

Stories of Jesus Week 2- God Time – The Stories of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin

These scriptures are selected to help you gain a deeper understanding of who Jesus is. You can read them each day or listen to the daily audio that is sent to you. They are intentionally designed for you to engage in your time alone with God. You will find them complementary to the teachings on the weekend (gatherings) and to the LIFE Group materials.

Some tips:

Use a Bible that is easy to read. The ESV or The NLT are both good translations.

Use a prayer journal. After you read the passages jot down what “jumped out” at you while reading. Then take a few minutes to write a prayer response to what you have read.

There are only five days of reading provided so if you miss a day you have time to catch up. Do not get legalistic! If you miss a day or even a week...God still loves you!

Monday: Luke 19:10

Tuesday: Luke 15:32

Wednesday: Romans 10:15

Thursday: Jeremiah 50:6

Friday: Luke 15:7

Diving Deeper

The Stories of Jesus – The Parable of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin
Read Luke 15:1-10

Think back on the last time you lost something and searched the day away, looking for it. Well as age sets in, that becomes a common aspect of life. Where are my keys, have you seen my billfold, didn't I put my jacket in the closet? We might wonder why would Jesus be focused on a lost sheep and a

lost coin? How is it significant to us? You really can't understand the dilemma Jesus was confronted with and why he uses the lost sheep and the lost coin to make a point until you fully understand the on-going conflict that Jesus had with the religious leaders.

The religious leaders had a major problem with Jesus. A big problem. They believed that God hated sinners and were convinced that God wanted them to avoid such people. That is why they struggled with Jesus' behavior. He regularly hung around with dishonest businessmen, crooked politicians, and prostitutes. From the religious community's perspective, Jesus must have been a sinner himself. Otherwise, why would he associate with such people.

Jesus knew how the Pharisees and the teachers of the law felt. In order to correct their perception of God and how he feels about sinners, Jesus told three parables, the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. We will focus on the first two parables, but all three parables have the same message Jesus communicated clearly: *God loves lost people and seeks them out.* What a powerful lesson for those religious leaders, and for us today. God doesn't hate sinners, he loves them!

Every person is important to God. The shepherd in the first parable had a hundred sheep. You might think he would hardly miss one. Rather than focus on the one, he could have easily concluded that leaving the others behind while he searched for the one could put the remaining 99 at risk. At any rate, it would be an inconvenience and not worth the effort. But God, as the shepherd in this story, never considers abandoning even one soul without searching after it. This shepherd immediately went after the sheep and didn't stop searching until he found it. He was on a search and rescue mission and that is the message, he wanted these religious leaders to see.

God celebrates when a lost person is found. Each of these parables ended with a party. Even when the woman lost the coin, she immediately began her search, one she did not take lightly. She grabbed the lamp for light and a broom to sweep the house. She went about her task carefully, and when she found the coin, she called her friends and neighbors and asked them to rejoice with her. Jesus wanted his listeners to know that every time a lost person is found, all of heaven rejoices.

Questions:

1. When it comes to lost people, do we as a church, take the message of these two parables and search diligently for the lost?
2. Do you ever find yourself uncomfortable in the presence of lost people?
3. Do you sometimes feel that we, as Christians, act like the religious leaders who questioned Jesus' behavior?
4. How can we as a church meet the challenges of this message to seek and save the lost as presented in these 2 parables?