

Luke 15:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father,
I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

Analysis

Jesus begins the second parable: 'Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?' (ἢ τίς γυνὴ δραχμὰς ἔχουσα δέκα, ἐὰν ἀπολέσῃ δραχμὴν μίαν, οὐχὶ ἄπτει λύχνον καὶ σαροῖ τὴν οἰκίαν καὶ ζητεῖ ἐπιμελῶς ἕως οὗ εὑρή;). The woman's diligent search—lighting a lamp (ἄπτει λύχνον), sweeping (σαροῖ), seeking carefully (ζητεῖ ἐπιμελῶς)—illustrates God's active pursuit of the lost. The coin (δραχμή, drachma, a day's wage) has significant value, and the woman expends effort disproportionate to the loss by human calculation. This reveals God's perspective: each person has infinite worth, justifying extraordinary effort in salvation.

Historical Context

In first-century Palestinian culture, a woman's ten silver coins might represent her entire dowry or life savings. Poor families lived in small, dark houses with dirt floors, making a lost coin difficult to find. The woman's methodical search and subsequent celebration with neighbors (v.9) would resonate with the audience's own experience of loss and recovery. That Jesus uses a woman as the main character (following the shepherd parable) demonstrates the gospel's inclusivity—God's seeking love transcends gender, ethnicity, and social status.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the woman's diligent, thorough search illustrate the comprehensive nature of God's work in salvation?
2. What does Jesus' use of both male (shepherd) and female (woman) protagonists teach about gender equality in the gospel?

Interlinear Text

ἀναστὰς πορεύσομαι πρὸς τὸν Πάτερ μου καὶ ἔρῳ
I will arise **and go** **to** ^{G3588} **Father** **my** **and** **will say**
G450 G4198 G4314 G3962 G3450 G2532 G2046

αὐτῷ Πάτερ ἥμαρτον εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐνώπιόν
unto him **Father** **I have sinned** **against** ^{G3588} **heaven** **and** **before**
G846 G3962 G264 G1519 G3772 G2532 G1799

σου
thee
G4675

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 3:40 (Parallel theme): Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.

Luke 15:21 (Sin): And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Luke 18:13 (Sin): And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Matthew 6:14 (Parallel theme): For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Jeremiah 3:19 (Parallel theme): But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.

Psalms 25:11 (Sin): For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

Isaiah 63:16 (Parallel theme): Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

Proverbs 23:13 (Parallel theme): Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Jeremiah 31:20 (Sin): Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.

Matthew 3:6 (Sin): And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.