



# Daily Reflections

**September 11, 2016**

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## Scripture

### **Luke 15:1-32**

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So to them he addressed this parable.

"What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it?

And when he does find it,

he sets it on his shoulders with great joy

and, upon his arrival home,

he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them,

'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'

I tell you, in just the same way

there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents

than over ninety-nine righteous people

who have no need of repentance.

“Or what woman having ten coins and losing one would not light a lamp and sweep the house, searching carefully until she finds it? And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.’ In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Then he said,

“A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’

So the father divided the property between them.

After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country

where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

When he had freely spent everything,

a severe famine struck that country,

and he found himself in dire need.

So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine.

And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

Coming to his senses he thought,

‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger.

I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him,

“Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

I no longer deserve to be called your son;

treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”

So he got up and went back to his father.

While he was still a long way off,

his father caught sight of him,

and was filled with compassion.

He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.

His son said to him,

'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you;  
I no longer deserve to be called your son.'  
But his father ordered his servants,  
'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him;  
put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.  
Take the fattened calf and slaughter it.  
Then let us celebrate with a feast,  
because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again;  
he was lost, and has been found.'  
Then the celebration began.  
Now the older son had been out in the field  
and, on his way back, as he neared the house,  
he heard the sound of music and dancing.  
He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean.  
The servant said to him,  
'Your brother has returned  
and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf  
because he has him back safe and sound.'  
He became angry,  
and when he refused to enter the house,  
his father came out and pleaded with him.  
He said to his father in reply,  
'Look, all these years I served you  
and not once did I disobey your orders;  
yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But  
when your son returns,  
who swallowed up your property with prostitutes,  
for him you slaughter the fattened calf.'  
He said to him,  
'My son, you are here with me always;  
everything I have is yours.  
But now we must celebrate and rejoice,  
because your brother was dead and has come to life again;  
he was lost and has been found.'"

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## Our Scripture Reflection

In this very famous and very powerful parable, Jesus describes the mercy of God using real life examples as analogies. What's God mercy like?

1. An imprudent shepherd who sacrifices the safety of 99 sheep in order to search for one stray.

2. A woman who turns her house upside down to find one puny lost coin. And when she finds it, she throws a party costing much more than the recovered coin's worth in order to celebrate with her friends.

3. A Father who drops everything to welcome back home a spoiled brat son who abused his Father's trust while shaming the Father and his entire village.

Sound crazy? Jesus teaches us that when we reject Our Father through our sinfulness, He wants us back. He comes looking for us. Absurd? No, Amazing!

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## Food for your Journey

One of the fallacies about our sinful behavior is that we think that somehow Jesus is absent when we sin. The story below will help change such thinking.

I remember a trip to the hospital just a few years ago. I was there to visit a beautiful young man from Spring Lake, Michigan, whose life was being robbed one blood cell at a time by a vicious and unrelenting leukemia. Because he was so weakened, I knelt next to his bed to look at him eyeball to eyeball. I said quietly, "Hi, Tim," and he responded faintly, "Hi, Tim." There followed an awkward pause because I didn't exactly know what to say. The long, dark shadow of death has a way of muffling through much of our otherwise meaningless "chitchat." Finally, Tim broke the deafening silence by saying gently, "I have learned something."

Now I knew at least this much -- you never trifle with the last words of a dying person, so I said, "Tell me, what have you learned?"

He said, again very faintly, "I have learned that life isn't like a VCR."

Perplexed, I said, "I don't get it. What do you mean?"

He said, drawing his next breath in pain, "Life isn't like a VCR -- you can't fast-forward the bad parts."

As I knelt there, fighting back the tears and trying to take it all in, he interrupted my awkward silence again by asking, "You know what else I learned?"

I said, "No, I really don't. Please tell me."

"I have learned," he whispered, "that Jesus Christ is in every frame, and right now it's just enough." -- Timothy Brown, "God Is in Every Frame," *Perspectives*, May 1997, 24.

In Christ, we are never lost.

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## **Prayer from the Heart**

Precious Lord, You freely shed every drop of Your blood to cleanse me of my sins. Humble me, Lord, by this wonderful Truth. Make me humble and grateful so that I will be moved to turn away from sin and be faithful to You. Amen.