

# 20/20 Vision

Luke 15: 1-10

About three years ago I had surgery on both my eyes to remove cataracts. It was a very unsettling thing to ponder someone that you did not know being allowed – yea encouraged to CUT YOUR EYES!!! But now, having had the surgery done, I do see more clearly in most situations. I wanted clear vision – 20/20 vision. **Satan doesn't want us to see things clearly.** The reason is that a distorted view hinders our motivation to do some things God wants us to do. Failure to see things clearly can cause serious problems.

God wants us to see things clearly. The Bible helps us to see things in the spiritual realm as well as the physical realm the way that God sees things. Our text will help us see some things that we may have distorted or blurred the way God sees them.

## The Setting

Luke 15:1-2 *“Now all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them.”*

From the beginning of His ministry the Pharisees and scribes were jealous of Jesus. They constantly looked for any way possible to discredit Him even if it meant lying: *“This man receives sinners.”*

Jesus responds to their criticisms and accusations with 3 stories to get them to see things more clearly; to see things the way God sees them.

## The Three Stories

### The Lost Sheep

Luke 15:4-7 *“What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?”*

*And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost! I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”*

1. Sheep were invaluable financially because of their wool.
2. They would become attached to their sheep.
3. The loss of a sheep would be very upsetting to the family.
4. Twice there is mention of rejoicing when the sheep is found.

### **The Lost Coin**

Lk 15:8-10 *“Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost! In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

1. They would often link coins together and make a head dress.
2. The mothers would pass these down to their daughters; they had great sentimental value.
3. Sometimes they would link the coins to make a necklace.
4. The necklace symbolized that they were married and had a home and family.
5. To lose one of the coins was like losing your wedding ring.
6. It was a big deal to lose it and it was a big deal to find it; vs. 9.

### **The Prodigal Son**

1. Man has two boys.
2. Youngest son asks for his inheritance and goes to the distant country.
3. He squanders all he has and is reduced to feeding the pigs.

4. He's so hungry that he is tempted to eat what the pigs are eating.
5. He decides to go home.
6. As he approaches home his dad sees him and runs to him.
7. He embraces his son, kisses him, calls for a robe, and a ring.
8. And the dad says, ***"Let's eat and be merry for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found."***
9. Vs. 24 says, ***"They began to be merry."***

## **Two Things We Need To Learn From These Stories.**

### **The Truth In Regard To Separation.**

1. In all three stories the thing that was valued, when separated from the one to whom it belonged, is referred to as **"lost"** and the owner experiences great agony over this **"lost-ness."** The reason for the great agony is because Biblically it is a terrible thing to be **lost**.

From the first story, a lost sheep in Palestine is a **dead** sheep; That is what it means to be **lost**. The Greek word for "lost" is the same word used when the disciples were on a boat sinking in a storm and they say, ***"Master, don't you care that we are perishing?"***

It is the word used in 2 Peter 3:9 when the apostle said, ***"God is not willing that any should perish but that everyone should repent."*** It is the word used of Judas when Jesus said, ***"Not one of them perished but the son of perdition."***

A form of the word is used to give name to the angel of the abyss, ***Apollyon*** in Revelation 9. It is a terrible thing to be separated from the One to whom you belong and that is what Isaiah says your sins have done in Isaiah 59:2: ***But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God.*** Sin leads to death; Rom. 6.

2. Today there seems to be a tremendous reluctance to talk about someone being lost or to use the word "lost."

It is easier to talk about the “world” or to say everyone is a sinner than it is to refer to one individual as being lost.

In churches today there is a real effort to stress God’s grace and to get us to rediscover His grace. This effort is so strong that it is almost incompatible to talk of grace and being lost at the same time. The irony is, **grace loses its beauty and appeal when we give up the idea of being lost.** Also, it is the idea of “lost-ness” that put the church in a business different from everyone else. Only the church is in the business of recovering the lost.

Jesus said, **“The Son of Man came to seek and save that which is lost.”** We must never get far from this idea for when we do, we are not seeing clearly, and Satan has benefited from our poor sight.

### **Rejoicing Inevitably Goes With Finding That Which Is Lost.**

Everyone in these three stories rejoices when that which is lost is found. The only one who is not happy is the older brother of story number 3, the Prodigal Son. He is upset because he thinks his father is being unfair. The father responds by saying, **“Your brother was lost and he is found, he was dead and now he is alive.”** In vs. 32 he says, “We had to be merry.”

“*We had to*” is a strong work in the Greek; it is used only at special times.

- When Jesus said, **“I must suffer many things.”**
- **“I must be buried; I must be raised again.”**
- **“The prophet’s words must be fulfilled.”**

some translations say, **“God must be merry when the lost are saved.”**

If God says He must be merry when someone is saved, shouldn’t we be? When it is announced that someone is to be baptized did you run to meet them, embrace them, put a robe of fellowship and ring of brotherhood on them...or did you slip out the back?

I remember in Virginia Beach there was a time early in our work there when we were at the building a couple of times each week to baptize someone. A call would be made to about three people and by the time we arrived at the building there would be at least 50 brethren there to witness something that was going to cause heaven to erupt in joy!!

Did you, by word or deed, show anyone who needs to come home how important it is for them to do so...or did you show them you really don't care?

As a Christian what we do is supposed to manifest what God would do. When we are indifferent do those who come home get the impression that God doesn't care either?

How do you make those who have left home and who have come back feel? I was taking a confession from a person years ago and as we talked on the front pew I overheard a brother say, "this is the third time he has come forward to repent of sin." That hurt me to hear that and I hoped this person had NOT heard what I heard. Would to God that the front pew was filled with saints who wanted to have the church pray for them!!

## **Conclusion**

God wants us to see clearly.

To help us He gives us His word.

If we see the lost in the terrible, desperate situation they are really in then perhaps we will be motivated to search frantically for them.

And then, when they come home, perhaps we too will be compelled to rejoice.

May God burden all our hearts to see ourselves and others as we really are – lost in a sinful world with the only hope being the precious blood of Jesus.