

Living “paycheck to paycheck” isn’t only an American way of living—albeit, it might be instigated by reaching for more than one can afford in our prosperous economy. But it *is* the way of living of many a person who is near starvation, living in poverty. In Biblical times the average Jewish family was living on the edge of poverty. One day’s wages (about one “drachma”) was the difference between putting bread on the table and going hungry for a day. And there wasn’t much opportunity for all of that to change. Let’s read today’s passage together to sympathize with the panic that is in one woman’s heart when she realizes she has lost something of immediate value to her livelihood.

Luke 15: *The Parable of the Lost Coin* NKJV

- ⁸ "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?"
- ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!'
- ¹⁰ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The ancient Jewish home was susceptible to the dimming light of dusk. The typical home had a small window, maybe eighteen inches in diameter, that welcomed the sunlight and moonlight in. Beyond these celestial lights there were only oil-burning lamps to illuminate the living area. The floors were hardened dirt or clay and sometimes covered in a patchwork of dried reeds and rushes.

In this spiritual lesson, called the *Parable of the Lost Coin*, Jesus tells of one woman who dropped everything she was doing to search for her lost coin. You can see her sweeping her house, searching every corner, fishing behind the furniture, down on her hands and knees hoping to see a glimmer of her coin, or hear a faint tinkling of it, so she can enjoy a glad reunion.

There are two very likely reasons for her concern and urgency:

1. **Her coin stood between her and her family's appetite and hunger for the day.** Every day's wage was necessary to provide just the basic needs of the home. Losing a day's wage could mean the difference between a family dinner and one shared with a charitable neighbor or extended family.
2. **Her coin represented her hopes and dreams that one day she would find her husband.** As a young girl growing up she had worked hard to save up 10 coins to string together on a silver chain for a

traditional Jewish head-dress, as prized as a wedding ring. Now she had worn this head-dress to show that she had been ready to be, or perhaps was now, even, happily wed! To lose a coin off this head-dress was not only emotionally distressing, but would set her back in her efforts to ready herself for her dreams to come true! It would be like losing one's wedding ring.

When this woman found her elusive coin, imagine the thrill she experienced as she lifted it up and held it in her hand! Such joy overwhelmed her that with tear-filled delight she rushed to her neighbors' homes and inspired joy-filled laughter and rejoicing among them!

God, Jesus said, is like that.

Jewish theology had leaned so much into the act of pious repentance of one who came back to God crawling on his knees to earn back the favor of God that it had overlooked the mercy of God. They never conceived of a God who searches for sinners. To them, this was a new thing that Jesus taught about God.

This is just like our God. **In Jesus Christ we see the seeking love of the God Who searches for sinners.** Jesus “came to seek and to save that which was lost.”

The “lost-ness” of the sheep and the coin does not infer that the owners were irresponsible or incapable of keeping them safe. The fact that they were lost highlights the condition of the sheep and the coin outside of the care of their owner. Without their owner they are in peril, aimless and unfulfilled in purpose.

If God was not like the searching shepherd and the sweeping woman, we would still be lost! We would have no hope. Bound in some thicket on a hillside, or stuck in some non-descript crack in the floor, we too would be lost. **If it weren't for the seeking love of God the lost would still be lost. But, it is the delight of God to search out the lost, and to hold them before Himself as a prize to rejoice over.**

When God finds lost sinners their condition is forever changed. From that point forward they are “found.” They are kept in His joy and become the glimmer in His eye. Our God is not careless or blind to the lost. He is emphatically seeking out all who are in peril, aimless and unfulfilling in their purpose.

Life Application Questions:

1. Christ’s question (like in the previous parable “What man among you”), “What woman...” leads us to a question we ought to consider. Which of these Pharisees were showing the merciful and forgiving love of God to the crowds before them?
2. How does self-righteousness (the idea that one can make themselves acceptable before God based upon their good works) not offer the hope of being “found”? What is so deceiving about self-righteousness?
3. Why doesn’t the woman just “write off” the lost coin as a loss and continue on with her day? How is this like God’s merciful view of sinners?
4. How is Christ like this woman?
5. Describe the “lostness” of your soul without Christ’s rescuing help.
6. Write out Luke 19:10
7. How does this parable exalt the character of Jesus Christ in contrast to the character of the most upright religious men of His time?
8. Are you lost? If so, today look upon Him in faith and repentance confessing your sinfulness to Him trusting in His forgiveness available to restore you to a right relationship with God today.

