

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

TEXT: (Luke 15:3-23, NLT)

³ So Jesus told them this story: ⁴ “If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won’t he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. ⁶ When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven’t strayed away!

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.”

¹¹ To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: “A man had two sons. ¹² The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

¹³ “A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. ¹⁴ About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. ¹⁵ He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will go home to my father and say, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.’”

²⁰ “So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. ²¹ His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’

²² “But his father said to the servants, ‘Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. ²³ And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.’ So the party began.

INTRODUCTION

1. “And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy but with fear, loathing even the clothing spotted *and* polluted by their shameless immoral freedom” (Jude 1:22-23, AMP).
2. “Hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord” (I Corinthians 5:5, NIV).

I. THE LOST SHEEP

1. “If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won’t he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it?” (Luke 15:4, NLT).

A. The Precious Valuable Sheep

1. "The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake" (Psalm 23:1-3, NIV).
2. "For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand" (Psalm 95:7, KJV).
3. "When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it" (1 Samuel 17:34-35, NIV).
4. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters" (1 John 3:16, NIV).

B. Driven by Passion

1. "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it?" (Luke 15:4, NLT).
2. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16-17, NIV).
3. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NIV).
4. "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4-5, NIV).
5. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10, NIV).

C. When the Sheep Is Found

1. "And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep'" (Luke 15:5-6, NLT).
2. "In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!" (Luke 15:7, NLT).

II. THE LOST COIN

1. "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one" (Luke 15:8, NLT).

A. Lost at Home

1. "Won't she light a lamp and sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it?" (Luke 15:8, NLT).
2. "A child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Proverbs 29:15, ESV).
3. "The one who loves their children is careful to discipline them" (Proverbs 13:24, NIV).
4. "Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death" (Proverbs 19:18, NIV).
5. "If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:25, NIV).

B. The Way to Finding the Lost Coin

1. "She will light a lamp" (Luke 15:8, NCV).
2. "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105, KJV).
3. "She will light a lamp, sweep the house, and look carefully for the coin until she finds it" (Luke 15:8, NCV).
4. "They traded the glory of God who holds the whole world in his hands for cheap figurines you can buy at any roadside stand" (Romans 1:23, MSG).

C. Change Led to rejoicing

1. "And when she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents" (Luke 15:9-10, NLT).

III. THE REBELLIOUS SON

1. "A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons" (Luke 15:11-12, NLT).

A. The Way Down

1. "The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate'" (Luke 15:12, NIV).
2. "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living" (Luke 15:13, NIV).
3. "The younger son...set off for a distant country" (Luke 15:13, NIV).
4. "And there squandered his wealth in wild living" (Luke 15:13, NIV).
5. "After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need" (Luke 15:14, NIV).
6. "So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs" (Luke 15:15, NIV).
7. "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first" (Matthew 12:43-45, NIV).
8. "He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything" (Luke 15:16, NIV).
9. "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men'" (Luke 15:17-19, NIV).

B. The Way Back Up

1. "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!" (Luke 15:17, NIV).
2. "I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you" (Luke 15:18, NIV).

3. "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men" (Luke 15:19, NIV).
4. "So he got up and went to his father" (Luke 15:20, NIV).
5. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20).
6. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20, NIV).
7. "Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate" (Luke 15:23-24).

C. The Father's Role

1. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20, NIV).
2. "But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began" (Luke 22-24, NLT).

CONCLUSION

1. "Hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord" (I Corinthians 5:5, NIV).