

## Parables Of Luke 15 (Part Two)

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In analyzing the illustration of the Lost Sheep, we saw that the sheep that was lost was worth saving, and the shepherd's pity for it motivates him to rescue it. In the next illustration, what many Bibles title the Parable of the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10), the value of the lost silver piece motivates the woman to search her house diligently until she finds it. Concern over something lost and the joy at recovering it are the fundamental issues of each illustration.

Unlike the lost sheep, the coin is lost inside the house, not in a vast wilderness, and since it is not alive, it has no consciousness of being lost. In the same way, its lost condition does not bring upon it discomfort or anxiety. The silver piece is lost, not because of any inferiority in its composition, but because it was either badly handled or unconsciously misplaced. Part Two of this three-part study will consider the lessons of Jesus' second illustration.

### 1. Who does the lost coin symbolize? Luke 15:8.

**Comment:** The sinner who is largely ignorant of himself and passive in the hands of those with whom he associates is symbolized in the lost coin. People can be lost not only in dens of iniquity but also in good homes and churches (Revelation 3:14-17). The Garden of Eden was the most conducive of environments, but it did not guarantee that man would live God's way of life. This does not negate the value of a godly home (Proverbs 3:33). Such a home obviously gives a person a far greater advantage in learning how to live God's way of life compared with an ungodly one. This illustration teaches that, even in a good environment, a person may still be lost.

### 2. What causes the coin to become lost? Luke 15:8.

**Comment:** Unlike the lost sheep that wandered away and became lost, the coin's lost condition is due to the carelessness of another. The coin is lost because it had fallen from its intended place, just as sin always lowers a person and never lifts up (Proverbs 14:34). This negligence of another reminds us that the sin of one person can bring tragic, spiritual consequences upon another. As an example, the backsliding dissenter almost always takes others with him, because it is sin's nature to take others down with it (II Peter 2:1-2, I Timothy 6:3-5, 20-21). False teachers and church dissidents put many coins on the floor spiritually.

### 3. What are the consequences of the coin's lost condition? Same verse.

**Comment:** The coin becomes useless and unclean, just as a person does through sin. While lost, the coin is essentially worthless. Likewise, an unrepentant sinner is useless to God and of no benefit to others. The apostle Paul was a lost coin, as it were, until he met Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-6). Sin destroys our value in service to both God and man; we become useless.

If the coin fell on the floor, it fell onto one of the dirtiest places in the house, making it unclean. The woman's sweeping of the floor indicates it was dirty. This defilement of the coin shows what sin does to a person: It pollutes, thereby defiling him (Titus 1:15-16). The only spiritual cleansing agent that will cleanse away the filth is the blood of Jesus Christ (I John 1:7-9).

#### 4. Why is finding the coin so important? Luke 15:8-10.

**Comment:** Several things are involved in the woman's searching for and eventually finding the coin. Her motivation to find the coin is due to the value she placed upon it. She also suffers from the loss of the coin, while the coin, of course, feels nothing. The woman represents the church through which God works.

In the eyes of God, the sinner, represented by the coin, is not only a suffering being, like the sheep on whom He takes pity, but he is also precious, created in God's image and assigned a part in the accomplishment of His plans. In the illustration of the sheep, the lost person is viewed from man's perspective—he is one who suffers and therefore needs salvation. In the illustration of the coin, the lost person is seen from God's perspective—he is one who has great value, the loss of which God feels. In considering this, we should realize the great effect of sin upon God's glory and interests.

The lamp represents both the Word and the Spirit of God (Psalm 119:105). Both shed light on the plight of sinners and give solutions to their problems. Spiritual illumination enables the church to see how to help sinners who cannot see their fruitless condition. Just as the woman has to sweep the floor of debris, the church must make its surroundings clean and pure by sweeping away the filth from its domain (Isaiah 52:11). Doctrinal corruption makes it hard to see through the debris of false teachings. Today, doctrines have been so corrupted in mainstream Christianity that it is impossible to find spiritually pure teachings within it.

That the woman seeks the coin diligently shows a dedication to looking cautiously and continuously (Ecclesiastes 7:25). She is not haphazard in looking for the coin but organized and systematic, and she persists in the job until it is completed. Sadly, there are always those who attend God's church who work vigorously and earnestly for a short time then quit.

Finally, the whole illustration depicts her as enthusiastic, hopeful, and joyful in her responsibilities. This is the attitude we must have as we do God's work in preparation for His coming.