

Family Stories

The Seeking God

Luke 15:1-10

Christian spirituality is about a process of formation, a process in which we are formed by , and in Christ: Christ who, sharing the form of God, assumed the form of a servant.

Kenneth Leech

Our Faith Journey

- Our faith journey is a process
- The Parables are our family stories about the process of faith

Setting the Scene

Luke 15:1-2

The "People of the land"

- According to the religious those coming to hear Jesus are 'sinners & tax collectors' (v1)
- The religious are grumbling about who Jesus welcomes (v2) – 'the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!"' (Luke 7:34)

The system allowed for extra tax to be collected above the amount to be sent to the government. The doors to corruption stood wide open... Add to the financial oppression the ceremonial impurity of such contact with Gentiles and the element of treason for working for foreigners against one's own people and the outcast status is understandable.

Fred B. Craddock

Welcoming & Eating

- Eating was a sign of welcome
- It was a custom that spoke of acceptance
- It speaks of the inclusiveness of Jesus

Two Twin Parables

Luke 15:3-7 & 8-10

At its simplest, the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.

C. H. Dodd

Parables of Common Experience

- Not an obvious point – it requires thought
- Calls one to enter the story – locate yourself in the story
- Not an intellectual exercise but an invitation to participation

#1. Shepherd & Lost Sheep

- A shepherd has 100 sheep – one is lost so the shepherd leaves the 99 to look for the one lost sheep
- The same shepherd seeks until he finds the lost sheep
- Upon finding the sheep there is great joy (3x 'joy' – v5,6,7)

Interpretation?

- There is joy in true repentance (v7b)
- Repentance = a turning ; an opening up to God
- More joy in the lost sheep than the 99 who see no need for repentance
- It raises the question of our values – What do we value?



There will be joy in heaven over one sinner who is obliterated before God.

Pharisaic Saying

#2. The Lost Coin

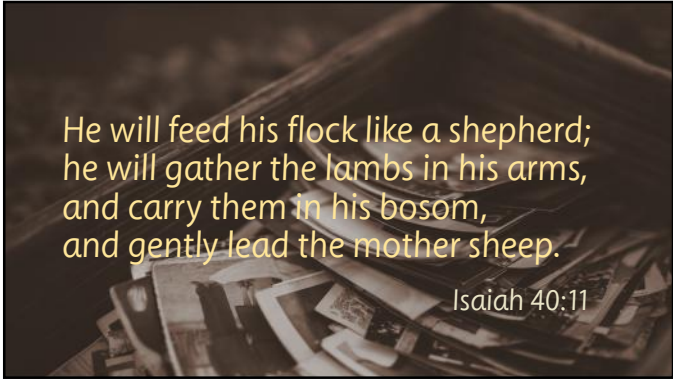
- A poor person in a small hut loses a valuable coin – a drachma; 10 days wages
- Small dark huts with a dirt/grass/reeds floor
- The woman seeks for the coin and finding it there is a celebration (2x – v9-10)

The Seeking, Rejoicing God

- Repentance gives joy to God (v10)
- Do we share the values of God's joy or the prejudice of the religious?

Shepherd God

- God is portrayed as a tender, seeking, shepherd God who finds great joy in our turning to him
- This sets up the third parable in the set – the Lost Son



He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Isaiah 40:11

Family Stories

- What is our response to those who are astray?
- Do we share the values of God or the critics?
- A call for patience and love to others in our community and to those who are struggling