

“He Was Lost, and Is Found”

Lesson 18

Luke 15; 17

Purpose To help class members understand the joy that comes when we repent and when we help others repent.

Preparation

1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
 - a. Luke 15:1–10. Through the parable of the lost sheep and the parable of the piece of silver, Jesus teaches the worth of souls.
 - b. Luke 15:11–32. Through the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus teaches that Heavenly Father finds great joy in forgiving the repentant. The Savior also teaches his followers to be forgiving.
 - c. Luke 17:11–19. A man whom Jesus has healed of leprosy returns to thank him.
2. Additional reading: Matthew 18:11–14.
3. If the pictures *The Prodigal Son* (62155; Gospel Art Picture Kit 220) and *Ten Lepers* (62150; Gospel Art Picture Kit 221) are available, use them during the lesson.
4. Suggestion for teaching: Jesus often asked questions to encourage his listeners to apply the principles he taught (see Matthew 16:13–16; Luke 7:41–42). Prayerfully prepare questions that will encourage class members to participate in discussions and will help them understand and apply the principles being taught. (See *Teaching—No Greater Call*, 105–6, 130–31.)

Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson. Invite class members to tell about a time when they lost something important to them or when a family member became lost. Then ask the following questions:

- How did you feel when the object or person was lost? How did you feel when the object or person was found?

You may also want to ask class members to tell about experiences they have had with being lost and later found.

Explain that Jesus often taught spiritual lessons by relating them to common experiences of the people. This lesson discusses some parables that teach the importance of searching for and finding those who are lost.

Scripture Discussion and Application As you discuss the following scripture passages, help class members understand that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love each of us and want us to return and live with them again.

1. The Savior teaches the worth of souls.

Read and discuss Luke 15:1–10. Explain that Jesus presented the parable of the lost sheep and the parable of the piece of silver after the Pharisees and scribes murmured, “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them” (Luke 15:2).

- In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd left ninety-nine sheep to find one that was lost (Luke 15:4). In the parable of the piece of silver, the woman sought diligently for one lost coin (Luke 15:8). What can we learn from the actions of the shepherd and the woman? (See D&C 18:10–13.)
- In what ways might a person be “lost”? What is our responsibility toward those who are lost? (See Luke 15:4–5, 8; Alma 31:34–35.)

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“Some of our own . . . cry out in pain and suffering and loneliness and fear. Ours is a great and solemn duty to reach out and help them, to lift them, to feed them if they are hungry, to nurture their spirits if they thirst for truth and righteousness. . . .

“ . . . There are those who were once warm in the faith, but whose faith has grown cold. Many of them wish to come back but do not know quite how to do it. They need friendly hands reaching out to them. With a little effort, many of them can be brought back to feast again at the table of the Lord.

“My brethren and sisters, I would hope, I would pray that each of us . . . would resolve to seek those who need help, who are in desperate and difficult circumstances, and lift them in the spirit of love into the embrace of the Church, where strong hands and loving hearts will warm them, comfort them, sustain them, and put them on the way of happy and productive lives” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 86).

- How should we respond at the return of a person who has been lost? (Have class members look for an idea that is repeated in Luke 15:5, 6, and 9. See also verses 7 and 10 and D&C 18:15–16.)

2. Jesus teaches that Heavenly Father rejoices in forgiving the repentant.

Read and discuss Luke 15:11–32. Display the picture of the prodigal son.

- In the parable of the prodigal son, what did the younger son do with his inheritance? (See Luke 15:13. Note that *prodigal* means wasteful.) What are some ways that people today make errors similar to those of the prodigal son?
- What happened to the prodigal son after he had wasted all his inheritance? (See Luke 15:14–16.) What application does this have in our day?
- When the prodigal son was in want, who in the far country cared for him? (See Luke 15:16.) What can we learn from this?
- Whom did the son think of when he saw that no one in the far country cared for him? (See Luke 15:17.) What can we learn about repentance from the son’s attitude? (See Luke 15:18–19.)
- What did the father do when he saw his son returning? (See Luke 15:20.) How did the father respond to his son’s confession? (See Luke 15:21–24.) How is the father’s response like the Lord’s response when we repent? (See Luke 15:7; Mosiah 26:30; D&C 58:42.)

- In what ways are we like the prodigal son? (See the quotation below.) What hope does the parable of the prodigal son offer us?

Referring to the parable of the prodigal son, President Gordon B. Hinckley said: “I ask you to read that story. Every parent ought to read it again and again. It is large enough to encompass every household, and enough larger than that to encompass all mankind, for are we not all prodigal sons and daughters who need to repent and partake of the forgiving mercy of our Heavenly Father and then follow His example?” (“Of You It Is Required to Forgive,” *Ensign*, June 1991, 5).

- Why was the elder son angry with the way his father received the younger son? (See Luke 15:25–30.) How did the father respond to the elder son’s complaint? (See Luke 15:31–32.) Why is it sometimes difficult to welcome back a “prodigal son” who has repented? What can we learn from this man’s response to his returning son? (See Luke 15:32.)

3. A man whom Jesus has healed of leprosy returns to thank him.

Read and discuss Luke 17:11–19. Display the picture of the ten lepers.

- As the Savior went to Jerusalem, he healed ten lepers (Luke 17:11–14). Of those ten lepers, how many returned to express gratitude? (See Luke 17:15–16.) What are some reasons that we, like the nine ungrateful lepers, do not always express our gratitude for the blessings we receive? Why is it important that we express gratitude to the Lord?
- Although all ten lepers were cleansed, only the man who returned was made whole (Luke 17:14, 19). What is the difference between being healed and being made whole? (See the quotation below.) How do our gratitude and faith help us become whole?

Bishop Merrill J. Bateman taught: “In becoming a whole person, the grateful leper was healed inside as well as on the outside. That day nine lepers were healed skin deep, but only one had the faith to be made whole” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 16; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 14).

Conclusion

Testify that we feel great joy when we repent and return to the Lord and when we help others return. You may want to express appreciation for Jesus’ parables and other teachings that show God’s love for his children and his desire that we love one another.

Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

1. The parable of the unprofitable servant

Read and discuss the parable of the unprofitable servant (Luke 17:5–10).

- Jesus presented this parable after the Apostles requested of him, “Lord, Increase our faith” (Luke 17:5). What can we learn from this parable about how we can increase our faith? (Answers could include that we grow in faith by diligently serving the Lord.)

- Why are we unprofitable servants even when we do everything the Lord commands us to do? (See Mosiah 2:20–25.) What does this reveal about the Lord’s love for us?

2. The parable of the laborers in the vineyard

Read and discuss the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1–16).

- In this parable, what did every laborer in the vineyard receive?

Emphasize that those who worked one hour received the same pay as those who worked the entire day. We should not be concerned about who receives the most or who does the most in the service of the Lord. The perfect Judge of all, who knows our hearts, will judge us with mercy and grant us “whatsoever is right” (Matthew 20:4, 7).

3. Video presentations

The fourth segment of “New Testament Customs,” a selection from *New Testament Video Presentations* (53914), may be useful in explaining how lepers were regarded in New Testament times and what a great, life-changing blessing it was for the ten lepers to be healed by Christ.

This segment also contains information about how the Jews of the New Testament measured time. You may want to show this portion if you discuss the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (see the second additional teaching idea), to help class members better understand the householder who “went out about the third hour” and also the sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours (Matthew 20:3, 5–6).