

## The Parables:

*According to the Greek and Hebrew definitions, a parable is "a placing of one thing beside another, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning, sentences with ethical wisdom and a comparison of one thing to another." God uses parables to teach those who are truly interested in following after Him. It is my prayer that you will be blessed by these truths.*

### A Penny Saved

By Mary Kane

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I am not a woman who is given to switching purses every time she changes her shoes. I have two basic purses: a summer purse (which is a small backpack) and a winter purse (which is black and has several compartments). Twice a year, at the change of seasons, I clean out my purse in order to make the Big Switch. Since fall is upon us, I recently had Fall Purse Cleaning. Into the trash went all the old receipts, sticky gum wrappers and small bottles of lotion without caps. I also returned all the loose, spare change, which continually escapes my wallet to its rightful place. A few days later, while searching in my purse for a pen, I came across a penny that missed the previous big clean up. I was about to drop the penny into the coin compartment of my wallet when I noticed that it looked a little odd; the back of the penny was covered with peppermint bubble gum. Without a second thought, I walked into the bathroom and tossed the sticky coin into the trash. As I threw the penny away, my grandfather came to my mind. My hardworking, frugal, German grandfather would have been horrified to know that I threw away a penny. To my grandfather every coin, no matter how insignificant, was worth keeping. Jesus feels the same way about people—no one is insignificant to Him.

Please read Luke 15:8-10.

**What did the woman lose in this parable?**

One silver coin; not iron, or lead, but silver—a precious metal.

**Where did she lose her coin?**

**Name something that you have lost in your house this week.**

I lost my brown belt. I searched high and low for that belt and finally found it in my closet. Go figure.

**Please write down what you think of when you hear the word *lost*.**

I think of wandering, of being unable to return to a given point, of having no sense of direction and of being in danger. When I looked up the definition *lost* in the original Greek, I was surprised by what I learned. The Greek word for *lost* is *appollymi* which means “to destroy, to declare that one must be put to death, to abolish, to kill.” To God, being lost is a very serious thing—it’s a matter of life and death.

**How many coins did the woman originally have?**

Some of the commentators that I researched believe that the lost coin possibly came off an ornament of ten silver coins that was traditionally worn on a chain by a married woman. The ornament, similar in function to a wedding ring was a sign that the wearer was married.

The word used for “silver coin” in this passage is *drachme*. A *drachme* is a Greek silver coin equivalent to the Roman denarius worth about 15 cents.

The lost coin was not worth very much and the woman also had 9 more coins just like it. Why waste time looking for it? I would have been tempted to forget about the little coin (like my penny) and go shopping with the other nine. Though the coin was not valuable in and of itself, it was important to the woman who owned it. The silver coins in this story represent those who have yet to trust in Christ; small, lost and insignificant but very valuable to our Heavenly Father. As each coin was valuable to the woman, every person is valuable to God. No one is a throw away penny.

**Do you have something that is relatively worthless but extremely precious to you?**

My cedar chest is full of precious little mementos: cards from my husband, dried flowers, baby clothes and funny little presents from my sons. These treasures are worthless to others but immensely valuable to me.

**What three things did the woman do when she realized that she lost a coin?**

Lit a lamp, swept the house and searched.

We are going to take a look at these three actions and see how they apply to our lives as Christians.

***First, the woman lit a lamp.*** If the woman had to light a lamp in order to search for the coin, it must have been dark in the house. As Christians, we also have been saved out of darkness. Because of the darkness of the world and our own sin, God had to light a lamp to *find* us as well.

**What was the lamp that God used to show us the way to Him? Please turn to Psalm 119:105 and record your answer in the space below.**

God used the lamp of His Word to lead us to Him. Matthew Henry states in reference to the woman lighting a lamp, "This represents the various means and methods God makes use of to bring lost souls home to himself: he has *lighted the candle* of the gospel, not to show himself the way to us, but to show us the way to him..."<sup>iii</sup> God sent His Word to show us the way to Him. After our eyes were opened to see the way, we had a choice to make: to follow God or to follow our own path. The difference between the two choices is where we will spend eternity.

***Second, she swept the house.*** The coin was lost in the dirt and dust of the house so the woman kept sweeping until she found it. We were in the same condition as the coin when Jesus found us; lost in the dirt of our sin. Thankfully, He kept on sweeping until He found us.

Many years ago, Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached a sermon on the lost coin. He made a point that if a coin was dropped in a house, it may fall on a beautiful polished floor, on an expensive woven carpet, or in the dust and dirt. No matter where the coin fell, lost was still lost. The same point applies to mankind; whether our sin is apparent to all or not, lost is still lost. We all need a savior.

***Third, she searched carefully.*** The word *searched* used in this text comes from the Greek word *zeteo* which means to seek in order to find, to strive after, to require, to crave, to demand something from someone. Can you imagine that the Creator of the Universe desires to have you as His own and longs to spend time with you?

**Which of these definitions means the most to you and why?**

Let's go back to our text again.

**Please fill in the missing word for the verse below:**

“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search \_\_\_\_\_ until she finds it?”

The woman in our parable not only searched, but she searched *carefully*. Why did she search carefully? Because she cared very deeply about what was lost. God also cares very deeply for the lost—it is His will that all should come to Him and that no one should perish.

### **How long did the woman search for the coin?**

Until she found it. It is my opinion that as long as we draw breath, God will continue to pursue us, giving us opportunities to accept His gift of grace. If you aren't a Christian yet, God is longing for you to become *found*. You can become *found* by asking Christ to come into your heart and accepting Him as your personal Savior. If you have not asked Christ to be your Savior please take a moment to accept Him right now. Simply bow your head, tell God that you accept the death of His Son on the cross as payment for your sins and ask Jesus to be your Savior. If you have sincerely asked Christ to be your Savior you are now a member of God's family!

### **What happened once the woman found the lost coin?**

She called her friends and neighbors together to rejoice with her. I have found that in order for some things to be fully celebrated, they must be shared with others. Most of the time, when I am joyful I want to share my joy with certain people. I think to myself, “I just can't wait until I talk to so-and-so about this!” Have you had the same experience?

**Please share a joyful experience that was made better for the sharing with others.**

Please look back at verse 10.

**Check the box that tells how God reacts when one sinner repents.**

- Cries
- Rejoices
- Laughs
- Mourns

He rejoices when one sinner repents! The word *joy* in the original language means “joy, gladness, *of persons who are one’s joy*” (emphasis mine). I have often heard mothers say “my son/daughter is the joy of my life!” Be blessed—God says that about you. You are the joy of His life!

For as many times as I have read over these scriptures, I was freshly moved by the word *one* at the end of verse 10. God rejoiced over *one* sinner. All it takes to get God rejoicing is *one* precious lost treasure who repents...one lost person who comes to Bible study...one lost person who comes to church. I have often heard churches talk about numbers. I’ve also worried over numbers; keeping careful count of how many people attended a retreat or conference. It’s all about the numbers. To God it truly is all about numbers. Every number is an important number—even *one*. *One* is a cause for great rejoicing in God’s economy—may we have the same attitude. Instead of being discouraged over low attendance at a carefully planned event, rejoice with God over those who have come.

In closing, like coins, people can also be *lost*. God knows exactly who has decided to follow Him and who hasn’t. Like the woman in the parable, He is actively seeking that which is lost. God has given us the Parable of the Lost Coin to reveal to us His heart for the lost; He treasures them. He treasures you. By this parable, He has shown us how to pursue the lost; by carefully

and continually holding out the light of His Word so He can sweep away the shame of sin through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Have a blessed day.

*"for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

*Luke 19:10*

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<sup>i</sup> Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *parabolē* (Strong's 3850)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 16 Aug 2010. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3850&t=KJV> >

<sup>ii</sup> Henry, Matthew. "Commentary on Luke 15." . Blue Letter Bible. 1 Mar 1996. 2011. 12 Sep 2011. <[http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm\\_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1656&commInfo=5&topic=Luke&ar=Luk\\_15\\_8](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=4&contentID=1656&commInfo=5&topic=Luke&ar=Luk_15_8) >