

## THE DIVINE SEARCH

Jesus is searching for you right now and will joyously celebrate your return to Him.

### KEY POINTS

- ❖ As told in Luke 15, Jesus sat down to a meal one day: Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them."
- ❖ Now, in Jesus' time, eating was just as important as it is to us today. But in that Middle Eastern society, *who* you ate with was even more important.
- ❖ The Pharisees – the religious experts, and the scribes –the legal experts, were closely observing the scene. Both came to the same conclusion: Jesus was violating their laws and customs! This was totally unacceptable. He received sinners into His presence and He *ate* with them. Shocking! Unbelievable!
- ❖ Jesus responded in Luke 15:3-7, ending with, "I say to you that...there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."
- ❖ Here's the situation: 99 sheep (representing "just persons") have repented of their sins and are in a right relationship with God. If anything happens to them (up to and including death!) they're okay; their souls are safe in God's care. But *one* is lost and outside of the kingdom of God (1% of the total 100).
- ❖ This is a problem that demands a dramatic response.
- ❖ As far as the Pharisees and scribes were concerned, the tax collectors and sinners Jesus was teaching and feeding were worthless sheep that shouldn't have wandered off in the first place. Their sinful lives and the consequences of their actions were on their own heads; certainly not the concern of the religious and legal elites who "obeyed" the word of God every day.
- ❖ But Jesus said, "No, no, no! they're as valuable to Me as your child is to you and I will do everything in My power to save them. And when they repent, the angels and I are going to party!" *That's* how Jesus views a wandering sheep.
- ❖ In the next connected parable, one coin out of 10 was lost: **10%**. A sheep was only good for wool and meat, whereas a coin could buy anything, so was more versatile than the sheep. And the coin represented a ten times higher percentage of the owner's wealth.
- ❖ But the process was virtually the same. The woman wasn't concerned about the nine "safe" coins, but she lit a lamp, got her broom, swept her house and totally devoted herself to finding the one lost coin (Luke 15:8-10).

**KEY SCRIPTURES:** Luke 15, 9:25; Psalm 34:18, 51:17; Isaiah 57:15, 66:2b

- ❖ And afterwards, like the shepherd, she called her friends and neighbours together, saying, "I found my lost coin! Come, let's celebrate!"
- ❖ In 'Part 3' (Luke 15:11-31), Jesus talks about a father who has two sons, one of whom goes astray. From 1% to 10%, now **50%**! From a sheep to a coin to a *son*.
- ❖ The younger son was wrong in every aspect. He was presumptuous, prideful, ungrateful, rude, and naïve. His life was a recipe for disaster, which is what he experienced in the end.
- ❖ On the other hand, his father allowed him the freedom to act like a man and make his own decisions, knowing what the end would be.
- ❖ Likewise, God doesn't force us to do what's right. He doesn't withhold His blessings from us. He allows us to exercise our own free will.
- ❖ The sheep and the coin had no capacity to choose their own path and make their own decisions. But the son was a different "kettle of fish". And we are most like the prodigal son: willful and unwise. *But* – and here is the crucial part of the story – one day, in the middle of his mess, he came to himself, prepared an appropriate speech to his father and came back home! And note well: nothing about him changed for the better *until* he returned home.
- ❖ You may have strayed away from what you know is right and done things that will earn you the judgment of God unless you repent. But, as you've heard today, the Lord is watching and waiting for you to come back home and repent.
- ❖ The minute He sees you coming around the bend, He's going to race out to meet you and restore you into His family, with great joy.
- ❖ If you are a righteous "big brother," Jesus is inviting you to join the party and attend the banquet He has prepared. Your Father thinks your brother's return is worth celebrating. He is willing to welcome him back with open arms and wants you to come in and join the feast.

### DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. As the lost/safe sheep/coin/brother, what do you understand about God's love from Luke 15? How will you respond? Ponder: do you exhibit the attitude God responds to (as shown in the verses from Psalms and Isaiah above)?

### PRAYER TIME

Jesus, thank You for showing mercy to me, a sinner. Amen.

## WEEK OF SUNDAY, JULY 25, 2021

### NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🧠 (Think about)

! (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↻ (Must share)

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### PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

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Go deeper with your Life Group family.  
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD  
Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline

Start-up: What is the most precious possession you have lost? Did you ever find it?