

# JESUS UNFILTERED

SERMON STUDY GUIDE | PART 2: Who Does God Love? | 1.14.18 | FOLLOW ON FB @PASTORERICHUFFMAN TWITTER @ERICTHESTORY

It seems like we're always talking about why it's important to believe in Jesus, but when was the last time you stopped to think about *what Jesus believed?* Over the next month, we're going to take a closer look at Jesus' belief system by analyzing eight of his most famous parables. Last week, we asked the question, "What is God like?" by taking a closer look at the Parable of the Sower from Matthew 13. Today we'll ask, "Who does God love?" and study the three parables that Jesus tells in Luke 15.

To review: What are parables?

Today's focus parables are all about being *lost*. When was the last time you can remember feeling lost? Do you remember *how* you got to that point? What circumstances led to you getting lost?

## Three Parables, One Story: A Sheep, a Coin, and a Son

### Luke 15:1-7 The Parable of the Desperate Shepherd

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

How does a sheep get lost?

Who does the lost sheep represent? What kind of people do you know who get lost the same way a sheep might?

Who does the shepherd represent? What is Jesus trying to teach about God with this parable?

### Luke 15:8-10 The Parable of the Careful Woman

"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

How does a coin get lost?

Who does the lost coin represent? What kind of people do you know who get lost the same way a coin might?

Who does the woman represent? What is Jesus trying to teach about God with this parable?

Luke 15:11-32 The Parable of the Lovesick Father

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!"

"My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

How does a [grown-up] son get lost?

Who does the lost son represent? What kind of people do you know who get lost the same way a son or daughter might?

Who does the father represent? What is Jesus trying to teach about God with this parable?

Look back at Luke 15:1-2. Who was Jesus' audience for these parables? Why should that matter to us today?

Take another look at all three parables. How does each story end? What do you think Jesus is saying about God when he ends each story that way?