

The Parables of the Lost Things

Context

- Lost Coin
 - In those times, married women wore a headpiece made from silver coins strung together similar to how we might wear a wedding band. Some scholars suggest the coin might have come from this headpiece so the coin would be personally significant to the woman as well as financially.
- Prodigal Son
 - The son asking for and leaving with his inheritance was hugely offensive
 - Asking for his inheritance early makes the statement to his father, "I wish you were dead."
 - In this collective society, leaving his family behind would be offensive
 - The father honors the younger son in several ways
 - He runs to greet his son in a culture where respectable men didn't run
 - The robe was a sign of honor
 - The ring was a sign of authority and was used to seal documents. Giving the ring would be like giving the son power-of-attorney.
 - Slaves were barefoot so the giving of shoes embodies the son's promotion from servitude to sonship.
 - The older son's cold heart comes out in a couple ways
 - When speaking to his father, he refers to the younger brother as "your son" instead of "my brother"
 - The older son feels his father is indebted to him for his years of service
 - He shames his father by refusing to go into the party

Large Group Outline

- First, we must understand that we were once wandering from God and He brought us back home
 - But God's work in our life is not just for us
 - **What God does in us, He wants to do through us.**
 - At Starbucks, people sometimes "pay it forward" by paying for someone's coffee behind them in line inspiring the next person to pay for someone behind them. In the same way, we should pass on what God's blessed us with to someone else.
- The parables of the lost things
 - When the shepherd went out, it was inconvenient. He spent long days and sleepless nights looking for the lamb.
 - When the woman was looking for the coin, it represented either her means of providing for her family or a symbol of marriage. Either are personally valuable to her.
 - Something is lost in each parable. In the third parable, however, no one goes looking for the lost thing.
 - The older brother should have been out looking for the younger brother
 - When the younger son returns, the father doesn't put him on probation but love and entrusts

him immediately. This love us vulnerable and risky.

- This prodigal love is also shown in the story of Absalam and David
- Love isn't strategic move or a method to change someone, but our love should reflect God's heart

We can respond in two ways

1. Invest - Be the good older brother with the attitude, "If you don't make it, neither do I."
2. Invite - Invite people into this community through Bucces runs, hang outs, small group, or large group.

Potential Questions

- Have you identified with the younger brother at points in your life? With the older brother? With the father?
- What can we learn about God's character from these parables?
- Why do the shepherd, the woman, and the father celebrate? What does this say about God? What should we celebrate?
- Often we read the Parable of the Prodigal son in terms of guilt and forgiveness but the story also contains themes of honor and shame. How are guilt/forgiveness and honor/shame different? Where do you see each in the parable?
- Jesus gave these three parables to explain why he was eating with "sinners". What might we do for the Kingdom that causes people to ask why we're celebrating?
- After we've been found and the father has come and welcomed us back, what are we to do?