



ENOGERA BAPTIST CHURCH
Jesus changes lives

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDES



Luke 15:1-32 Jesus is for the Lost

***Luke 15:9-10** And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

NOTE FOR LEADERS

This document is intended to be used as a discussion *guide*, rather than a curriculum. As small group leaders, please feel free to lead through the topic as most appropriate for your group.

HOUSEKEEPING

- **Members Meeting this Sunday 23rd June**
- **Church-wide Prayer Night**
 - Wednesday 26th June - 7pm



REFLECT

This is a time to generate some discussion around the ideas in the sermon. Some ideas include:

- Ask the group to debrief for those who missed the sermon on Sunday.
- What stood out? Do you have any questions?
- Were there any special moments of clarity where God spoke to you clearly?
- Why is this important and worth discussion?

EXPLORE

Let's dig a little deeper. Use the biblical text to discover what God reveals to us in his Word.

RELEVANT SCRIPTURES

Luke 15:1-32 The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

³So he told them this parable: ⁴"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? ⁵And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

⁸"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? ⁹And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.'¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

¹¹And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. ¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.¹⁴And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.



¹⁷ “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ ²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. ²³ And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴ For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, ²⁹ but he answered his father, ‘Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

UNDERSTANDING & APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scriptures apply directly to their lives. Get group members to talk about the real life implications of the study.

1. Is there any immediate personal response to the sermon necessary for you?
2. Getting Started: What were the two common world views that Matt outlined on Sunday about good people and bad people? (A: Firstly, there are good and bad people, and God is for the good ones. Secondly, there is no such thing as good and bad people. Jesus gives us a third way – you’re all bad people so come and be mine!)
3. Read **Luke 15:1-32**:
 - a. What is important about who Jesus is talking to when he gives these parables? How does this change how we read it?
 - b. Do you remember what the younger sons request (for his share of the estate) communicated to the Father? (A: It was as if he was saying he wished he were dead).
 - c. Speculate as to what the younger son might have been thinking when the Father lavished his love on him? How would he have felt in that moment? Have you experienced God’s love like this?
 - d. What was the response of the elder brother when he learned of the feast? Why would he have reacted like that? How was the Father’s response counter intuitive once again?



- e. According to Tim Keller both sons were alienated from the Father and the Father extended grace and acceptance to both of them. How did the Father do that for the younger brother? How about the elder brother? So at the end of the parable, who is reconciled to the Father and who is still alienated from Him?
 - f. The difference between the two brothers is that the younger rebellious brother “came to himself” while the older brother is still relationally estranged to the father. Why are self-righteousness and bitterness such blinding sins? How might we guard against them?
 - g. Both younger and elder brothers need God’s initiating love like the Father demonstrates in the parable. Let’s start by sharing some things we are thankful for when it comes to God’s initiating love towards us.
4. Is God calling **you** to any practical application? What positive steps can you take? Is there any active repentance necessary?
 5. To finish our time in Luke 15, let’s consider Spurgeon’s words: “The truth here taught is just this: that mercy stretches forth her hand to misery, that grace receives men as sinners, that it deals with demerit, unworthiness and worthlessness; that those who think themselves righteous are not the objects of divine compassion, but the unrighteous, the guilty and the undeserving, are the proper subjects for the infinite mercy of God; in a word, that salvation is not of merit but of grace.”

PRAY

Close time in prayer, sitting at the feet of Jesus.

- Pray that God would reveal the idols of earthly treasures in our hearts and that we would be instead filled with love for Him
- Take time to pray for those in need in our church family, and in our wider community.

HELPFUL NOTES

ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTES

Luke 15:1–7 *The Parable of the Lost Sheep*. In Matt 18:10–14, a similar parable is addressed to the disciples as Jesus emphasizes God’s concern for everyone within the community of Jesus’ followers, even the least among them. The parable here is the first of three parables in ch. 15 in which Jesus responds to the Jewish religious leaders who criticize him for welcoming “sinners” (v. 2). All three emphasize the love and mercy of God the Father in reaching out to the lost, but the third presents an implied call to those whom God has invited to the great banquet to provide a proper response (vv. 11–32).

15:1–2 The Jewish religious leaders again criticize Jesus, “a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (7:34), for associating with these marginalized people.



15:2 muttered. In the Greek translation of the OT, this Greek word always applies to the grumbling of the Israelites in the exodus account (Exod 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num 14:2; 16:11; Deut 1:27; cf. Josh 9:18b). Here the Jewish leaders likewise fail to understand and appreciate God's mighty acts among them.

15:4 The shepherd's gathering of his sheep often appears as imagery for God's delivering his own people at the end time (cf. Isa 40:11; Jer 31:10–11; Ezek 34:11–12). The contrast between the 99 sheep in his fold and the lost one highlights God's love for even a single individual.

15:6 Rejoice. Unlike v. 5, which portrays the shepherd's joy, this calls the entire community to celebrate the return of the lost sheep. Jesus responds to those criticizing his mission to the outcasts by emphasizing the need to celebrate God's work in this new age of salvation.

15:7 in heaven. Includes "the angels of God" who are in heaven (v. 10). Instead of participating in this heavenly joy, the Jewish religious leaders complain and refuse to acknowledge the work of God. **righteous persons who do not need to repent.** An ironic note that reveals the self-understanding of the Jewish religious leaders (cf. 5:31–32; 18:11–12).

15:8–10 *The Parable of the Lost Coin.* This reinforces the points made in the note on vv. 1–7: (1) the merciful God does not desire anyone to be lost, and (2) every lost individual is precious in his sight.

15:8 ten silver coins. See NIV text note. This may constitute a significant portion of the woman's savings, especially if she is a widow (the story does not mention her husband).

15:9–10 Jesus again concludes with notes of both earthly and heavenly joy.

15:11–32 *The Parable of the Lost Son.* In the lengthiest of the three parables in this chapter, Jesus extends the discussion by emphasizing the responses of both the younger son and the older son: (1) Unlike sheep and coins, a son can take the initiative to return to his father (vv. 17–20a). Thus, this parable focuses not just on God's mercy but also on the need to repent (cf. vv. 7, 10). (2) A significant portion of this parable is devoted to how the older son reacts (vv. 25–32) after his younger brother returns. His anger and refusal to participate in the family banquet (v. 28) parallels the attitude of the Jewish religious leaders, who despise including tax collectors and sinners with God's people. The open-ended call "to celebrate and be glad" (v. 32) becomes a call for these leaders to repent and participate in this banquet with their "younger brother."

15:12 The younger son insults his father with this request. The Mosaic regulations discuss distributing inheritance only after a person's death (Num 27:8–11; 36:7–9), and later Jewish writings explicitly discourage any such discussion before a person's death.

15:13 the younger son got together all he had. Reflects his resolve to leave and be cut off from his father. He is unfaithful to his father ("squandered his wealth") and his people (living among Gentiles in "a distant country"). How one uses wealth reflects the object of one's worship (cf. 16:1–15, 19–31).



15:15 pigs. Jews considered pigs unclean (Lev 11:7; Deut 14:8), suggesting that the younger son is living among Gentiles. Later Jewish traditions note that “to feed pigs” is to be cursed.

15:17 When he came to his senses. This can refer to the younger son’s repentance, which he carries out by returning to his father. The love of God is expressed in similarly vivid ways in vv. 20, 22–23.

15:18 I have sinned against heaven and against you. Unlike Pharaoh’s less than sincere confession (Exod 10:16–17), this younger son acts out his confession by returning to his father. **heaven.** Here refers to God.

15:20 ran to his son. An unexpected act that ignores Near Eastern cultural protocol, thus emphasizing the initiative of the father as he welcomes his son. **threw his arms around him and kissed him.** The father shows mercy and love.

15:21 The son is unable to complete his rehearsed speech (vv. 18–19) before his father welcomes him again as a son.

15:22 robe ... ring. The father restores him to his position as a son (cf. Gen 41:42; Esth 3:10; 8:2). **sandals on his feet.** Servants often were barefoot.

15:23 feast and celebrate. The younger son is a member of God’s restored people (cf. the banquet parables of 14:7–24). This celebration also echoes the rejoicing over recovering the lost sheep and coin (vv. 3–10).

15:24 The younger son was considered “dead” when he left his father’s household and “is alive again” when he returns and is reunited with his family. The life and death metaphor underlines the significance of both his departure and his return. **lost and ... found.** Ties all three parables together (vv. 4, 8; cf. v. 27) in expressing the joy when salvation is granted when God reaches out to welcome sinners.

15:28 The older brother became angry and refused to go in. This reaction contrasts with his father’s rejoicing (vv. 22–24; cf. vv. 6–7, 9–10). He fails to understand the significance of the moment and insults his father, who hosts the banquet.

15:29 slaving ... never disobeyed. The older son’s claims stand for the Jewish religious leaders in v. 2 who claim to be righteous in God’s presence (cf. 18:11–12). **a young goat.** Of less value than a fattened calf (v. 23).

15:30 this son of yours. The older son refuses to recognize the younger son as his brother. **squandered your property with prostitutes.** The older son may intend to evoke the Mosaic regulation against “a stubborn and rebellious son” (Deut 21:18) who deserves to be stoned to death (Deut 21:21).

15:32 had to. They must obey God’s salvation plan (see 2:49 and note). This concluding note includes an implicit call for “the Pharisees and the teachers of the law” (v. 2) to join in celebrating



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the salvation of the lost. Otherwise “not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet” (14:24).¹

REFERENCE:

Developed with the help of the following:

- Tom Wright. For Everyone Bible Study Guides – Luke.
- Ada Lum. A LifeGuide Bible Study – Luke: New Hope, New Joy.
- ESV Study Bible, Crossway.

¹ Carson, D. A. (2015). [The Gospels and Acts](#). In D. A. Carson (Ed.), *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message* (pp. 2108–2111). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.