

## “Why Are They Lost?”

by Jody Wells

**Opening Text:** [Luke 19:10](#)] For the Son of man is come to seek and to save [that which was lost](#).

**Opening Illustration** – Last year, on a Friday afternoon in April an 11-yearold autistic child named Nadia Bloom finished reading her adventure book for girls – parked her bicycle at the edge of a densely wooded swampland near her home and began what she called a “nature walk.” That nature walk became a 4-day nightmare for her parents and church family! She was LOST in the swamps surrounding Florida’s Lake Jesup – famous for having the largest population of alligators in the US! As she approached the 96-hour mark, the odds of her survival without food or water dropped sharply and Police Chief Brunelle in charge of the search was losing hope. He announced, “We’re getting close to that bewitching hour when I have to make a decision. I’m not looking forward to it!”

*As the daily news covered this story, hopelessness began to settle in across America. I shuttered to imagine what her parents must be going through. “What if they never see her again? She’ll never throw her cap in the air at a high school graduation. Her dad will never give her away to some undeserving young groom. Her mother will never hold her hand in childbirth. What if she’s LOST forever?!” As we considered these thoughts and emotions, we should be keenly aware of how the Lord must feel about the LOST in this world!*

He devoted the entire 15<sup>th</sup> chapter in the book of Luke to His unwavering passion for the LOST. We learn of a lost SON ... a lost SHEEP ... and a lost COIN. In our teaching and preaching over the years, we often focus on WHO was lost ... WHERE they were lost ... or even HOW lost they were. Today, let’s answer this question ... WHY ARE THEY LOST?”

**Introduction:** By simply typing the word “LOST” on your computer, you will immediately see the reason why we aren’t truly motivated to reach the “LOST.” Just one click of the thesaurus and three pathetically passive words show. They just sit there staring at you. Repeat each word after me... MISPLACED .... MISLAID... ABSENT!

Now, I might MISPLACE my cell phone! I might MISLAY my keys! I might be ABSENT from physics class! But when it comes to a human soul - when it comes to my family member - when it comes to my classmate - when it comes to my backslidden friend - they’re not MISPLACED! They’re LOST!!!

When Jesus said “[I came to seek and to save that which was LOST,](#)” the word He chose was crystal clear. Listen carefully to Jesus’ definition of the word LOST = **1)** destroyed **2)** put out entirely **3)** abolished **4)** rendered useless **5)** put to death **6)** given to eternal misery in hell!

I’ve come to PLEAD with you today! At times I might even seem desperate. But I believe Jesus is coming VERY soon and I’m not sure we’re doing EVERYTHING in our power to reach the LOST before He comes! I’m not sure I’m doing everything in MY power! I wonder if the world’s casual definition of LOST has crept into our hearts and minds? Before we leave this place today – each of us will make a covenant with God to reach the LOST in our lives. But, before I can challenge you – there are a few in this room who are LOST ... and I must reach to you before He can commission you!

### **I. The Prodigal**

In Luke 15:24, the Father says this about the Prodigal ... “[For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.](#)” To the Father, a LOST son was a DEAD son!

#### **A. But WHY was he LOST?**

**Luke 15:11]** And he said, A certain man had two sons: **12]** And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. **13]** And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

- First of all, he's lost because his relationship with the Father was more about what the Father could GIVE HIM than what HE could GIVE the FATHER!
- Jesus tells us that days before he ever packed his bags and left his father's house, he selfishly demanded "what's in it for me dad?" His demand was for an early inheritance. The Bible says the father divided HIS living ... it was the father's money!
- You don't obtain an inheritance until your parent dies. So this boy was saying, "I can't relate to you dad! I don't believe like you dad! You're dead to me dad! But, give me YOUR money!"
- Jesus tells us that the boy "took HIS journey" into a far country and wasted all the Father had given him. The only thing the prodigal owned was the journey! He wasn't pushed out! It wasn't someone else's fault he left! He WILLFULLY chose HIS journey!
- Why is the Prodigal LOST? Because he's selfish. He wants his father's FAVOR without being a FAITHFUL son! He's LOST because he doesn't value his Father! He's lost because he's bent on HIS journey! But, most of all he's lost because he chose to be!

**Apply** – I believe the vast majority of you love the Lord and want to please Him, but if you're at the Father's house today wondering "what's in it for me?" I've come to talk to you for a moment. God WILL bless your relationships – He WILL bless your academics – He WILL bless your career pursuits – but only IF, He's FIRST in your life!

So, I beg you - don't say "I want mine first Lord!" When you place your boyfriend or girl friend, your education or career before the Father's purpose – you've already started packing your bags! And the journey you're choosing leads to hopelessness with the swine!

**(Optional Kings of Leon Illustration: "Talihina Sky" Movie Trailer)** They just won a Grammy. I just saw a trailer for their new film on YouTube. In it, the formerly Apostolic Pentecostal "Kings of Leon" front man Caleb Followill says, "As soon as I knew we were about to get a record deal ... I knew, I was going to Hell and I wasn't going to be a preacher!"

To those committed to following THAT journey ... Hear me shouting with love from the Father's house ... YOU'RE LOST! And it's not your Pastor's fault – It's not your church's fault – and it's not even your parent's fault! You're stealing the talents, the gifts and sensitivity that the Father gave you at His house – and you're knowingly leaving Him behind! Please don't demand Him to finance YOUR journey ... ask Him to favor HIS journey! These kids aren't misplaced ... they're not just absent from youth service... they're LOST!

But, you can't seem to stay away from Daddy's house can you? You still come to our camp meetings! You hang out in the halls of our conferences! You pose on the perimeter! Why? Because you don't belong out there! You were bought with a price ... washed in the blood ... filled with His Spirit! And I've come to tell you ... The Father still loves you ... and your Mother ... the church ... the Bride of Christ still loves you too! But, you must know that you're LOST. (optional prayer time)

## II. The Coin

**Luke 15:8]** 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? The Bible tells us that the Prodigal CHOSE to be LOST. And we understand that the SHEEP wandered away in the wilderness and became LOST, but what about this LOST silver coin?

## A. The Coin

- There are many theories about the significance of this woman's 10 coins and why she searched so diligently. But, the one that applies today is that of the bridal DOWRY.
- In those days, when a couple became espoused to marry, the woman sealed the engagement with a DOWRY. The dowry could be precious stones, property, material possessions, but especially ...money...coins!
- Young women seeking a husband used to wear these gold or silver coins publicly in hopes that a man would be impressed by her financial value and propose marriage.
- However, AFTER her formal engagement to the man, she might not wear the coins since she no longer needed to attract him. Nevertheless, the coins represented her covenant to surrender all she had to HIM! Is it possible that the young woman in the parable is engaged to be married and the coins are a covenant with her husband to be?

**II Corinthians 2:2]** For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have **espoused** you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

**Apply** – Young people, you are a Bride **ESPOUSED** to marry the Lord Jesus Christ! And you are beautiful in His sight! When you repented of your sins – got baptized in Jesus name – and were filled with the Holy Ghost - - you became His espoused wife! And there are many “coins” of covenant that you must hold precious until He returns!

We must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth! We must hold fast to the doctrine and His name! We must live holy and separated lives! We must love one another and live the Fruit of the Spirit! We must work in the Kingdom! - - BUT, I believe one of the most important “coins” to our Groom is our promise to reach the LOST with the Gospel! As Jesus left to prepare a place for us He said to His bride in **Mark ...** “preach the gospel to every creature!” In **Matthew ...** “Go! Teach all nations! Baptize them in my name!” In **Acts ...** “be witnesses unto me ... in your hometown ... to your enemy's town ... to the uttermost parts of the earth!” Is reaching the LOST still a precious covenant between God and you?

## B. But, WHY is the Woman's Coin Lost?

- Is it possible that her once precious coins had become common? Was it OK to just have 9 out of 10 coins? Can't we focus on what we HAVE rather than what's LOST?
- But, maybe this parable finds her facing the imminent return of the bridegroom – and she's suddenly reminded that she must have ALL of her coins in place. So she frantically crawls the floor - searching! Can you see her diligence? Can you feel her desperation? Searching into the darkness of night - so now a candle must be lit!
- But, even with her light, the coin remains LOST! Hindered by the dirt and grime of life, she grabs a broom – sweeping every room, every hall way, every closet, every corner ... every square inch must be turned upside down! WHY...she screams Why is it lost!

**Apply** – Apostolic young person, it's no longer your parent's job to reach the LOST! It's not a leader's obligation! YOU – and YOU – and YOU are the Bride Betrothed to Jesus Christ! He's given YOU a calling! YOU have a COIN of COVENANT! And you must FIND the LOST in this dark and dirty world! (Share examples of young soul winners)

UPC Youth ... No one holds a CANDLE to your “coin” of worship! Nothing compares to your “coin” of talent! No one can rival your “coin” of Bible intellect ... But, what about the LOST?! Are you comfortable with classmates going to Hell? Are you content to see coworkers left behind? How many times will you share texts – without sharing the love of Jesus? Is it really enough that your profile says “Pentecostal?” Is it enough to say, “they know I go to church?” The problem is, your friends - like the COIN don't even KNOW they're LOST!

**Illustration** – In a hot and humid, gator and mosquito infested Florida swamp – Nadia Bloom spent 4 nights and nearly 5 days. Much like the LOST in this world, because of her disorder - she didn't even know she was LOST – she thought she was on a nature adventure! Police, fire-rescue, scuba divers and volunteers searched for her every day – all day – for 4 days to no avail. The swamp was too deep and dangerous! The woods were too thick, and the statistics were mounting against them!

As the sunlight faded each evening, so did her parents' hope that their LOST child would ever be found. But a church in Orlando was praying! And a Spirit-filled man named James King searched for only 2 hours and found NADIA! He waded waste deep into the swamp ... He was scraped and cut by thick brush ... and surrounded by venomous snakes and alligators, but he found her!

He boldly reported on local and national news programs that he was praying in tongues as he wondered through the woods - - he said God directed him to Nadia! Sure he was ridiculed and even investigated, but listen to what he said, "It was just a question of was I going to listen to God. I'm just a regular guy! The hardest part ... was getting out of my own way; putting my thoughts aside and listening to God!" King would cry out her name ... then listen ... cry out "NADIA!" ... then listen!

**I hear Paul crying out to the church at Corinth - II Corinthians 4:3]** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are LOST: **4]** In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Do I wish it was a One-God, Apostolic Christian that found Nadia? Sure I do! The only problem is – there weren't any Apostolic Christians involved in her search! And that's the problem facing the LOST in our world isn't it? Many of us just aren't involved in the search! Get involved! It will change your life! (Share YOUR personal testimonies of soul winning) It's addictive! It's life changing for everyone involved! It was the most important thing for Jesus and it should be for us too!

I know you're busy! I know you're tired! I know you get bored easy, but someone please light a candle? The day is far spent! Your LOST friend - that lady in the checkout line - that guy at the gym ... the kid who sits in the cafeteria alone ... they're just COINS! And they don't KNOW their lost!

**ALTAR:** (Consecration & Commitment)

- Jesus came to seek and to save that which was LOST! And He found us! But, now He's gone to prepare a place for us and now it's my purpose – it's YOUR purpose to find the LOST!
- NOT with the emotion you feel over a MISPLACED cell phone or ABSENT set of keys ... But with the INTENSITY and boldness of James King!
- He could have said, the pro's can't find her ... how will I find her? He could have said ... she's probably abducted – gone forever! They'll make fun of me! They'll attack me! - - And THEY WILL! But we have a COVENANT with Jesus! We must obtain His passion for the LOST!
- A passion that drove Jesus to a whipping post ... up Calvary's hill ... and onto a Cross! He was driven because He knew LOST meant **1) destroyed 2) abolished 3) useless 4) put to death 5) given to eternal misery in hell!**
- **(Bring Masked Man Over)** The reason this young man has a mask on is because YOU'RE the only one who KNOWS his identity! Is he your best friend? Is he the kid that eats lunch alone in the cafeteria? Is he the cashier at Starbucks that you pass every week? If you don't FIND him, he'll be LOST forever!

- **So the ultimate answer to the question ...** “Why are they LOST? Because WE haven’t found them ... YET! But that’s about to change!!!
- Waiting for you in this altar are men and women who will lead you in this search for the LOST. They each have faceless ...nameless masks ... in their hands. I want every young person to come and take one mask ... then write the name (s) of LOST souls that only YOU can reach on the mask. (cry out their name as you begin the search)

### **ALTAR Celebration:**

**Prodigal ... Luke 15:32]** ... we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

**Sheep ... Luke 15:6]** ... he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

**Coin ... Luke 15:9]** ... she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

- In ALL of these parables, there’s a CELEBRATION after the Lost Things are found!
- If your worship isn’t as intense as it used to be, all you need is to find the LOST!
- We’re going to celebrate because you found that COIN of personal soul winning! THEN, we’re going to celebrate in advance that the LOST people in your life are about to be FOUND!

### **ACTION PLAN ...**

- Pray for that name every day
- Talk to that person every day about the Lord
- Testify of God’s goodness to them
- Expose them to the POWER of God
- Sign up for YOM or Sign up for AYC today
- Equip yourself with an easy to follow Personal Bible Study
- Get out of your comfort zone!