

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 15: 8-10

Brothers and sisters, Peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it is time for our Bible study again. We are continuing our study of Luke chapter 15, and today we will read verses 8 through 10.

This chapter tells three parables, which are actually three segments of a single parable. Yesterday we looked at the first segment; today we look at the second, from verse 8 to verse 10. Before we dive in, let's take a general look at the similarities and differences among these three parables.

First, the similarities: in the stories of the shepherd, the woman, and the father, something is lost initially. The shepherd had one sheep go astray, the woman lost a coin, and the father's younger son left home. Then, the shepherd, the woman, and the father each paid a price, and as a result, they recovered what was lost. Finally, they celebrated with friends and neighbors, and every story ended in joy; these are the commonalities.

Regarding the differences, from the perspective of what was lost, the parables emphasize life, value, and identity—three different angles. In the case of the lost sheep, a sheep cannot survive on its own in the wilderness; it will surely lose its life. Therefore, the shepherd hurriedly sought to bring the lost sheep back. This shepherd values life immensely; even though it was just one out of a hundred, he would not allow it to perish. Similarly, God places great value on every single one of our lives.

The second segment focuses on value. Money has value in the woman's hand; when it is lost, it loses its utility. Therefore, the woman must search carefully. Even though it is only one coin, she prizes its value. Many times, we might even look down on ourselves, feeling as though one more or one less of us makes no

difference, but God highly values each individual's worth; without even one, it is incomplete.

In the third segment, the prodigal son returns home thinking he is no longer worthy to be a son, yet the father puts a robe on him, a ring on his finger, and sandals on his feet, restoring his identity as a son. Beyond these different emphases regarding the lost, the shepherd actively goes out to search, the woman actively lights a lamp to search at home, while the father waits passively until the son comes to his senses.

These three stories are all about love—the shepherd's love, the woman's love, and the father's love—yet they highlight different aspects of love. For the shepherd, he must pay the price of going into the wilderness and traveling everywhere to search; his is a laboring love. This is like Jesus Christ being sent to earth, laboring to find the lost sheep belonging to God. The woman emphasizes a meticulous love, lighting a lamp to search slowly until the coin is found. The father represents a broad, forgiving love. With this understanding, let us return to chapter 15.

Verse 8: “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?”

The shepherd mentioned previously typifies Jesus Christ coming into the world to seek the lost sheep, while this woman typifies the Holy Spirit. The woman has ten coins, and if one is lost, the set is incomplete; therefore, she must light a lamp and sweep the house. Lighting a lamp implies it is nighttime; she cannot wait for daybreak to begin her search, but must find the lost coin immediately. Thus, she lights a lamp and then sweeps the house.

Unlike the shepherd, who had to go into the wilderness, enduring all kinds of hardships and dangers and ultimately paying the price of his own life to save the lost sheep, this woman is at home. On one hand, she lights a lamp to see clearly, and on the other, she sweeps the house. When a house is filthy and cluttered, with dust and miscellaneous items everywhere, it is very difficult to find a lost coin.

Therefore, she both lights a lamp and sweeps the house, clearing away all filth, dirt, and chaos. Throughout the entire process, she is very patient, searching carefully and turning over every corner of the home until she finally finds it.

In the course of this description, I wonder if you have considered what this "house" represents? The scope of the shepherd's labor was the wilderness, while the scope of the woman's meticulous search was inside the house. In fact, this house represents our hearts. After our forefather Adam sinned and fell in the Garden of Eden, all of Adam's descendants were born in sin and lived in sin, their entire lives being dominated by sin. It reached a point where God's original intention for creating man was lost.

Every person created by God is of great value in His eyes, but because of sin, that value was lost. Our hearts became piled high with all sorts of filthy things—not only filthy, but dark. It is hard to find anything in a dirty, dark room. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is like this woman, coming to seek this lost coin that once belonged to God.

How does the Holy Spirit search? The first step is lighting a lamp. On our own, we have no light within us, but when the Holy Spirit comes, He first brings the light of God's hope into the depths of our hearts, allowing us to see hope. Then, the Holy Spirit very gently begins the work of sweeping our hearts. Room by room, corner by corner, He sweeps slowly and searches carefully, clearing away everything that does not align with God's will or please Him: things like selfishness, greed, arrogance, pride, and even anxiety or self-pity. All kinds of dust are swept clean until we, the coins originally covered in dust, once again manifest the value God intended at creation.

Verses 9–10: “And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents”.

God is perfect and cannot tolerate imperfection; missing one coin out of ten is an imperfection. Each of us has immense value in God's eyes; if you are missing, God is not "complete" in His family. Therefore, He must light the lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until that one coin is found. And once it is found, He is so joyful that He celebrates with friends and neighbors. Not only that, but the angels and heavenly hosts also sing and praise together.

If we reflect on our own experience of salvation, it is likely we heard someone preaching, or a hymn, a prayer, or a message. God's word is like light entering our dark hearts. Afterward, though we may not know how much time passed, the Holy Spirit began the work of sweeping and searching within us. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is truly patient; I know of some saints who only repented and believed after more than ten years. The Holy Spirit is like this woman, never giving up until He finds what He seeks.

Often when we share the gospel, we seem to encounter a "son of peace" who repents and believes as soon as the message is delivered. In reality, the Holy Spirit may have already begun working in their heart long ago; the Holy Spirit has already prepared their heart, and God simply sends us at the right time to harvest His crop. The Holy Spirit has already done the preliminary work in their heart.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. Thank You for giving me the wisdom for salvation. Truly, it is not that we could actively come before You, but that You first sent Your Son to complete the great work of redemption, and then You sent the Holy Spirit to do the work of enlightening, sweeping, and searching carefully within our hearts. Then, when the time was ripe, You gave us the opportunity and the willingness to repent, believe, and accept You as our Savior for life. This is the greatest blessing of our lives, and for this, we once again offer our thanks and praise. Help me, in my daily life today, to also become a channel and an outlet for the gospel; just as You saved me, I pray that the same salvation would come to the friends I care about and encounter. Bless my life; I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen.