

- The relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes was always a rough one. The Pharisees and scribes were envious of Jesus and His popularity to the point that they would do whatever it took to damage and tarnish His name. One man has sat down and counted the individual accusations against Jesus, and he counts there being at least 39. The vast majority of these accusations were made by the Pharisees and scribes. They accused Him of being a false prophet (**Luke 7:39**), of healing on the Sabbath unlawfully (**Luke 13:14**), and in our Daily Bible Reading from this past week, we see them accusing Jesus of doing something just terrible by eating with sinners (**Luke 15**).
- Regardless of the numerous accusations, we know that no accusation could be sustained against Jesus. Having endless wisdom and knowledge allowed Jesus to answer every accusation with perfect a perfect response. The response of Jesus in **Luke 15** not only stops the mouths of His critics, but it also gives us an amazing insight into how God views the world. As we study through this chapter, I hope that we all will begin to see the world through the eyes of God. There are obviously many different applications that we can take away from this chapter, but tonight we want to do our best to see the immediate purpose for Jesus sharing these parables in light of the accusation that was just brought against Him.

The main idea behind the parables of Luke 15

I. The Pharisees saw sinners only as sinners.

- A. To begin to understand the main idea of Jesus' parables, we first need to address the way that the Pharisees and scribes viewed those who were "sinners" and lower down the spiritual/religious totem pole.
- B. This isn't the only time, in Luke alone, that we see the Pharisees and others rebuking Jesus for his association with those they deemed as nothing more than sinners.
 1. In **Luke 5:30**, the Pharisees and their scribes beginning grumbling because Jesus's disciples are eating and drinking with the tax collectors and sinners.
 2. Jesus allowing the "sinful" woman of **Luke 7:36-39** to wash and anoint His feet was used as a "proof" that Jesus wasn't a prophet.
 3. When Jesus went to the house of Zaccheus, people grumbled for Him eating with "sinners". (**Luke 19:1-7**)
 4. Obviously, the Pharisees, scribes, and even some other Jews felt as if keeping company with this type of person said a lot about your own spirituality and religion.
- C. The rebukes of Jesus towards the Pharisees help us to understand that the mindset of the Pharisees shaped their view of the sinners that Jesus was among. (**Matthew 23**)
 1. The Pharisees and scribes loved their position of leadership. (**v.2**)
 2. They loved to have the place of prominence among the people. (**vv.6-12**)
 3. They Pharisees and scribes had a major superiority complex concerning the "common" person. They were the religious elite, and they couldn't imagine being around others who were lower than them.
 4. Understanding this about them should really help to understand why they acted so disgusted when they saw Jesus with those "sinners."
 5. It should also help us to gain a better understanding of the true meaning behind the parables of Jesus from this chapter.

II. Jesus uses parables to describe sinners as valuable and precious.

- A. The parable of the lost sheep. (**vv.4-6**)
 1. Man has a 100 sheep and one goes missing.
 2. He leaves the 99 in order to go and find that 1 sheep that is lost.
 3. He is overjoyed when he brings the lost sheep back and calls his friends and neighbors so they can come and rejoice with him.
- B. The parable of the lost coin. (**vv.8,9**)
 1. Woman has 10 silver coins and she loses one.
 2. She searches all over her house in order to find it.
 3. Once she finds it, she invites all of her friends over so they can rejoice with her because she had found the coin that was lost.

C. The parable of the prodigal son. (vv.11-32)

1. The younger son asks for his share of the family's money, takes it, and blows it in loose living.
2. Just the taking of the family's money would have been an extremely embarrassing moment for the family.
3. The son hits rock bottom when he loses all of his money, comes back to his senses, and decides that it is time to go back home to his family.
4. The father embraces the son with grace, mercy, and compassion, but the older brother doesn't show the same happiness for his brother's return.
5. The brother views his brother as someone who was nothing more than a waste of good money and opportunity. He doesn't recognize the awesome nature of his brother's repentance because all he sees is his mistakes.

D. These 3 parables of Jesus further illustrate His words about coming to the earth to seek and save the lost.

1. Jesus sees that lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son as something that is so precious and valuable that they are fully worthy of finding and gaining back.
2. Jesus answered their first rebuke back in **Luke 5:31,32** by explaining that the well are not the ones who need the physician, but the sick are the ones who are in need of a doctor. I further explains that he did not come to earth to call the righteous, but the sinners who are in need of repentance.
3. They are so precious and valuable that He was willing to come to earth and give Himself in order to save them. (**Luke 19:10**)
4. It should be so obvious to us that every single soul is precious and valued in the eyes of Jesus. The emphasis He puts on puts on the sinners who repent in **vv.7,10** shows us that His greatest emphasis is on the soul and repentance.
5. If this was not the case then there would be no need for Jesus to go to such lengths to explain these parables.

III. We must see sinners as valuable and precious souls

- A. Jesus' Point: Every soul is valuable and precious. Therefore, we should 1) not disrespect sinners as the Pharisees did and 2) hope that all people will come to repentance.
1. It's easy for us to talk disparagingly about people who might be in sin.
 2. It takes great effort to remember that they are a soul who is need of salvation.
 3. For each of us personally, we should want to see people who might have wronged or hurt us repent and come back to God.
- B. We should seek to share the beautiful message of salvation that has been extended to us with all others.
1. Warren Berkely has this great quote about sharing the Gospel and I believe it ties in well with this chapter. *"Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where he found Bread."*
 2. We shouldn't look sinners in a poor way because we once were in their shoes. Thanks be to God that we were shown the bread of life!
 3. We should be willing to share that Bread with others, freely and without prejudice. We cannot have the same mindset of the Pharisees and scribe and think that we will be what Jesus wants us to be.

It's always important for us to take the teachings of Jesus and see the immediate meaning of them. I believe we learn a very important lesson concerning the way Jesus and our God see the world and the souls around us. May God help us to see the world around us as He sees them, souls who are in need of the saving grace of a loving Savior who gave Himself for them all.