HOMEWORK: Read Luke chapters 15 & 16

**Main Point**

Jesus didn't come for those who are self-sufficient but for the lost and needy.

Read Luke 15:1-10.

* **How does Jesus’ parable of the sheep relate to the complaining of the Pharisees?**
* **What are the similarities between the two parables in Luke 15:3-10?**

Both of these parables point to the finder’s joy. Jesus said there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than the many—the 99—who don’t need repentance. No one is so lost as those who fail to see their lostness. Jesus pointed out the need for His followers to diligently and intentionally pursue those who are without Christ and celebrate when people make Jesus Lord of their lives.

* **What are the implications of these two parables for us today?**
* **What does it mean for a person to be lost spiritually? How long has it been since you shared with others how to be a follower of Christ? If it’s been a while, what has held you back?**

The scene is a pastoral setting of a shepherd with a flock of 100 sheep. Somehow, one sheep wanders from the flock and cannot find its way back. Jesus described the sheep as “lost” from the flock, a word that implies a life-threatening situation for a sheep. The safety of the many did not remove the shepherd’s concern for the missing one. He went looking for the lost sheep.

In the second parable, verses 8-10, Jesus gave another perspective, hoping His hearers would get the idea. A woman had saved her small wages and gathered ten silver coins, her wages for ten days. When she lost one coin, she faced the same dilemma as the shepherd: should she spend time and energy searching for the one when she still had nine? Jesus taught that one coin was worth the effort.

Read Luke 15:11-32.

* **What was the son saying about how he valued his father? Why do you think the father gave his son what he asked for?**
* **How did the son gain appreciation of his father?**
* **How did the father respond to the younger son? How di the father respond to the older son? What does this teach us about God?**

The son’s request for his inheritance was like telling his father, “I wish you were dead.” Inheritance comes when someone passes away; therefore, the son implied that he thought his father was worth more to him dead than alive. The father would have been heartbroken by the request, but he let the son have his wish and leave. Much like we do today, the son made idols out of the things his father could give instead of loving his father.

Instead of the story ending on a note of joy and celebration, as might be expected, the spotlight shifts to the older brother. Unlike the father’s positive attitude, the older brother (1) was surprised at the return of his sinning brother, (2) was offended and jealous at the father’s celebration, (3) became angry at the father’s forgiving love, (4) declared his own self-righteousness, and (5) focused on his brother’s sinfulness rather than his newfound repentance. Jesus’ representation of the religious leaders in the character of the older brother was a scathing rebuke of their self-righteousness.

Read Luke 16:1-18.

* **How would you define “shrewd”? When is shrewdness a negative quality? How is it a positive quality in this parable?**
* **In what manner does the shrewd person look at their money? What does that have to do with saving?**

Jesus told the disciples to use worldly wealth for kingdom purposes. When we do that, we recognize that money is temporary, but we can use it for eternal good. In other words, we are to treat our money as a tool for investing in eternity. The way we spend our money is a window into our hearts. Our spending shows us what we believe about God. Because everything we have is a gift from God, we must to learn how to make the most of what we’ve been given.

Read Luke 16:19-31.

* **What words would you use to describe Lazarus? On the other hand, what words would you use to describe the rich man?**
* **What is suggested by the detail that Lazarus was left at the rich man’s gate each day?**

The account of the rich man and Lazarus continues the examination of whether money takes priority over God (see vv. 1-18). More than likely, the Pharisees who challenged Jesus and scoffed at His teaching nevertheless remained in the crowd to hear this story. The parable includes many topics such as wealth, poverty, economic disparity, social justice, and the nature of heaven and hell. At its core, the parable has a two-pronged focus: judgment for the proper use of wealth and the sufficiency of the Scriptures.