued through sin by His death on the cross so that He might bring us back to God.

This is the good news. Jesus did not wait for us to come to our senses. He comes to us when we are far from the land of promise, living a morally unclean life, and unable to come back home.

**How did you feel when you lost something and then found it?**

# DAY 5

## READ:

Luke 15:11-32

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 15:25-32

## NOTES

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"It is in the highest degree unreasonable that we should disdainfully reject those whom the Son of God has so highly esteemed. And even if the weak labour under imperfections which may expose them to contempt, our pride is not on that account to be excused; for we ought to esteem them not for the value of their virtues, but for the sake of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

—John Calvin (1509–1564)

When the Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn read the parable of the prodigal son, he was so moved by the story that he began a work of art to celebrate this great parable. In "The Return of the Prodigal Son," Rembrandt portrays the young prodigal kneeling before his father in contrition for his rebellion, bowing and wishing to be accepted as a servant in his father's household. Standing to the right of the prodigal is the older brother, hands crossed in displeasure, objecting to his father's gracious reception of the younger son.

When the Dutch priest Henri Nouwen considered the parable along with Rembrandt's painting, he wrote a small book that reflected what many have thought about this remarkable piece of art:

Rembrandt is as much the elder son of the parable as he is the younger. When, during the last years of his life, he painted both sons in 'Return of the Prodigal Son,' he had lived a life in which neither the lostness of the younger son nor the lostness of the elder son was alien to him. Both needed healing and forgiveness. Both needed to come home. Both needed the embrace of a forgiving father. But from the story itself, as well as from Rembrandt's painting, it is clear that the hardest conversion to go through is the conversion of the one who stayed home.<sup>2</sup>

The prodigal, in other words, is not just the one who ran away but also the one who was pharisaical in his heart and hated the repentance of his brother. For this reason, it may be that Rembrandt painted himself into his work of art as the older brother.

**How do you respond when someone who seems undeserving of salvation comes to faith?**

# GROUP

NOTES

**POINT 1: The lost are sought with urgency**  
(Luke 15:3-7).

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ every one of His sheep and will do anything to find one that is \_\_\_\_\_ .

**?** What kind of people do some perceive to be beyond redemption in our day?

When the lost are found, God and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

**POINT 2: The lost are sought with diligence**  
(Luke 15:8-10).

**KEY DOCTRINE #65:  
ELECTION**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He \_\_\_\_\_ , justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's \_\_\_\_\_ goodness and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

**?** How does the doctrine of election humble us and keep us from exalting ourselves?

Joy is the expected result over even \_\_\_\_\_ sinner who \_\_\_\_\_ .

**?** How might we rejoice with those who come to faith in Jesus?

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God; he, to rescue me from danger, bought me with his precious blood."<sup>3</sup>

—Robert Robinson (1735–1790)

**POINT 3: The lost are sought with compassion** (Luke 15:11-24).

The son was \_\_\_\_\_ at his own doing but was \_\_\_\_\_ by the father's doing.

**?** What are some reasons people seek restoration?

The Father runs to us and \_\_\_\_\_ when we \_\_\_\_\_ to Him.

**?** From Day 5: **How do you respond when someone who seems undeserving of salvation comes to faith?**

## MY RESPONSE

Because we have been forgiven of our sin through Jesus, we celebrate the Father's goodness in welcoming home any repentant sinner.

- **HEAD:** What are some ways you can thank God today for how He saved you?
- **HEART:** What do you need to confess and repent of in your life this week?
- **HANDS:** Who has God put in your life who is lost and needs to be found?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch; like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see."<sup>4</sup>

—John Newton (1725–1807)