

To Speak in Parables
Proclamation of the Gospel in the Parables of Jesus

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WHAT IS A PARABLE?

Parables function as metaphors challenging or inviting the audience into a new or deeper experience of God's dominion, a dominion identified with those who are the **LAST LOST LEAST LITTLE LIFELESS LOWEST, LEAST LIKELY, LONGINGLI-EST**

Lost and Found Parables of Luke 15

WANTED
PARTY ANIMAL
Dead
and
Alive

Lost and Found Parables of Luke 15

Resources:

The Lutheran "Art for the Heart"
March 1998

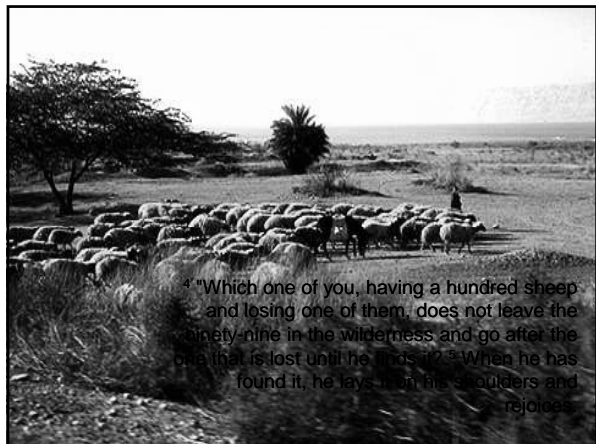
The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming
Henri J.M. Nouwen

A Father and Two Sons
CD-ROM from American Bible Society

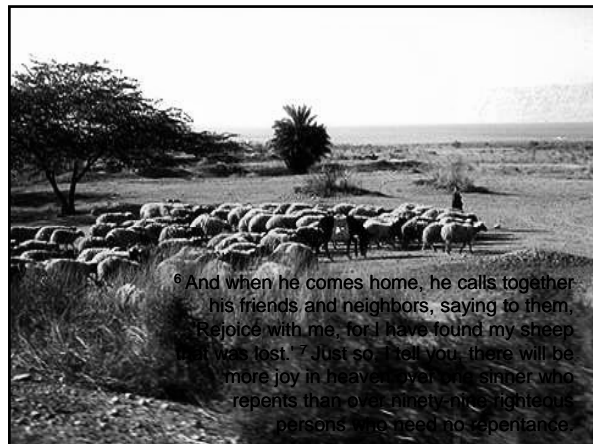
Luke 15

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable...



⁴ "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices."



⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over a sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."



How is this picture interpreting the parable?

Gospel of Thomas 107

Jesus said, "The Kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine and looked for that one until he found it. When he had gone to such trouble, he said to the sheep, 'I care for you more than the ninety-nine.'"

Also compare Matthew 18.10-14

<p>Matthew 18.10-14</p> <p>¹² What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.</p>	<p>Luke 15.4-7</p> <p>⁴ "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."</p>
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Thinking of the last, lost...

⁴ "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing (ἀπόλλυμι) one of them, ... and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ... 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'

Thinking of the last, lost...

There is one flock, but...



Luke 15

In the whole world you find no occupation more despised than that of the shepherd... Yet David presumed to call the Holy One, blessed be He, a shepherd!
Midrash Ps 23.2

Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents...

What does it mean for a sheep to repent?



⁸ "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?"



⁹ When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.'



¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."



Thinking of the last, lost...

⁸ "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?"

Luke 15

Women were of low social status

Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

What does it mean for a coin to repent?



¹¹ Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property (*ousia*) that will belong to me.' So he divided his property (*bion*) between them.

What do you think of the son? Of the father?

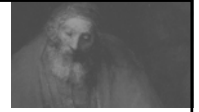
Sirach 33:20-23

²⁰ To son or wife, to brother or friend, do not give power over yourself, as long as you live; and do not give your property to another, in case you change your mind and must ask for it.

²¹ While you are still alive and have breath in you, do not let anyone take your place.

²² For it is better that your children should ask from you than that you should look to the hand of your children.

... in the hour of death,
distribute your inheritance..



¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need.



¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs.

¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.



¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said,

'How many of my father's hired hands (*misthoi*) have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying (ἀπόλλυμαι) of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands (*misthoi*)."'



*Is the son truly sincere?
Or is he only calculating how he will survive?
Is he asking for forgiveness?*



Is the son truly sincere?

Or is he only calculating how he will survive?

Is he asking for forgiveness?

Lost Sheep

²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion (σπλαγγνίζομαι); he ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him all over.



²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

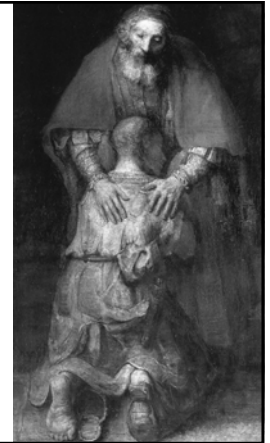
But the father said



²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ...



... ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found! And they began to celebrate.



²⁵ Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in.



His father came out and began to plead with him.

29 But he answered his father,
 'Listen!
 For all these years I have been working
 like a slave (*doulos*) for you, and I have
 never disobeyed your command;
 yet you have never given me even a
 young goat so that I might
 celebrate with my friends.
 30 But when this son of yours came back,
 who has devoured your property (*bion*)
 with prostitutes,
 you killed the fatted calf for him!

31 Then the father said to him,
 'Child, you are always with me, and all
 that is mine is yours.
 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice,
 because this brother of yours
 was dead and has come to life;
 he was lost and has been found.'"


Luke 15

*What does it
 mean for a
 person to
 repent?*

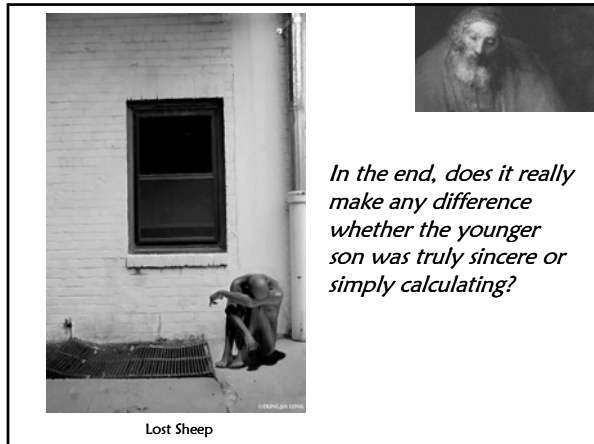



REPENTANCE
 is to realize that
 we:

- were lost and
 have been found
- were dead and
 have been made
 alive




*In the end, does it really make any difference
 whether the younger son was truly sincere or
 simply calculating?*



WANTED: Dead *and* Alive

"Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?"

WANTED: Dead *and* Alive

Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?

WANTED: Dead *and* Alive

But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

WANTED: Dead *and* Alive

His father came out and began to plead with him.

Which lost sheep was forgiven?



WANTED: Dead *and* Alive

- Jesus practices what he preaches.
- Only a persistent, foolishly and outrageously loving and gracious God can save us and make us alive
- It takes a Prodigal Father...

What is the Dominion of God like?

Rejoice with me...!

Rejoice with me...!

We had to celebrate and rejoice...!

What is the Dominion of God like?



The banquet and celebration at the end!

Luke 15

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

WANTED PARTY ANIMAL Dead *and* Alive

In this series of parables in Luke 15, who ends up dead?

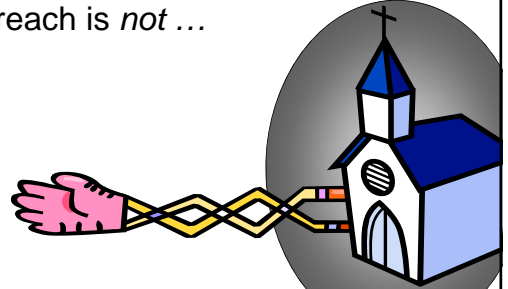
Who is the true **party animal**?

Come on in and let the party begin!

WANTED: Dead *and* Alive

What do these parables suggest about the Church's mission and outreach?

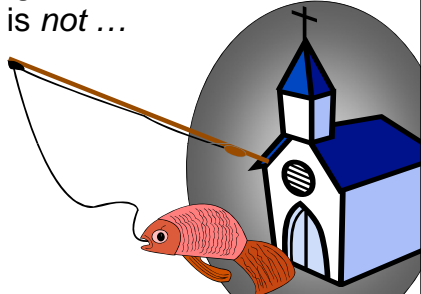
WANTED: Dead *and* Alive
Outreach is *not* ...



... simply reaching out

Thinking of OUTREACH...

Outreach is *not* ...



... simply reeling 'em in

WANTED: Dead *and* Alive

Outreach *IS* ...

- Going after
- Searching carefully
- Running toward
- Going out
- ~~Welcoming home~~

