

Parent Bible Study

Three Parables

Bible Passage: Luke 15

In Luke 19, Jesus went after Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. Zacchaeus was not well liked, but his interaction with Jesus led him to repent of his wrongdoing. Jesus said to him, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10).

Who is “the lost”? What does it mean to be lost? In Luke 15, Jesus told three parables to the crowd of tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees, and scribes. Jesus’ teaching brought gospel truth to the tax collectors and sinners—those whose unrighteousness separated them from God—and to the Pharisees and scribes—those whose relied on their own righteous efforts for salvation.

The first two parables are similar. In one, a man loses a sheep. He leaves his flock to find the missing sheep, and he rejoices when it is found. In the second, a woman loses a silver coin. The woman carefully searches her home until she finds it. Then, she calls her neighbors and friends to celebrate with her. Heaven rejoices when even one sinner repents. Finally, Jesus told a parable about two sons. The younger son asked for his inheritance, wasted his money on immoral living, and decided to return to his father. Rather than rejecting his wayward son, the father embraced him. The older son, who had always been obedient to his father, reacted with anger.

As you read Luke 15, think about the crowd Jesus was speaking to. The focus is often placed on the younger son—the one with whom the tax collectors and sinners could identify—but Jesus also made a point about the older son. He was like the Pharisees and scribes, focused on his own morality and feeling entitled to his father’s favor.

Jesus taught what God is like. He seeks sinners who have wandered far from Him, and He seeks sinners who try to earn salvation by their good works. As you teach, help preschoolers understand that being lost means not knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior. God loves us, and He actively seeks to bring sinners to Himself.