

Let's begin by looking at the context for today's gospel. Luke 14 ends with the following: "*He who has ears to hear ought to hear.*" Our first verse today from chapter 15 says, "*The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him.*" This stands in contrast to the Pharisees and scribes who were grumbling because Jesus was receiving sinners and eating with them. They are not open to hearing.

As the tax collectors and sinners are listening to Jesus, He tells three parables, each about something that is lost and then found. There is a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son (the prodigal son). In each case, there is great joy when that which was lost is found (except for the older son who grumbles when the younger son returns).

In the first parable, we have a lost sheep. A shepherd has 100 sheep and one is lost. Someone with an M.B.A. would advise to write it off and protect the business. Thank goodness Jesus doesn't have an M.B.A. The ordinary rules of calculation do not apply. The shepherd is willing to risk everything for the lost sheep out of love for it.

In the second parable, we have a lost coin. The Greek (*drachma*) here indicates a small amount of money. It's about a day's worth of wages. Jesus asks what woman wouldn't look for the coin. Those listening would probably say, "No one Jesus. No one would fuss over that small amount of money. It's not like she lost her life savings."

Even more odd is that after finding the coin, the woman invites her friends over and throws a party. We scratch our heads because the party costs more than the lost coin. As with the lost sheep, we have a celebration and great joy.

I provide just a couple of thoughts about these beautiful parables. First, God *never* tires of pursuing us. We may forget him or run from Him, but He still seeks us. His love is beyond calculation. He risks everything (including His own beloved Son!) to come find us.

Second, notice that with both the sheep and the coin, that even though both were lost, they were in places where they could be found. It took striving from the shepherd and woman, but both were found. While God pursues us, you must put yourself in a position where God can find you. Going to Mass and confession, taking time to pray each day, puts you in a place where you can be found. And in finding you, the Lord will rejoice as He leads you home.