

Parables of Lost and Found (24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14—Moses Intercedes for the Israelites

1. Idolatry → Intercession: Moses intercedes on the Israelites who worship a golden calf
2. Forgiveness: God “repents” of the “evil” he was going to do (32:14, RSV)
 - a. “Repent” (Hb *nacham*) = “change one’s mind” or “have compassion” (Ps 90:13)
 - b. “Evil” (Hb *ra*) = one word “suffering/punishment” and “moral evil” (Job 2:13)
 - c. NAB: “the LORD *relented* in the *punishment* he had threatened to inflict.”

Psalm 51—Have Mercy on Me, O God

1. Psalm of David: “after” he had committed adultery with “Bathsheba” (cf. 2 Samuel 11)
2. Mercy and Repentance: asks for “mercy”; admits his “iniquity” and his “sin” (v. 1-2)

1 Timothy 1:12-17—Christ Jesus Came into the World to Save Sinners

1. Mission: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1:15)

Luke 15:1-32—Three Parables of “Lost” and “Found”

1. Tax Collectors and Sinners: people whose sins are (1) public and (2) grave (15:1)
2. The Lost Sheep:
 - a. 1 Sheep: is “lost” (Greek *apollumi*)
 - b. 99 Sheep: not lost
 - c. Shepherd: goes out, “finds” (Greek *heuriskō*) it , and carries it “home”
 - c. Twist #1: leaves the 99 and goes “in search of the one”?!
 - d. Twist #2: “he calls his friends and neighbors to celebrate”?!
 - e. *Nimshal*: “joy in heaven” over “one sinner who repents...”
3. The Lost Coin:
 - a. 10 Coins: “coin” (Greek *drachma* = a day’s wage)
 - b. 1 Coin: she “loses” (Greek *apollumi*) one
 - c. Woman: seeks diligently until she “finds” (Greek *heuriskō*) it
 - d. Twist: “calls her friends and neighbors... Rejoice with me!” ?!
 - e. *Nimshal*: “joy in heaven” over “one sinner who repents...”
4. The Lost Son:
 - a. Younger Son: goes to a “far country”; feeding “swine” (cf. Lev 11:7-8!)
 - b. Father: sees him and is filled with “compassion” (15:20)
 - c. Twist #1: the father “ran and embraced him and kissed him” (15:20)
 - d. Repentance: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you..” (15:21)
 - e. Twist #2: father treats him like Joseph (cf. Gen 37:1-4)
 - f. *Nimshal*: death and resurrection (spiritually “dead” vs. “alive”)
 - h. *Nimshal*: “lost” (Greek *apollumi*) vs. “found” (Greek *heuriskō*) (15:24, 32 [2x])

The Catechism on Jesus’ Parables of Lost and Found

Jesus invites sinners to the table of the kingdom: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” He invites them to *that conversion without which one cannot enter the kingdom*, but shows them in word and deed his Father’s boundless mercy for them and the vast “joy in heaven over one sinner who repents” [Luke 15:7]. (CCC 545)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. Does the Old Testament reading and Psalm 51 depict a God who is full of mercy and compassion for those who have sinned and repent?

2. What is the thread that ties all three of Jesus’ parables together? What does this reveal about the nature of Jesus’ mission and the nature of God?

3. According to the three parables of Jesus, is repentance really necessary for salvation? If so, why does it matter?

For Further Study

1. Arthur A. Just, Jr. *Luke*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament III. Downers Grove: IVP, 2003. Pp. 243-53
3. Pablo Gadenz. *The Gospel of Luke*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. Pp. 271-280.