

Week 2: The Prodigal Son

Luke 15:1-2, 11-24

The Parables of Jesus

Week 1 – **Understanding Parables**
INTRO: Matthew 13:35

Week 2 – **The Prodigal Son**
LOSTNESS: Luke 15:11-32

Week 3 – **The Good Samaritan**
GOODNESS: Luke 10:25-37

Week 4 – **The Two Debtors**
SINFULNESS: Luke 7:36-50

Week 5 – **The Workers in the Vineyard**
FAIRNESS: Matthew 20:1-16

Parable of the Prodigal Son

Luke 15:1-2, 11-24 (NLT)

	Verse	Theme
1	[12]The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So, his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.	A son lost
2	[13]"A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.	Goods wasted in extravagant living
3	[14]About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve.	Everything is lost
4	[15]He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs.	The great sin
5	[16]The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.	Total rejection
6	[17]"When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!	A change of mind
6'	[18]I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you,[19]and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."	An initial repentance
5'	[20]"So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.	Total acceptance & forgiveness
4'	[21]His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.'	The great repentance
3'	[22]"But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet.	Everything restored, son reinstated
2'	[23]And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast,	Goods used for celebration
1'	[24]for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So, the party began.	A son is found

Luke 15:1-2

The Pharisees' Complaint

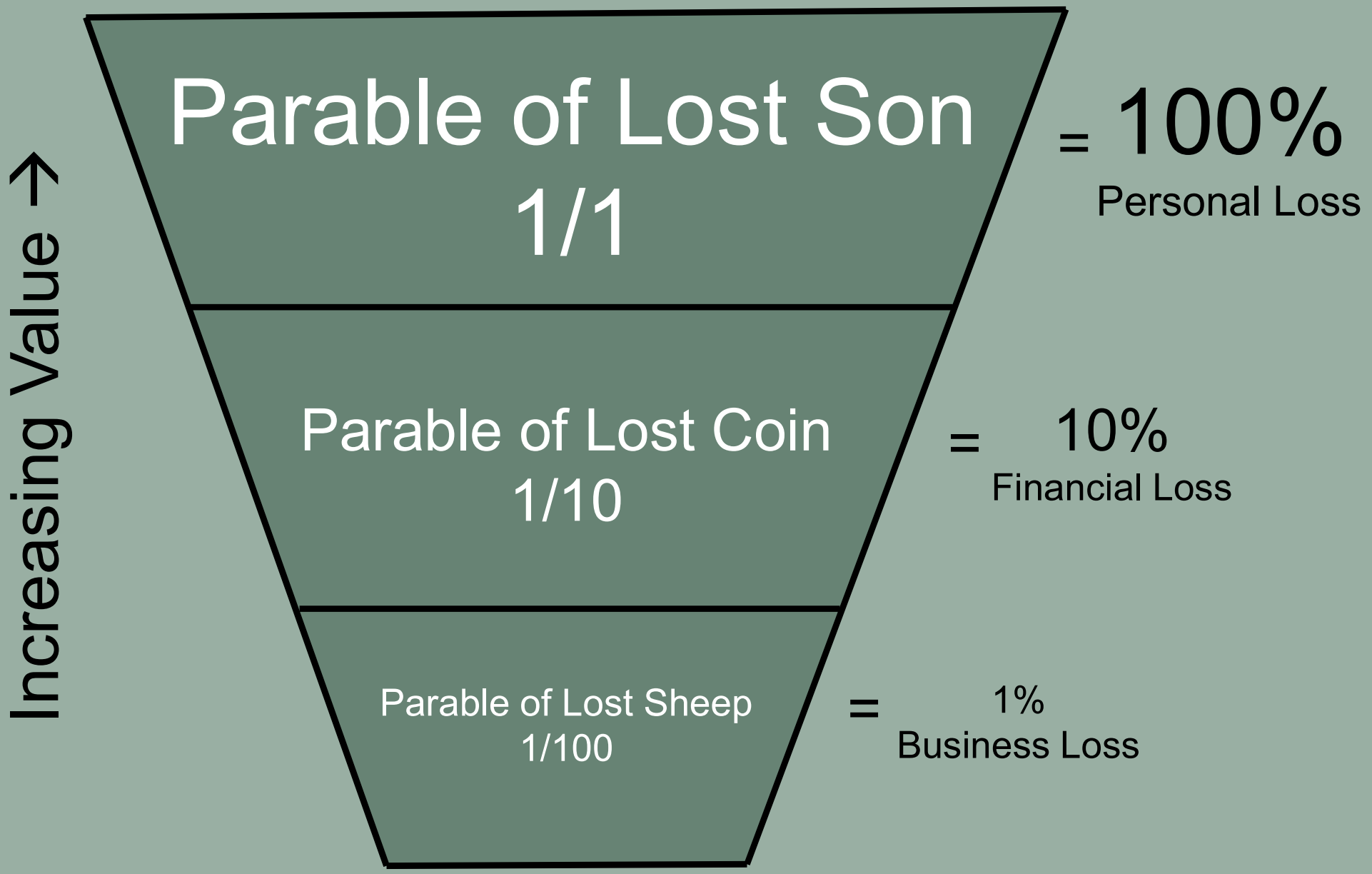
Tax collectors and other notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach. This made the Pharisees and teachers of religious law complain that he was associating with such sinful people—even eating with them!

Based on Rabbinic tradition, the Pharisees believed that the righteous were expected to actively separate themselves from defiled people to preserve personal purity and the sanctity of Israel. They didn't initiate relations with sinners. Sinners were to be left on the own.

The Pharisees were objecting to Jesus eating with sinners. Table fellowship for the Pharisees was a very special gathering reserved for righteous Jews.

Luke 15:3-32

Parables of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Lost Son



Luke 15:12

(1) “A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, ‘I want my share of your estate now before you die.’ So, his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons.

For a son to ask for their inheritance before the father dies is unprecedented.

If the father divides his estate, the son shouldn’t sell the property until the father dies. The father still had the right to live off the income while he was alive, even though the property is now owned by the son.

Essentially, the son wished his father were dead!

The son committed a shameful act. The father acquiesced to the son’s request and didn’t discipline him.

Instead, the father bore the shame of the son’s actions.
The community would have been outraged at the father’s decision.

Historical-Cultural Context

Middle-Eastern Culture



Community
Honor/Shame
Conformance to Shared Norms/Rules

The **community** held the power to

shame the son & father into conformance,

or

cast them out of the community.

Luke 15:13

(2) A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.

The son shouldn't have sold the property until the father dies.
In fact, he "fire-saled" his assets to leave town quickly.

The son broke with tradition by moving away from his family. He was expected to succeed his father on the estate.

The son left town in a hurry for a foreign land.
Having contact with Gentiles was considered sinful.

Extravagant Waste: spending money or resources freely and recklessly.

Luke 15:14-16

(3) About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve.

(4) He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs.

(5) The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything.

The son lost everything, his complete inheritance.

The son was sent to live among the pigs!
Having contact with pigs, much less serving pigs, was defiling.

The son went from bad to worse. Not only did he lose his inheritance, but he was also starving to death.

The wild (ungrafted) carob pods of the ancient world had very little nutrition and were extremely difficult for humans to eat.

He was completely rejected and left for dead.
The son hit “rock bottom”!!!

Luke 15:17

(6) “When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger!

In the son’s great despair, God intervened and reminded him of the goodness of his father.

The son finally assessed his situation rationally.
He had a <u>radical change of mind.</u>

For the first time, the son displayed humility and remorse by acknowledging his ways would lead to ruin and certain death.

Luke 15:18-20a

(6') I will go home to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant."
So he returned home to his father.

The son responded in an act of contrition. He had a genuine change of heart and planned to return to the father and ask for forgiveness.

The son demonstrated faith knowing his father would receive him and take him on as a hired servant.

A hired servant was the equivalent to a skilled tradesman who lived in the village, not on the estate.

The son would have been forced to live outside the village because of the community's rejection.

The son must not only repent but make restitution. The debt the younger son owed the father was greater than he could ever repay in his lifetime at a hired servant's wage.

Luke 15:20b

(5') And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.

Running was very undignified for an older nobleman. Lifting his robe and exposing his legs and ankles was very disgraceful.

The father ran to meet the son partly out of joy and because he wanted to shield the son from the community's rejection (Kezazah).

Jewish Ceremony of Kezazah

"Cutting Off"



KEZAZAH

"Cutting Off"

The village community met the returning person at the town edge, break a pot, and declare them permanently excluded from their community.

Talmud (Ketubot 28b)

Luke 15:20b

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The father's embrace symbolized acceptance.

The kiss was a sign of the father's reconciliation and forgiveness.

Luke 15:21-22a

(4’) His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’ “But his father said to the servants, …

The son repented and humbly acknowledged he was no longer worthy of being considered the father’s son.

Before the son presented his plan of restitution for his sins, the father interrupted the son with unexpected grace.

Luke 15:22b-24

(3') 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet."

(2') And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast,

(1') for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So, the party began.

Robe: The finest robe signified total restoration with the father.

Ring: The signet ring was a sign of the father's trust in the son.

Sandals: The sandals were a sign that the son is a free man in the house, not a bond or hired servant.

The selection of a calf (vs. goat, sheep) implied that the feast was large and included the villagers. Luke 15:25b-27 suggests that the villagers attended the feast.

Jesus concludes that the son has transitioned from death to life.

Jewish Process of Teshuvah

"Turning Back"

Process of Teshuvah was initiated by the returning sinner.

1. Repentance	**Repentance** Genuine Repentance of Sin
2. Debt Repayment	**Restitution** Full Reparations with a Penalty Charge
3. Probation Period	**Reformation** Demonstration of Changed Behavior
4. Ceremonial Cleansing	**Purification** Commitment to Moral Purity

Restored to Fellowship

Jesus Fulfills the Teshuvah

Steps 2 Through 4

2. Debt Repayment	**Jesus Atones (Repays)** Paid for All Our Sin on the Cross (Colossians 2:14)
3. Probation Period	**Holy Spirit Indwells (Reforms)** Transformational Power No Longer Slaves to Sin New Creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18, 5:17)
4. Ceremonial Cleansing	**Jesus' Blood Cleanses (Purifies)** Cleansed by Jesus' Shed Blood (1 John 1:7-9)

Luke 15:25-32
The Elder Son

[25]"Meanwhile, the older son was in the fields working.

1	When he returned home, he heard music and dancing in the house,[26]and he asked one of the servants what was going on.	He comes	
2	[27]'Your brother is back,' he was told, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf. We are celebrating because of his safe return.'	Your brother safe A feast	
3	[28]"The older brother was angry and wouldn't go in. His father came out and begged him,	A father comes to reconcile	
4	[29]but he replied, 'All these years I've slaved for you and never once refused to do a single thing you told me to. And in all that time you never gave me even one young goat for a feast with my friends.	Complaint 1	
4'	[30]Yet when this son of yours comes back after squandering your money on prostitutes, you celebrate by killing the fattened calf!'	Complaint 2	
3'	[31]"His father said to him, 'Look, dear son, you have always stayed by me, and everything I have is yours.	A father tries to reconcile	
2'	[32]We had to celebrate this happy day. For your brother was dead and has come back to life! He was lost, but now he is found!'	Your brother safe A feast	
1'	*** No final stanza provided by Jesus. The portion of the story has no ending. ***		

WORKSHEET/GROUP DISCUSSION

Parable of the Prodigal Son

Luke 15:1-2, 11-24 (NLT)

Parable of the Prodigal Son

(Luke 15)

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Parable Worksheet

Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-24

LOSTNESS

Main Characters:

Main Events/Scenes:

Turning Point:

Historical-Cultural Gaps (THEN ↔ NOW):

Earthly & Heavenly Parallels:

Earthly Principle & Heavenly Principle:

Main Teachings

Earthly Meaning

The lost son received undeserved
grace/mercy from the father.

Heavenly Meaning

“The Son of Man came
to seek and to save the lost.”
“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and
will forgive us our sins and
purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Luke 19:10, 1 John 1:9

Application

1. Who do we consider a **lost cause**?
2. Do we actively **engage** with people and share the Gospel?