

## The DAILY JESUS NEWS #208

### Jesus' Ministry in Perea Jesus' Parable of the Lost, Then Found Coin LK 15.8-10

8 *"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, keep on sweeping the house and continue her careful search until she finds it?"*

9 *"And because she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'You must rejoice with me; for I have found my lost coin.'"*

10 *"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one repenting sinner."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Somewhere in Perea
Timeline	January or February (Months 36 & 37)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	A. Jesus' Ministers Throughout Perea
Title	7. Jesus' Parable of the Lost, Then Found Coin

#### COMMENT:

In today's reading Jesus moved from the 100 to 1 ratio of sheep/lost sheep of the first parable, to a 10 to 1 ratio of coins/lost coins. The final parable will pare the ratio down to 2 to 1. Jesus used this ever tightening focus to emphasize the final person in the sequence--the lost older brother. It was a brilliant story-telling technique by the greatest Communicator that has ever lived.

All three parables describe an owner's joy in re-connecting with lost items of great value to them. This was Jesus' consistent point LK 15: God takes supreme joy in re-connecting with sinful people who repent and return to him. We should therefore have the same attitude.

Jesus used a key grammatical tool to emphasize this point. In the first two parables, when the owner found the lost item, Jesus used a command-form to stress the necessity of rejoicing in sinful people who repent. In both cases they said to their friends, **"you must rejoice with me."** (15. 7, 9) The "must" in this phrase is included to show in English that this was actually a command to their friends to continually rejoice.

Joy was not an option, it was necessary in the circumstances. Therefore, in the third parable the father says to his recalcitrant older son: **"We HAD to rejoice..."** Here Jesus used a verb that literally means necessary-- "it was necessary for us to rejoice." Rejoicing is the only appropriate response to people who repent and come to Jesus by faith.

Today's reading points to the Holy Spirit's joy in welcoming sinful people. Here is the rationale for this interpretation. In the first parable, Jesus is obviously the Good Shepherd who finds and rejoices in a single lost sheep. In the third parable, God the Father is clearly the father in the story who rejoices in welcoming his prodigal

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younger son home. In order to maintain the Trinitarian approach, Jesus therefore referred to the Holy Spirit as the woman who searches out her single lost coin, and rejoices in that discovery.

Aside from balancing out the Son and Father roles in this Trinitarian sequence of these three parables, there is another reason for interpreting the woman in the story as the Holy Spirit. That is, the woman's actions portray the Holy Spirit's ministry perfectly. First, she "lights" the room. The Spirit is portrayed throughout Scripture as the One who gives "illumination," or the light of revelation to us pertaining to the things of God. For example, Paul prays for the Spirit to "light our hearts" and enable us to see in Eph. 1:15-23.

The woman used the light to "*carefully search*" for the lost coin. "Searching" is another common description for the work of the Holy Spirit. Again, Paul said: "*The Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's own spirit within him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.*" 1 Cor 2:10-12

Just as a lost sheep cannot find its way back to its shepherd on its own, a lost coin cannot make itself be "found." Both a lost sheep and coin require an owner who is capable of finding them in their lost condition, and re-connecting with them. For the owner, finding a valuable sheep or coin is a source of great joy.

The Holy Spirit searches out the hearts of people who are lost, in alienation from God, and gives them the ability to understand that the living, loving God of the universe has found them where they are in their sinful condition, and rejoices to welcome them into the love and fellowship of the family of God. Without the Holy Spirit's gracious searching and illuminating work, no sinful person can repent and be "found" by God. This is Jesus' point.

### APPLICATION:

God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit both rejoice in working together in perfect unity to find us in our lost condition, and in enabling us to respond to their work by faith. Their joy in re-connecting with sinful people is great enough to light up the angels in heaven with the glory of it.

We, too, must join in God's joy in restoring sinful people to himself. There is no other options. The Pharisees were totally wrong in their attitude toward "sinful people."

*How do you express your gratitude and praise to the Holy Spirit for illuminating you?*

*Is your expression of joy appropriate to the scope of his work?*

*How much joy do you share with Jesus and the Holy Spirit when you see their work in bringing other sinful people into a relationship with them?*