

## Proper 19

*Sunday between 11 and 17 September inclusive • OT24*

### Principal Service readings

Exodus 32.7-14	Moses seeks God's mercy
Psalms 51.1-11	A plea for mercy despite sinfulness
1 Timothy 1.12-17	The grace of the Lord was poured out on me
Luke 15.1-10	The parable of the lost sheep; the lost coin

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

### Gospel Reading

#### *The parable of the lost sheep; and of the lost coin*

<sup>1</sup>All the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? <sup>4</sup>When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. <sup>5</sup>And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." <sup>6</sup>Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

<sup>7</sup>Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>8</sup>When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost." <sup>9</sup>Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'

Luke 15.1-10 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

## Comments and Questions

‘ This man welcomes sinners and eats with them’ (15.1) is the criticism that Jesus is responding to when he tells these parables. The categories (tax collectors and sinners, versus Pharisees and scribes) recapitulate 7.29-30.

Jesus wants the Pharisees and scribes to understand that when he is eating and drinking with *them* he is eating and drinking with sinners. He asks the Pharisees and scribes to imagine themselves in the place of a man who has lost a sheep. They would try to find it and rejoice once they had found it. Luke adds the touch (compared with Matthew 18.12-14) of the shepherd putting the sheep across his shoulders and carrying it home. This evokes the pastoral tradition, as in Psalm 23.1-6 (see also Ezekiel 34.1-24).

The second parable is about a woman with ten coins who has lost one. Again, like the woman, the Pharisees and scribes would rejoice if they found what they had lost.

The two stories are building towards the longer parable of the lost son (15.15.11-32), one of the best-loved parables in the gospels.

Jesus is contrasting the judgemental attitude of his critics with the welcoming outreach of God. Do we share the passion of God to reach out to those who have gone astray or have got lost?

## Quotations

1

Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines.

*Reaching out: the three movements of the spiritual life* / Henri J. M. Nouwen. 1975

2

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

Anne Frank, 1929–1945

2

3

E. P. Sanders argues that what offended other Jews was that Jesus offered to sinners forgiveness and admission into his community without making the normal demands of restitution and commitment to the law. He shows that Jesus’ offer of forgiveness was not novel: in Judaism one could always turn to God, repent, and be saved (e.g. Is 45:2) ... Sanders proposes that the novelty and offence of Jesus’ message was that sinners who heeded him would be included in the reign of God even though they did not repent by making restitution, sacrifice, and turning to obedience to the law. Jesus’ companionship with such people was a sign that God would save them, and, moreover, implied a claim to know whom God would include. (E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1985])

*Women in the gospel of Luke* / Barbara E. Reid. 1996

## Related topics

*For further study:*

Morality; reconciliation; mercy; forgiveness; images of God

## Closing Prayer

Undaunted you seek the lost, O God,  
exultant you bring home the found.

Touch our hearts with grateful wonder  
at the tenderness of your forbearing love.

Grant us delight in the mercy that has found us  
and bring all to rejoice at the feast of forgiveness.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.

*Opening prayers* · Ordinary Time 24, Year C<sup>2</sup>

CPL • LBC Year C Proper 19.odt • 2022-08-15

2 *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.