(23) Parables of Lost Sheep, Coin, The Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:1-32)

1. Three parables teach and emphasize the grace of God in restoring the lost.
   a. The tax collectors and sinners had ears to hear (Lk. 14:35; 15:1).
   b. The Pharisees & scribes mouths to grumble (Lk. 15:1-2).
   c. The conflict centered on relationship and fellowship—receives sinners and eats with them.
   d. “This parable” (Lk. 15:3) has three episodes.

2. Lost Sheep (Lk. 15:4-7).
   a. An address to the men speaks to their work and livelihood.
   b. 1% loss of sheep is unacceptable to a good shepherd (Lk. 15:4; Jn. 6:37,39; 10:28; 17:12; 18:9).
   c. Trained for fighting wild beasts (1st Sam. 17:34-37), the shepherd brings back whatever he can salvage (Am. 3:12). The live sheep is the ultimate for rejoicing (Ezek. 34:11-16; Lk. 15:5-6).
   d. The parable has a heavenly reality (Lk. 15:7).
      1) Heavenly joy exists for the righteous in fellowship.
      2) Heavenly joy is greater for the restoration of the sinner to fellowship.
      3) No heavenly joy for the destruction of unrepentant (Ezek. 18:21-32).

3. Lost Coin (Lk. 15:8-10).
   a. An address to the women speaks to their home and heart-treasure.
   b. Barclay describes the precious nature of the 10-drachma headpiece for a married woman.
   c. Again, the heavenly joy is described as the reality for this episode.

4. Lost Son (Lk. 15:11-32).
   a. The third telling of this principle has three main characters (Lk. 15:11). Πατήρ, Νεώτερος, and Πρεσβύτερος.
      “Strictly speaking, both the sons here sketched are lost,—the one through the unrighteousness that degrades him, the other through the self-righteousness which blinds him.” LANGE
   b. The younger ordered his share of the Father’s estate. The Father divided his livelihood to both sons.
      1) Premature estate distribution was discouraged by secular wisdom literature (Sir. 33:19-23) and regulated by Jewish traditions (Baba Batra 8:7).
      2) Νεώτερος was parting from Πατήρ in a manner similar to Abraham’s dismissal of all his sons but Isaac (Gen. 21:14; 25:5-6).
   c. Νεώτερος converted his inheritance into cash and headed off to a life of luxury in a dissipation nation (Lk. 15:13-20a).
   d. The reunion disunion (Lk. 15:20b-32) teaches the fundamental doctrine for this entire chapter.