

## Session 2

March 8, 2020

### HOLY VOCABULARY: THE WORD *LOST*

#### Luke 15:11-14,17-24

Jesus said, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). But what does it mean to be “lost?” And since you can’t be *saved* unless you’re first *lost*, how do you explain the concept to a *lost* person (who doesn’t necessarily know he’s *lost*, or even care about being *saved*), so that he might realize he is *lost* and want to be *saved*??

The stories Jesus related in Luke 15 were in response to the religious leaders around Him who complained that Jesus spent too much time associating with sinners...when He should have been socializing more with them, the spiritual elite. Each of the three parables—the Lost Sheep (15:3-7), the Lost Coin (15:8-10), and the Lost (or *Prodigal*) Son (15:11-24)—has some unique features, but the Lost Son *personalizes* the principle of what it means to be lost...and what it means to be found.

**What lostness looks like (vv. 11-16).** Amidst the many lessons in this text, four characteristics of lostness are displayed. First, lost people *disrespect the Father*. The request made by the younger son (v. 12) is unbelievably offensive. An inheritance is only dispersed *after* a death; not before. To ask his father for his share of the inheritance is basically to say he wishes his father was already dead! Second, lost people *run from the Father*. Far from home, this young man was free to live a life of frivolity. Ultimately, he wasted all he had in pursuit of a good time (v. 13; see also Luke 12:19). Third, lost people are *desperately hopeless*. At the end of this stage of the son’s rebellion, what did he have? Nothing! And his future prospects were equally as empty (v. 14). Fourth, lost people are *desperately helpless*. The son’s needs were obvious; no one was there to help him (v. 16); and he was clearly unable to help himself.

**What conversion looks like (vv. 17-20).** The first step in accepting salvation is *acknowledging* you are lost! In the parable, this is demonstrated by the sudden realization observed in verse 17: “When he came to his senses...” (anyone who has had a wayward child prays for this to happen, and to happen soon!) The second step is *confession*. The Greek word for confession means “to say the same thing.” Simply put, to confess is to agree with God that I am a sinner. “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight,” (v. 18) is about as clear a confession as you can get! *Repentance* and *submission to God’s lordship* are also necessary for salvation. These are both illustrated by the younger son’s humble admission of failure (v. 19) and his willful, intentional return to the father he had offended (v. 20).

**What forgiveness looks like (vv. 20-24).** The hero in this story is not the wayward son who returns, but the loving father who is out there waiting for him! The parable of the Prodigal Son provides several characteristics of this father that relate directly to our Heavenly Father. Certainly, there is *patience*. While the father did not force his wayward child to stay, or drag him back by force, he was already watching for his return (v. 20; see 2 Pet. 3:9). Second, the father went *to* his son while he was still far off (v. 20; see Rom. 5:8). Next, he grants complete *forgiveness*. The confession and repentance of the sinning son is met with a warm and loving embrace (v. 20; see 1 John 1:9; Is. 1:18). The past failure is forgotten, and the focus is on the

future (see 2 Cor. 5:17; Ps. 103:12). Finally, the father leads a chorus of celebration over the sinner who repents (vv. 22-24). Celebrating salvation is a recurring theme in Luke 15. In verse 7, Jesus said, "I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who don't need repentance." Then again in verse 10, "I tell you, in the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents." The reason for all this joy is given at the chapter's conclusion, "...we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (v. 32).