

## Lost and Found

### Luke 15

Luke was a physician, an educated, cultured man, a close associate of Paul and familiar with the other apostles. Thus, while not himself an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry, he was well-qualified to carefully research and write an 'orderly account' that readers might be confident as to the 'certainty' of what they had been taught about Him.

While Jesus is affirmed as the Son of God as in the other Gospels, Luke seems particularly interested in His humanity, giving the most detail about His birth. The first two chapters record Mary, John the Baptist's father Zechariah, angels, shepherds, elderly Simeon and prophetess Anna all rejoicing that the Lord was coming to 'scatter the proud' but show grace to the poor and hungry, to outcasts and even to non-jewish gentiles!

Chapter 15 is set during Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. Jesus knows who He is and why He has come. He has already stated clearly that a cross awaits Him in Jerusalem. Why does he still go?

And here is His motivation, not just obedience to God the Father, but the deepest compassion for people who are lost because of sin. Some religious people criticised Jesus harshly for welcoming and eating with lepers, beggars and folk with questionable past or present but Christ hit the perfect balance, always condemning sin but loving people struggling with its consequences!

This classic trilogy of parables makes it clear God loves people, whatever we may have done, whatever problems we may have, however lost we may be. He wants us to find our way home. So the Good Shepherd searches for the one that somehow fell behind. The woman persists in her search to recover that which is precious.

Perhaps most famously and with tender poignancy, the Father runs to welcome the returning 'prodigal son' AND pleads with the unforgiving brother to join the celebration. The Pharisees are invited to join the tax-collectors at the party. God welcomes *all* His children to the table!

The Gospel is the good news that because of Jesus and His cross, *every* lost sinner has the chance to be found and come home safe to God.