

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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He Is A Son, Not A Coin

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Jesus spoke in parables after many had rejected his clear teaching (cf. *Matthew 13:13-17*).

Each parable conveyed a spiritual truth consistent with the physical or more familiar truth which Jesus laid down beside it. For example, in the parable of the sower, you see a man sowing seed upon different types of ground. Jesus' hearers could identify with the truth told in the parable of hard ground, rocky ground, shallow ground, and finally the good ground. But the real message Jesus desires to convey in the familiar experience of different soil types was how different hearers receive the seed of God's word (cf. *Matthew 13:18-23*). The familiar, physical account was being laid beside the more important spiritual truth.

In Jesus' parables there was nothing out of the ordinary conveyed in the parables. The growth of seed, the inner spreading of leaven in bread or the drawing up different types of fish in a fisherman's net all were consistent with man's experience in the physical realm.

When Jesus spoke the parables of the lost sheep, the lost

coin, and the lost son, He again laid down truth which his hearers could identify with through experience. Sheep stray away and are lost, misplaced coins are lost, and children leave home and become lost. The spiritual message Jesus sought to convey was how contradictory to these accepted truths was the attitude of the Pharisees and scribes when viewing the spiritual reality of people lost in sin.

Jesus spoke the parable after the Pharisees and scribes grumbled that Jesus “*receives sinners and eats with them*” (*Luke 15:2*). Jesus says, “*What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?*” The more important spiritual message of Jesus is: you would do it for lost sheep; I am manifesting that same attitude toward the more important lost souls of mankind.

Because Jesus' parables conveyed nothing contradictory to reality, it is interesting to note how the account of the lost son differs somewhat from the lost sheep and coin. They all emphasize the same truth of the effort to

seek the lost and the consequent joy of their finding safety. But notice that with the sheep and coin, one goes after the straying animal and misplaced coin, but with the lost son, the Father stays at home and waits.

The coin cannot come to itself, but the son does. He is an intelligent human being while the coin is an inanimate object. You can find the coin, pick it up and put it in its proper place. But a son who has gone away following his own desires must be persuaded to find his way back to safety.

The son “*came to himself*” through suffering the wages of sin (*Luke 15:17*). Unlike a coin, he could reason and clearly see the consequences of his profligate life-style. Now in the depths of despair he reminds himself of the good that those under his father's roof enjoyed. He is ready to return home. Parents, would it not be easier if your children were like a coin? You could sweep, search and find the son or daughter putting them back in their proper place. But the son is not a coin. You must wait, anticipating the joy of the lost son returning. The woman seeks the coin, but the Father must wait for the son.