

SUN CITY SERMON NOTES

23.06.19



Luke's gospel. Some of the loveliest literature in history; chapter 15 – one of the world's greatest ever short story. Luke himself – a doctor with a heart of compassion for every soul – no barriers and full pursuit – it's the way he framed and presented Jesus. He draws out issues to be considered that the other gospel authors don't – that's the richness we have in the Word – it totally compliments itself; supports itself. Jesus came to display the heart of God and if anyone was every able to capture it in word, it's Luke. He identifies things in Christ that identify Christ in us today; he delved deeply to establish his account – about 19,500 words; not Jewish but has written the largest book in the New Testament, with the book of Acts – near quarter of the New Testament. He speaks to the rich, the poor, the rulers, the excluded, the downcast, the outcast, the sick, the wanderer and the rebel – Luke wants them all in the kingdom – from the north, south, east and west – Jew / Gentile. We all bring something to the table (can be an uneven playing field – background, rearing, country, substance) – Luke brings a heart of compassion and understanding to those who are outside the Jewish culture.

Along with the Good Samaritan and Luke 15: some of the parables that Luke alone presents are of the two debtors (7:40–43); the friend at midnight (11:5–8); the rich fool (12:13–21); the lost coin (15:8–10); the shrewd manager (16:1–12); the rich man and Lazarus (16:19–31); the persistent widow (18:1–8); the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9–14).

Some of us might remember the 'Jesus' film – based on the gospel of Luke – between translated in to more than 1.700 languages and has been credited with more than 570M decisions for Christ. Not glorifying Luke because his greatest desire that Jesus' heart would be made known – he magnifies this in his gospel as he saw Jesus cut through injustice.

Stimulating
Wholesome Thinking

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1. Jesus came to display the heart of God and if anyone was every able to capture it in word, it's Luke.
2. When Jesus says 'suppose' He is leaving room for others to consider, giving grace to the hearer.
3. The son of man came to seek and to save that which is lost - Luke 19:10

* Paul called him 'the beloved physician' Colossians 4:14. He includes more miracles of healing than other gospels and he spends much time on the events leading up to, and Christ's birth – miracle conception; fulfilment of prophecy. We see an intricacy, an intimacy in his writings - taking the genealogy back to Adam – not just to Abraham; when ten lepers – they call out to Jesus – to keep the distance – but Luke records 'when Jesus saw them' – Luke knew that if you call out to Jesus, He comes looking – to cleanse, to heal. Jesus – always looking, always **seeking**. The *Samaritan* leper drew near – and Jesus spoke with him. (The devil roams about like a roaring lion – **seeking** whom he can devour) Jesus – walking strategically – seeking for whom He can find, feed, heal, make whole, deliver, save, bring home). From last week we note Luke speaks of women involved; brings some beautiful praise out – (1:46-55; 1:68-79; 2: 29-32 - heaven touching earth); all barriers down – the gospel for every soul. Luke shows Jesus eating with all sorts of people (He received attention when He sat with those the religious didn't want Him to) and he shows more of Jesus at prayer, he shows us the distance required to win souls.

Suppose: Consider this. There is a lot of good preaching points in this chapter, but what is it that God is truly asking us to consider? What is He putting His finger on? What is the main thing?

Key passage: Luke 15. Let's hear His heart.

Luke 15:1-2:

"Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ²But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Jesus has overheard muttering from the Pharisees and teachers of the law; accusing perhaps 'this man welcomes sinners and eats with them' – though they were ticked with Jesus and going hard at Him, still, He loves them. How long had they watched Him? Imagine how many reports people would have brought to them? Imagine how broad the reports were to them? This man is forgiving men; teaching; healing; driving out demons; making us look a little exclusive; His words are lining up with prophecy; lots of prophesy; He's got hundreds and thousands of people talking about the kingdom; He loves people, all people; He embraces them; feeds them; He's got power, authority; He's turning our world upside down; He's speaking about a new covenant; different government; peace; women (notable and those we might have condemned); children! How long had they watched, listened, and not learned? So, He says to them:

'**Suppose**' In their hearing – Jesus' always aware of everyone in earshot... (Ephesians 4:29 -- imparting grace to the hearer) – Jesus is wanting to bring grace to these hearers.

Luke 15:3-7

"Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

Suppose one of yours **wanders** – and gets lost – little bit by little one of yours *find themselves* out on a limb; hanging off a cliff; stuck in a bramble; confused; on their own; in a precarious situation; no feed; no water; too far out; can't hear the crew anymore; can't see the way home?

Would you not bring your wanderer home? 'I suppose' – too distant for it to matter? "Suppose one of you Doesn't he ... go after ... until he finds it... don't you go commit to find until you find – and when you do! The joy! You wrap him around your shoulders, and you bring him home and you shout with all your friends and close ones 'I've found my lost sheep'....

Sheep are gregarious; this one didn't get lost intentionally; it just got lost. Jesus was probing at all of us to see and understand the heart and purposes of the Father: He is revealing His mission right here. He said in John 10:16: "I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must **bring** them also, and they will listen to My voice. Then there will be one flock, one shepherd."

A soul has wandered. Who will **bring** him home? There is great joy of bringing that one home – it gives you the strength to bear the discomfort. Again, of Jesus it is said: ‘for the joy set before Him, Jesus endured the cross, scorning its shame’ Hebrews 12:2. He carried the weight of the sin of the world; He bore upon Himself every curse and He brought us home... each one, heaven rejoicing... because we were dead, and now we’re alive; we were lost and now we’re found. Ninety-nine sheep might be enough – but not with God; the lost one – needs to be brought home.

Luke 15:8-10:

“⁸ ‘Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?’⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Suppose one of is lost through **no fault of its own**; led astray; falls to the ground; life is not an even playing field, but God comes hard after us. He came for Adam and Eve hiding in the garden - sin doesn’t stop God coming after us – it devours, inhibits and hinders us from His presence. It costs to find something: light needs to be thrown on some things; it takes effort, cleaning – what value a soul? ‘a little lost coin’ – no favourites with Father. Many thoughts around what the coin might signify but the next chapter reveals that the Pharisees loved money – they might not be interested to find a sheep; perhaps they would go hard to find lost money. Nine coins might be enough? Ten are important to God.

Suppose this lost one was your ‘one little coin.’ (Illustration: love them like you love your mother). Jesus was trying to show them that the Father loves everyone equally – no favourites, but the one who is lost, the one who is dead, must be found, must be brought into the light and loved – brought back into a place of right value and purpose. John 1:9 – says the true light brings light to every man.

Luke 15:11-31: Jesus continues: ‘supposing’ – a man with two sons – now making it personal, trying to bring it home, where it meets us. (Imagined responses of the Pharisee in red and expanded understanding in black).

*“¹¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ **Nooo!** So, he divided his property between them. **Could not be respected under these conditions.** ¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country **maybe no synagogues?** and there squandered **not good** his wealth **not good** in wild living **not good, hadn’t been taught that.** ¹⁴ After he had spent everything **not good, you always save some**, there was a severe famine in that whole country (sometimes our stewardship responsibility is much greater than we realise), and he began to be in need (good in Jesus’ eyes) – **deserved in the eyes of the religious** (Father waits to respond). ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country (maybe not the culture you want your son in), who sent him to his fields to feed pigs **shocking.** ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating (definitely not himself any longer), but no one gave him anything? (Might have helped him turn to the Father). ¹⁷ “When he came to his senses (literally, ‘himself – apart from God we are not free to be ourselves and we are not our true selves until we come home to God), he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! (Came to grips with reality; we don’t deny facts but we come to faith) ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father (came to grips with the answer) and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. (This is the second time he got up and went – it’s always right to get up, but there’s a right direction to take).*

*“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him (always seeking) and was filled with compassion for him (never anything else but) **the Pharisees were expecting the story to end with the younger son seeking repentance;** he ran to his son **NO!**, threw his arms around him and kissed him **NO! NO! NO!** (and this isn’t blowing a kiss – this is earnest kisses). **Jesus doesn’t stop ... He is after the hearts of the religious because they are as least as lost as the sheep, the coin, and the younger son. If they didn’t get it, He’d have to take the story further – and bring it inside.***

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' (Father's not doing a word count – repentance is there – He's returned – now we **welcome** him, for now we **eat with him** – communion!) ²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe (*the best robe?*) and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger (*restore his authority?*) and sandals on his feet (*he's a son? not a slave?*). ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate (there's a right time to celebrate but we must be waiting ready). ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So, they began to celebrate.

According to Father, he wasn't just lost then found, but dead and now alive again.

While we were dead in our sins, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on (maybe should have asked Dad; always good to ask the right person). ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back **safe and sound** (received him whole, sound – as if he never sinned, as if he is healthy, right, whole!).'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So, his father went out and pleaded with him *Sin doesn't keep God away from us – it keeps us away from Him; (Adam & Eve; Cain; Jonah...)*. ²⁹ But he answered his father (supposing now), 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends (wrong perceptions – very strong – he could have celebrated with his friend and neighbours at any time, but he wasn't seeking for the right things). ³⁰ But when this son of yours (*brother's keeper*) who has squandered your property with prostitutes (nowhere does it say this, but gossip travels fast and far) comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ "My son (Father's heart),' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But **we** had to celebrate and be glad (**rejoice**), because this brother of yours **was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.**'"

Father and Son and Holy Spirit are trying to bring the world back home. Are these 3 parables all saying the same thing? There may be four thoughts to consider.

1. Some have wandered (one degree at a time) and found themselves lost - unintentionally
2. Some are just lost – no fault of their own – circumstances, family, raising
3. Some got lost deliberately – thought it through and intentionally left
4. Some are absolutely lost and completely unaware – the self-righteousness (who have no need to repent) serving out of grim duty instead of loving service; could not say 'Father', with lack of sympathy, care or respect (not 'my brother' but 'your son' 'Your problem' (Jonah)); could not converse civilly; knew better than the Father with no sign of change. Jesus pursues them – He pursues their little and right-in-their-own-eyes group/s by wooing them; in the House and looking down their nose – still, Jesus woos them.

But they are lost! Jesus is seeking. Luke 19:10 'The son of man came to seek and to save that which is lost' – no matter why 'lost' (wanderer, lost, left or completely unaware) there is a cure to being lost – we simply ask direction. The right answer will always direct towards Christ.

He died and rose again for every soul.

“. . . He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).