

Once Was Lost, Now Am Found - Repentance and Love

Luke 15:1–10 (NIV) & Psalm 14

14/09/2025

I Once Was Lost, but Now I Am Found!!

Let us Pray:

Father, we pray your Holy Spirit upon all of us today to give us ears that hear, hearts that receive and minds and bodies that are willing to be doers of your word. Thank you, God, that you relentlessly seek the lost, treasure every soul, and rejoice over repentance. Thank you that we will reflect on the fact that repentance is not about condemnation but about restoration and celebration. And as your church, we are called to join Your mission—to seek, to value, and to celebrate with You. In Jesus name we pray, **Amen**

Have you ever lost something important? Perhaps it was your wallet, your car keys, or even a cherished family keepsake. The frantic search that follows can make your heart race. You turn the house upside down, look in places you already checked, and feel frustration growing. But then, the moment comes—you find it. Relief and joy overwhelm you, and you might even laugh at yourself. Jesus used this very human experience to describe God's love. In Luke 15, He tells the story of a lost sheep and a lost coin to show us how heaven responds when one sinner repents. What is lost is not forgotten; what is found is celebrated.

To truly understand our main text, Luke 15:1–10, we must step into the cultural and spiritual tensions of the time. Tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Jesus. These were people despised by society—tax collectors for collaborating with Rome, and sinners for openly living outside the moral laws of Israel. Yet, they found in Jesus something radically different: acceptance, compassion, and hope.

The Pharisees and teachers of the law, however, grumbled: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2). To them, holiness meant separation from the unclean. But Jesus revealed that holiness is love in action, not isolation. He told three parables in Luke 15: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. Each escalates in intensity, painting a picture of God's relentless pursuit of the lost. And today we will reflect on the first two parables.

Let's delve into the first parable—the lost sheep. Jesus says, in verse 4 of our text -"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?".

This imagery is powerful! A shepherd is willing to leave the safety and security of the flock to search for one lost sheep. This illustrates the heart of our God. He is not indifferent to our plight; He actively seeks us out.

Spiritually speaking, we are all lost at one time or another. Sin leads us astray, causing us to wander away from the fold. We may not even realize we are lost until we feel the emptiness within—a void that only the shepherd can fill.

The love of God is relentless. He pursues us, not with condemnation, but with compassion. Each of us has been that lost sheep at one point, and it is in our lostness that we experience the depth of God's love.

Now, let's turn our attention to the second parable—the lost coin. Jesus tells us in verse 8 about a woman who has ten silver coins and loses one. "Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search diligently until she finds it?".

The effort she puts into finding that lost coin speaks volumes about its value.

In God's eyes, each of us is priceless. The lost coin represents those who are spiritually lost, those who feel overlooked or forgotten. Just as the woman searched diligently for her coin, God searches for us with a fervour that cannot be quenched.

The shepherd with one hundred sheep risks leaving the ninety-nine to save the one. The woman with ten coins lights a lamp, sweeps her house, and searches diligently for the missing silver piece.

In both cases, the recovery sparks joy, not merely for the individual, but for the entire community.

Both these stories tell us about ourselves. We are lost and as Isaiah said in Isaiah 53:6 - 'We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.' The stories also teach us something about our God. God loves lost people.

We're divided in Scripture into one of two ways - we are either lost or we are saved and there's no in-between - you're either lost or you're saved

The reality is we are doomed - we are condemned as a result of our sin but we are discovered by grace - we are discovered, we are rescued, we are saved - by the grace of God.

Now we know how God feels about lost people - we know that he goes searching for them we know that when he finds them there's joy in heaven and there is rejoicing among the angels when one person comes to the lord

God wants to see the lost saved and if that's important to him it ought to be important to us as his followers

This background shows us two powerful truths: first, sinners are not beyond the reach of God's love, and second, heaven celebrates what the world dismisses. Luke's Gospel highlights Jesus as the Friend of sinners—the One who seeks, saves, and restores.

Now let's reflect on repentance. To be found, one must first recognize that they are lost. Repentance is not simply feeling sorrow for our sin; it is a complete turning away from it. It is saying, "I no longer want to live in the darkness, but I desire to walk in the light of Christ."

Repentance leads to restoration. When the lost sheep is found, the shepherd joyfully carries it home. When the lost coin is found, the woman rejoices and calls her friends to celebrate.

In our lives, we must embrace the process of repentance. It is an ongoing journey. There may be moments when we stray, but God's love is ever-present, calling us back. 1 John 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

This is the beauty of repentance; it allows us to experience God's grace and mercy profoundly.

As those who have been found, we have a role to play in helping those who are lost. We are called to be ambassadors of God's love. The joy we experience in being found should compel us to reach out to others.

This is the essence of the Great Commission. Jesus instructed us to go and make disciples of all nations as in Matthew 28:19. We are to share the good news that there is hope for the lost, that there is a shepherd who seeks them out.

Imagine the impact we could have if we truly lived out our calling. We must look around us and see those who are lost in our communities—those who are struggling with addiction, those who feel unloved or hopeless, and those who are seeking purpose. We need to be the light that leads them home, just as Christ leads us.

Our God is a God who loves to forgive - a God who made a way for sinners to be forgiven - he is the Good Shepherd our Savior Jesus he's truly a Good Shepherd and a rejoicing Savior - the Son of man came to seek and save the Lost

It is important here how Jesus has connected the lost and the found with repentance.

The simple message here is that God rejoices over the lost being found - that's how Jesus connects it - in verse 7 when the lost sheep is found – Jesus says “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.” – and in verse 10 – He says about the lost coin that has been found – “In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Repentance is often viewed negatively. Many associate it with shame, guilt, and condemnation. But in Scripture, repentance is about turning back toward God. It is the doorway into joy, freedom, and restoration. Luke 15 reframes repentance—not as punishment but as a celebration. God doesn't scold the sinner who returns; He throws a celebration in heaven. In these parables, we discover three life-changing truths:

- God seeks the lost. He doesn't sit back and wait; He pursues.
- God values the lost. Every soul matters deeply to Him; and
- God celebrates the found. Repentance is heaven's greatest joy.

This message speaks directly to us today. Each of us has wandered at some point, each of us has felt lost. But the good news is this: God never gives up on His children.

- **God Seeks the Lost**

The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine sheep to search for the one that is missing. He does not consider the loss acceptable; he goes after the lost sheep until he finds it. This parable shows us that God's love is not passive—it is active and pursuing. His heart is not content with ninety-nine safe sheep while one is missing. He notices the absence of the one, and He seeks until the sheep is restored.

Verse 4 of our text speaks to this and it reads: “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?”

Imagine a firefighter rushing into a burning building. Even if ninety-nine people escape, he will not rest if one remains trapped. That last person is not “just one”; that life is priceless.

The message is that, God's pursuit of us is relentless. Even when we feel unworthy or forgotten, He seeks us out. Our role is to stop running, surrender, and allow ourselves to be found by His love.

- **Now, God Values the Lost**

In the second parable, we read in verse 8 - a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Jesus says - Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? To others, a single coin may not seem valuable, but to her it is priceless. She lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches diligently until it is found. Jesus is teaching us that no one is insignificant in God's eyes. While society might dismiss or overlook certain people, God treasures every soul.

Now, think of a mother who treasures her child's hand-drawn pictures. To others, they are scribbles with no market value, but to her they are priceless because of love.

Likewise, you are not forgotten or replaceable in God's eyes. Each life has eternal worth. This truth calls us to see others the same way—to treat people as treasures, not statistics.

- **God Celebrates the Found**

Both parables in our text today, end in celebration. The shepherd calls his friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep." The woman does the same when she recovers her coin. Jesus concludes that heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents.

The point is clear: repentance is not about shame—it is about joy. Heaven throws a celebration when we come home.

We see this in verse 10, "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Now, imagine a community welcoming home a child who was missing for days. Tears, hugs, laughter—pure celebration. That's heaven's response to one sinner returning to God.

Repentance is not stepping into condemnation but into restoration. When you turn back to God, you enter a celebration of grace.

- **Now, God Calls Us to Share His Heart**

These parables not only reveal God's character but also challenge us to reflect His heart. If heaven rejoices over one sinner, then so should we. As His church, we are called to pursue the lost, value every soul, and celebrate repentance. Evangelism, discipleship, and compassion are not optional—they are the heartbeat of God.

We get told this in Luke 19:10: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Now, think of a rescue team working day and night to find survivors after a disaster. Their passion reflects God's mission through His church.

We are invited to partner with God in His mission—to go after the lost, to honour the forgotten, and to celebrate redemption.

John Newton in the writing of that great hymn - amazing grace - understood this whole concept of being lost and found because in the words in that hymn - he says:

*amazing grace how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me
i once was lost but now am found
was blind but now i see.*

maybe you're here today and you recognize your lost condition - you need to get saved today - for others – perhaps you know by the grace of God you've been found and Jesus has saved you - and so you're thankful for your salvation - but because he's done that for you, he wants you to also help those who are lost to be found

This famous song Amazing Grace describes anyone who's apart from a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ - and so if you're here today - you are either lost or you're saved - and if you're here today and you are saved - you once were lost before you got saved

Luke 15 paints a beautiful picture of God's love. He seeks the lost, values the lost, and celebrates the found. These parables remind us that no one is beyond God's reach. Today, you may feel distant, broken, or overlooked—but heaven notices you. God is searching for you right now.

Repentance is the necessary connector between the lost and God. Repentance is not a burden but an invitation. It is a turning back to God and stepping into joy. Heaven does not whisper about your failures; heaven sings over your return. The invitation is clear: **will you let yourself be found by His love?**

In this coming week, Be encouraged to Spend time in prayer, thanking God for pursuing you personally – we are reminded in Ezekiel 34:11 “For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.

Reach out to one person who feels distant or forgotten and tell them of Jesus, the good Shephard and what he says in John 10:11 - “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Share your testimony with someone, showing them God's love. Tell them of what Pauls says in Romans 5:8 – “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Celebrate small steps of repentance—yours and others. Meditate on 2 Peter 3:9 – “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Meditate daily on Luke 15 and journal God's personal pursuit in your life.

I'll say it again – I once was Lost but now I am found Hallelujah!

Let us Pray

Father in heaven I thank you for your word in these parables in which Jesus reminds us that we're all lost without you and we all need Jesus as our Savior. I pray right now for people who would recognize their lost condition and how much they need to be saved today.

Father, we thank You for the love that seeks us when we wander, values us when we feel worthless, and rejoices when we return. Help us embrace repentance not as punishment but as restoration. May we be Your hands and feet in this world, shining Your light in the darkness. Empower us to carry Your heart for the lost into the world, that we may love as You love. In Jesus' name,

Amen.