

Striking Out Against Jesus Luke 15 and 16

Icebreaker: “Was there a time you lost something valuable?”

Parable: (definition) Parables are more than simple folk stories; they are expressions of Jesus’ view of God, man, salvation, and the new age which dawned in His ministry. (from Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

A major theme in Jesus’ parables is the demand to follow Him in authentic discipleship. Jesus sometimes used this form of teaching to reveal the truth to those who followed Him while at the same time concealing the truth from those who were not followers of His ways.

Read: **Matthew 13:10-15** (fulfillment of prophecy: Isaiah 6:9-10)

Narrative: The historical context is found in Luke 15:1-2. Tax collectors and sinners were assembling around Jesus to hear him speak. The Pharisees and teachers of the law (the religious experts) saw an opportunity to strike out against Jesus by saying, “He welcomes and eats with sinners.” Jesus provided three parables to convey His thoughts regarding the underlying muttering accusation(s) of the religious leaders.

1. From the viewpoint of the religious experts, why would it be wrong for Jesus to be welcoming and eating with sinners? If Jesus was a “religious teacher or holy man” wouldn’t he want to maintain a personal separation from those deemed as “sinners” so as to not tarnish his reputation?” Please explain why or why not.

The Lost Sheep: Luke 15:3-7

The Lost Coin: Luke 15:8-10

The Lost Son: Luke 15:11-32

2. Describe what you believe was Jesus central message in these parables? (Luke 15:6, 9, and 32)

3. What activity had to be engaged in before the rejoicing mentioned in the previous

question, could be realized? (hint: Luke 15:4, 8, and 31)

4. What does it take to find that which is precious and/or lost?

5. What may cause you to continue the search? Describe some things which would bring you strength, encouragement, and motivation to keep your search activities active.

Narrative: The historical context is found in Luke 16:1-2 and Luke 16:14-15. We are told from these scriptures that there was a very rich man who had a steward (i.e an estate manager). This estate manager had been accused of wasting the rich man's wealth. The rich man wanted an accounting of the house manager's activities since he would be fired.

Parable of the Unjust Steward and Jesus Rebuke Related to Greed: Luke 16:1-17

6. Although the man was obviously dishonest, what did Jesus commend him for? (Luke 16:8-13)

7. Describe what you believe caused the Pharisees to become disrespectful and verbally aggressive toward Jesus? (Hint: Luke 16:14-15)

- a. Describe the value of "money" as mentioned in I Timothy 6:10.
- b. How does "self-justification" lead a person into a rebellious state before God?
- c. What does Jesus say in regard to the Law? (Hint: Luke 16:16-17)
- d. In what way could we use our resources to win people for the Kingdom?

Narrative: Jesus then provided his audience with a description of what would happen to them if they continued in their greed and unbelief. The account focuses on an anonymous rich man and a beggar named Lazarus ("God is my help"). There are many lessons contained in this passage; and with that said, let us look and consider some common questions.

The Rich Man and Lazarus: Luke 16:19-31

8. The rich man could have easily provided Lazarus with some assistance. In fact, he allowed Lazarus to be placed at a gate so he could beg. What do you think allowed him

to ignore the plight of Lazarus? Do we have any modern examples as this type of thinking?

9. The rich man prayed for his brothers (Luke 16:27-31). He did not say, "I'm glad my brothers will also come here. We'll have a wonderful time together!" Describe the three key elements in the rich man's prayer (Luke 16:28) - warning, place, condition

10. What could be the only thing to preventing the five brothers from joining their brother? (Luke 16:31)

11. What you are doing today to address any of these elements as it may concern your family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, etc.?

12. What could your circle group do to help you with any of the concerns identified in the previous questions?

13. You may want to take some time to pray for the lost some who are your family, friends, and others who do not know God as their savior.