



In **Luke 15**, Jesus told three “lost” parables: a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. The first two verses of the chapter tell us why Jesus told the parables.

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

In each parable, something was lost, then found. But Jesus was talking about much more than sheep and coins. Notice that in each parable, there was also a call to rejoice because *people* who were lost were being found.

“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.” (**15:7**)

“Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (**15:10**)

In that third “lost” parable, we hear words of repentance from the younger son...

“Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” (**15:21**)

...but we also see the older son refusing to rejoice when his brother returned (**15:28**). What’s going on in the hearts of these sons? That seems to be the key. Notice Jesus’ words in **16:15**:

“You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts.”

Think about that as you survey Jesus’ teaching in **Luke 16**. In **verse 9** he warned about “unrighteous wealth” that will eventually “fail.” In **verse 13**, listen to his warning:

“No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

In **verse 15** he warned the Pharisees who were lovers of money that “what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” Why all of the warnings? Because God knows our hearts. **Luke 16** ends with Jesus describing a rich man who lived the good life every day and a poor man at his gate named Lazarus who just wanted to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table. Both died. The rich man found himself in torment and Lazarus went to a place of great comfort. Why? Because all along, God knew their hearts.

How do **Luke 15** and **16** help us grow in certainty about Jesus? Let’s talk about it...

For Class & Family Discussion:

- Based on what we've seen so far in Luke's "orderly account," why do you think "the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear" Jesus (15:1)?
- Why do you think "the Pharisees and the scribes" were grumbling (15:2)?
- What stands out to you from the "lost" parables of Luke 15? What did Jesus want his hearers to see, understand, and apply?
- And what about the parable in 16:1-9? What do you think was Jesus' point?
- Why would Jesus use such strong language in 16:13?
- What should we, as modern disciples of Jesus, remember and apply from 16:14-17?
- In 16:18, Jesus spoke of divorce and remarriage. Should we still be concerned with teaching like this delivered so long ago? If so, why?
- What should we make of what Jesus said in 16:19-31? What can we learn? What do we need to understand?
- How would you summarize the conclusion in 16:31? Does it somehow still apply to people today? If so, in what ways?
- Remember the goal of Luke's Gospel—"that you may have certainty" (1:4). How does Luke 15-16 help us grow in certainty about Jesus?