

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

### “THE HEART OF THE SAVIOR”

For individual study or group discussion

As we begin our study of Luke chapter 15, it is interesting to note that Luke chapter 14 ends with these words of Jesus, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (v. 35). And in the opening verses of Luke 15:1-10, who do we find listening to Christ? Not the religious leaders who were standing on the sidelines grumbling, but “the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him.”

In today’s passage, Jesus speaks two of the three most notable parables from his ministry: *The Parable of the Lost Sheep* and *The Parable of the Lost Coin*. In these parables of lost things, **the heart of the Savior** is revealed, a heart that displays his seeking, saving, and finding love.

#### The heart of man that responds to Jesus (vv. 1-2)

The grumbling of the Pharisees trigger these well known parables, as Jesus responds and redirects his audience’s attention to a gracious God who pursues sinners. Note in verses 1-2, there are only two heart responses to God’s grace: resistant or receptive. The Pharisees are resistant. They cannot understand why Jesus “receives sinners and eats with them” (v. 2). According to theologian J.C. Ryle, their accusation against Jesus is true but understated: “*The testimony of the Scribes and Pharisees was strictly and literally true — the Lord Jesus is indeed one who “receives sinners.” He receives them — to pardon them, to sanctify them, and to make them fit for Heaven. He is emphatically ‘the sinner’s Friend.’*”<sup>1</sup>

- Read Luke 19:1-10. At Zacchaeus’ dinner party, Jesus tells those present, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” It should come as no surprise then that Jesus would be in the company of sinners. How is Jesus’ behavior a model for the church? How can we practice the same thing?
- Read Philippians 2:14-16. Why should we do all things without grumbling? How do we “hold fast to the word of life?”

#### The heart of God that pursues the lost (vv. 3-4,8)

The poet Francis Thompson described Jesus as “the hound of heaven” who pursued him into the slums of London, until finally, he was rescued and cared for by a friend. Likewise, in Luke 15:3-7, the heart of God is revealed to us as a shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep to go after the one that is lost, and when he finds it “he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing” as he carries it home (v. 5).

- Read Isaiah 53:6 and Ezekiel 34:16. How are we like sheep? Have you strayed from the flock in your life? How did Christ come and find you?

#### The call of God to rejoice as the lost are found (vv. 5-7,9,10)

Jesus’ parables reveal our lostness. We are the lost sheep. We are the lost coin. We are the sinners and outcasts throughout the *Gospel of Luke* that Jesus seeks out, heals, and restores. Like the shepherd seeking his lost lamb, like the woman looking for her lost coin, Jesus seeks until he finds. And when he finds us, he rejoices! Even his angels rejoice! All are invited to rejoice with them. We rejoice in the God who loves sinners and outcasts enough that he became like us that we might have life through him (1 John 4:9).

- Luke 15:10 invites us to see the joy that the Father lavishes on sinners whom his Son rescues. Psalm 23 speaks of the Shepherd King who welcomes his sheep to his banqueting table. Read Psalm 23, Isaiah 25:6-9, and Revelation 19:7-9. How are feasting and rejoicing related?

DATE: November 12, 2023

SPEAKER: John Mark/Aaron

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 15:1-10

## Family Dinner Table

### The Hound of Heaven

The poet Francis Thompson described Jesus as “the hound of heaven” who hunted and rescued him from the slums of London. The last lines of his famous poem describe Jesus’ unrelenting pursuit and love for him:

“*And human love needs human meriting —  
How hast thou merited,  
Of all Man’s clotted clay, the dingiest clot?  
Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art!  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me?  
All which I took from thee, I did’st but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might’st seek it in My arms.  
All which thy child’s mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:  
Rise, clasp My hand, and come.  
Halts by me that footfall;  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He whom thou seekest!  
Thou dravest love from thee who dravest Me.*”<sup>2</sup>

- Like Francis Thompson, do you hear the footsteps of *The Hound of Heaven* pursuing you? Don’t run. Turn and surrender to him. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Find rest for your soul in him.

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Lakeway Presbyterian Church,  
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### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Viktar, supported national partner

<sup>1</sup> Ryle, J.C. *The Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin*. Commentary on the Gospel of Luke. <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/l15.htm>. November 7, 2023

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, Francis. *The Hound of Heaven*. 1988, NY NY. Morehouse Publishing.