

The Mission of Jesus



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: *Luke 15:4–7, 11–32; 16:19–31; 18:35–43; 19:1–10.*

Memory Text: “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (*Luke 19:10, NKJV*).

If we were to write a mission statement for Jesus, we could not do any better than to repeat His own words: “‘To seek and to save that which was lost.’”

What was lost? It was humanity itself, which was alienated from God, subject to death, and filled with fear, disappointment, and despair. If nothing were done in our behalf, all would be lost.

Thanks to Jesus, though, we all have great reasons to be hopeful.

“In the apostasy, man alienated himself from God; earth was cut off from heaven. Across the gulf that lay between, there could be no communion. But through Christ, earth is again linked with heaven. With His own merits, Christ has bridged the gulf which sin had made. . . . Christ connects fallen man in his weakness and helplessness with the Source of infinite power.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 20.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is a story of God seeking after lost humanity. Luke illustrates this truth by using three important parables: the lost sheep (*Luke 15:4–7*), the lost coin (*vss. 8–10*), and the lost son (*vss. 11–32*).

* Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 23.

The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

Read Luke 15:4–7. What does this tell us about God’s love for us? Why is it so important to understand that it was the shepherd who went looking for the lost sheep?

In a world that can appear uncaring and indifferent to us, this parable reveals a startling truth: God loves us so much that He Himself will come after us, in order to bring us to Him. We often talk about people seeking God; in reality, God is seeking us.

“The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 483.

Read Luke 15:8, 9. This parable is found only in Luke. The lost coin could have one of two meanings. First, Judea during the time of Jesus was full of poor people, and in most homes one coin (*drachma*) could have been more than a day’s wage, barely enough to keep the family from starving. Second, as a mark of being married, some women wore a headdress made up of ten coins—a huge sum, saved over a long time in the case of poor families.

In either case, the loss was a serious matter. So, the woman, utterly broken and in deep grief, lights a lamp (the house perhaps had no windows or perhaps only a small window), picks up a broom, and turns the house upside down until she finds that coin. Her soul is filled with overflowing joy, and the overflow floods to all her friends.

“The coin, though lying among dust and rubbish, is a piece of silver or gold still. Its owner seeks it because it is of value. So, every soul, however degraded by sin, is in God’s sight accounted precious. As the coin bears the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore the image and superscription of God; and though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 194.

So much of modern science and philosophy tells us that we are nothing but chance creations in a meaningless universe that does not care at all about our fate or us. What completely different worldview is presented in these two parables?

The Parable of the Lost Son: Part 1

Hailed in history as the most beautiful short story ever told on the forgiving nature of love, the parable of the prodigal son (*Luke 15:11–32*), narrated only by Luke, may well be called the parable of the loving father and two lost sons. One son chose the lawlessness of the distant land over the love of the father. The other son chose to stay in the home but did not fully know the love of the father or the meaning of a brother. The parable may be studied in seven parts, four dealing with the prodigal, two with the Father, and one with the elder brother.

1. “Give me” (*Luke 15:12*). The younger son’s decision to demand of his father his portion of the property was no sudden, impulsive urge. Sin often results after a long time of brooding over misplaced priorities. The younger son must have heard from friends about the glitter and glamour of distant lands. Life at home was too rigid. Love was there, but it had its own boundaries; the distant land offered him life without restrictions. The father was too protective, his love too embracing. The son wanted freedom, and in the quest for unhindered freedom was the seed of rebellion.

2. “Why me?” (*Luke 15:13–16*). The son cashed in his entire share and set off to the “far country.” The far country is a place far away from the father’s home. Love’s caring eyes, law’s protective fence, grace’s ever-present embrace are foreign to the far country. It is a distant land of “riotous living” (*vs. 13*). The Greek word for “riotous” (*asotos*) appears three other times as a noun in the New Testament: for drunkenness (*Eph. 5:18*), rebelliousness (*Titus 1:6*), and debauchery that includes “lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries” (*1 Pet. 4:3, 4, NKJV*). Such pleasures of godless living wasted away his health and wealth, and soon he became moneyless, friendless, and foodless. His glittering life wound up in a gutter. Starved to the point of being in perpetual want, he found employment in caring for the pigs, a harsh fate for a Jew.

3. “Make me” (*Luke 15:17–19*). But even the prodigal is still a son, with the power of choice to turn around. So, the son “ ‘came to his senses’ ” and remembered a place called home, a person known as father, a relational bond called love. He walked back home, with a speech in his hand, to plead with the father: “ ‘Make me.’ ” That is, make me whatever you want, but let me be within your watchful eyes, within the care of your love. What better home is there but the Father’s heart.

The world can appear very alluring. What specific things of the world do you find yourself particularly tempted by, that you find yourself thinking, “Oh, that’s not so bad,” when deep down you know it is?

The Parable of the Lost Son: Part 2

4. The return home (*Luke 15:17–20*) was a journey of repentance. The journey began “‘when he came to himself’” (*NKJV*). Recognition of where he was, in comparison with what his father’s home was, drove him to “arise” and “go” to his father. The prodigal son returns home with a four-part speech that defines the true meaning of repentance.

First, there is an *acknowledgment* of the father as “‘my father’” (*vs. 18, NKJV*). The prodigal son now needs to lean upon and trust his father’s love and forgiveness, just as we must learn to trust in our heavenly Father’s love and forgiveness.

Second, *confession*: what the prodigal did is not an error of judgment, but a sin against God and his father (*vs. 18*).

Third, *contrition*: “‘I am no longer worthy’” (*vs. 19, NKJV*). Recognition of one’s unworthiness, in contrast to the worthiness of God, is essential for true repentance to take place.

Fourth, *petition*: “‘Make me’” (*vs. 19, NKJV*). Surrender to whatever God wills is the destination of repentance. The son has come home.

5. The waiting father (*Luke 15:20, 21*). The wait and the vigil, the grief and the hope, began at the moment the prodigal son stepped out of the home. The wait was over when the father saw him “a great way off,” and then “had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him” (*vs. 20*). No other image captures the character of God as that of the waiting father.

6. The rejoicing family (*Luke 15:22–25*). The father embraced the son, clothed him with a new robe, put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet, and ordered a feast. The family was in celebration. If leaving the home was death, the return was a resurrection, and worthy of rejoicing. The son was indeed a prodigal, but nevertheless a son, and over every repentant son there is joy in heaven (*vs. 7*).

7. The elder son (*Luke 15:25–32*). The younger son was lost when he stepped out of the home to go to a distant land; the older son was lost because, though he was home in the body, his heart was in a distant land. Such a heart is angry (*vs. 28*), complaining, and self-righteous (*vs. 29*), and refuses to recognize a brother. Instead, it recognizes only a “‘son of yours,’” a spendthrift without character (*vs. 30, NKJV*). The elder son’s attitude toward the father is the same as that of the Pharisees who accused Jesus: “‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them’” (*vs. 2, NKJV*). The father’s final word with his elder son reflects heaven’s attitude to all repentant sinners: “‘It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found’” (*vs. 32, NKJV*).

Put yourself in the older brother’s shoes. However wrong his thinking, why does it make so much “sense” that he would feel that way? How does this story reveal ways in which the gospel goes beyond what “makes sense”?

Lost Opportunities

Although Jesus came to seek and save those lost in sin, He never forces anyone to accept the salvation He offers. Salvation is free and available to all, but one must accept the free offer in faith, which results in a life in conformity with God's will. The only time we have for such an experience is while we live on earth; no other opportunity exists.

Read Luke 16:19–31. What's the main message of this parable?

The parable is recorded only in Luke, and it teaches two great truths with respect to salvation: the importance of “today” in the process of salvation and the absence of another opportunity for salvation after death.

Today is the day of salvation. The parable does not teach that there is something inherently evil in riches or something inescapably good in being poor. What it does teach is that the opportunity of being saved and living saved must not be missed while we are on this earth. Rich or poor, educated or illiterate, powerful or powerless, we have no second chance. All are saved and judged by their attitude today, now, to Jesus. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

The parable also teaches that eternal reward has nothing to do with material possessions. The rich man was “ ‘clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day’ ” (Luke 16:19, NKJV) but missed the essential of life: God. Where God is not recognized, fellow human beings are not noticed. The rich man's sin was not in his richness but in his failure to recognize that God's family is broader than he was prepared to accept.

There is no second chance for salvation after death. The second inescapable truth that Jesus teaches here is that there is no second chance for salvation after death. “It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27, NKJV). Another point of this parable is to show people that we have been given enough evidence now, in this life, to make a conscious choice for or against God. Any theology that teaches some kind of “second chance” after death is a great deception.

We love to talk about how much God loves us and all that He has done and is doing to save us. What should this parable teach us, though, about the danger of taking God's love and offer of salvation for granted?

Was Blind but Now I See

The mission statement of Jesus that He came to seek and save that which was lost is an affirmation of a holistic ministry. He came to make men and women whole, to transform them physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially. Luke gives us two instances that illustrate how Jesus restored two broken men into wholeness. One was blind physically, the other spiritually; both were outcasts—one a beggar and the other a tax collector. But both men were candidates for Christ’s saving mission, and neither was beyond His heart or reach.

Read Luke 18:35–43. What does this passage teach about our utter dependence upon God? Who among us at times has not cried out, “Have mercy on me”?

Mark names the man as Bartimaeus (*Mark 10:46*). He was a beggar outside of Jericho. Physically challenged, socially of no consequence, and poverty stricken, he suddenly found himself in the sweep of heaven’s wonder: “Jesus of Nazareth was passing by” (*Luke 18:37, NKJV*), and his faith surged upward to cry out, “ ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’ ” (*vs. 39, NKJV*). Faith requires neither eyes nor ears, neither feet nor hands, but only a heart that connects to the Creator of the world.

Read Luke 19:1–10. Who was the “blind” man in this story?

Only Luke records the story of Zacchaeus, the last of Jesus’ many encounters with outcasts. Christ’s mission, to seek and save that which was lost, was gloriously fulfilled in this encounter with Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was Jericho’s chief tax collector, a chief sinner in the judgment of the city’s Pharisees, but a chief sinner sought and saved by the Savior. What strange places and methods Jesus used to accomplish His mission: a sycamore tree, a curious man seeking to see who Jesus was, and a loving Lord commanding the man to come down, for He had a self-invited lunch appointment with him. But more important, Jesus had a delivery to make: “ ‘Today salvation has come to this house’ ” (*Luke 19:9, NKJV*), but not before Zacchaeus made things right (*vs. 8*).

It’s easy to see other people’s faults and shortcomings, isn’t it? But we can so often be blind to our own. What are some areas in your life that you need to face up to, confess, and get the victory over which you have been putting off for way too long?

Further Study: “By the lost sheep Christ represents not only the individual sinner but the one world that has apostatized and has been ruined by sin.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 190.

On the value of one soul: “The value of a soul, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, go to Gethsemane, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross. . . . At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 196.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 While all religions portray the human being in search of God, Christianity presents God as the seeker: Adam, where are you (*Gen. 3:9*)? Cain, where is your brother (*Gen. 4:9*)? Elijah, what are you doing here (*1 Kings 19:9*)? Zacchaeus, come down (*Luke 19:5*). What has been your own experience with God seeking you out?
- 2 Look again at the final question at the end of Tuesday’s study. What was the fatal mistake that the older son made? What spiritual defects were revealed in his attitude? Why is it easier to have that same attitude than we might think? See also Matthew 20:1–16.
- 3 In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus said that even if someone were to come back from the dead, there would be those who would not believe. In what ways did this parable foretell the reaction of some to the resurrection of Jesus, in which some still didn’t believe despite the powerful evidence for His resurrection?
- 4 One of the most impressive aspects of Jesus’ saving ministry is the equality with which He treated all people, such as the blind beggar and Zacchaeus, or Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. The Cross, more than anything else, shows the equality of all people before God. How should this crucial truth impact how we treat others, even those toward whom—because of politics, culture, ethnicity, whatever—we might have previously held ill feelings? Why is that attitude so anti-Jesus?
- 5 Compare the story of the prodigal son with the story of the rich man and Lazarus. How do the two balance each other out?

Praise Instead of Prejudice

DAESUNG KIM, SOUTH KOREA

Office buildings surround the Seoul Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, and it is very difficult to make contact with people. When I was pastoring there, I thought that it might be effective for the church to operate a vegetarian restaurant. If we provided fresh food and friendly service, perhaps the nearby office workers would like it.

When I first approached the church about this idea, most members were against it because they already had tried this but had failed. I assured them that I wouldn't use the church budget and that Ellen White had said many times that if we established this kind of restaurant in the cities, it would be very successful. At last, the members agreed.

As a nonprofit organization, the church isn't permitted to own a restaurant, so I organized a health association and invited those working in the surrounding offices to join so that they could eat in our restaurant. During the next three months, I visited every office and invited each person to become a member of our health association. I explained that we would provide the freshest vegetarian food and that by becoming a member of the association they could eat this delicious food Monday through Friday. The membership fee was the equivalent of US\$100 per month. Many people signed up.

The church members and I distributed more than five hundred free meal tickets. Each recipient was entitled to one free meal on a certain day at the restaurant. We were happily surprised when nearly five hundred guests arrived. As they enjoyed their meals, I announced that as members of the health association, they could eat here every day. Many joined.

To operate this kind of restaurant is not easy. It's important to have a good building, and the church pastor must have a good relationship with the community. Of course, the food is important—if it isn't tasty the guests won't continue coming. A few years after we started, we lost our cook, and her replacement wasn't as skilled. As the food quality went down, so did the number of guests. Once we replaced her, the food quality improved and again membership in the health association rose.

We found that there are many benefits coming from this venture. In Korea, many people think that Adventists are an unwanted sect. Because of this mind-set, some were reluctant to visit the restaurant.

But as our vegetarian restaurant became more well-known, Christian church pastors, Buddhist monks, and priests decided to come. After getting to know us, these people have only praise for our church, instead of prejudice. Many of our guests have high statuses in the community.

By God's grace, our vegetarian restaurant has been operating successfully for more than 12 years. It is one of 117 centers of influence in South Korea.

The Lesson in Brief

► **Key Text:** *Luke 19:10*

► **The Student Will:**

Know: Comprehend what it means to seek and save.

Feel: Understand how seeking and saving affects him or her.

Do: Act out the role that God has assigned the student in the seeking-saving process.

► **Learning Outline:**

I. Know: The Meaning of Seek and Save

A Before we know the meaning of “seek and save,” we should know the answer to the following questions: Who is lost? From where have we fallen? How far is the fall? How impossible is it for us to recover from the fall?

B What can we learn about the condition of our lostness from the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son?

C How is restoration from each condition of lostness accomplished? In what way does each restoration symbolize the seeking and saving mission of Jesus?

II. Feel: How Does Seeking and Saving Affect Us?

A With Jesus, the Seeker and Saver, what principle is illustrated in each of the three parables?

B What emotions are pictured in the parable of the lost son, as the son and father unite, and what lessons can we learn about God’s saving love?

C Lost and found are two opposite states in the life of an individual. How would you describe the mental, emotional, and spiritual conditions in each state, and what roles do Satan and Christ play?

III. Do: What Are We to Do in God’s Seeking Process?

A Do we contribute anything to God’s saving mission? What, if any, is the cost to us?

B How are we to respond against the world’s allurements to Jesus’ mission that He came to seek and save us?

► **Summary:** The mission of Jesus is a result of God’s love and grace. “Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (*Rom. 5:20, NKJV*), and through this grace we find ourselves saved.

Learning Cycle

►STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: *Luke 15:18, 19*

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: “Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. . . . Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 206.

Just for Teachers: *Lost.* This one word describes the heartbreak of human life and history. Wandering away from the fold, neglect of the owner, rebellious choice to assert one’s self: whatever the reason for the condition, lostness shall pronounce its own verdict of supreme wretchedness and condemnation unless the lost yield willingly to the Seeker—the good Shepherd, the Maker of the household, or the eternally loving Father. The lost discover their purpose and joy when they yield to the power of “abidingness.” Abide in whom? A good question with which to begin your discussion.

Opening Discussion: The lost coin, the lost sheep, the lost son—what are the differences between the lostness of each? Which is the most pitiable kind? Why do the first two parables speak of a seeker but not the last one?

►STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: “I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.” How often we have sung this verse as part of that great hymn “Amazing Grace.” Being lost is the tragedy of all humanity because “all have sinned” (*Rom. 3:23*). Being found is a privilege equally universal, but it needs to be grasped in faith and clung to in our embrace of the heavenly Finder. Our lesson this week speaks of several kinds of lostness, but we shall comment on three: lost son, lost opportunities, and two blind men.

Bible Commentary

I. Lost Son (*Review Luke 15:11–32 with your class.*)

Being lost is the pathetic plight of humanity, a sickness unto death, caused by the enthronement of self in the place of God. It is not, nor ever was, a part of God's plan. Being lost involves those who choose to leave the love of the Father in favor of the far country where the itch of fame, the lure of sinful pleasure, the strange intoxication of selfish pursuit, and the abandonment of judgment and responsibility combine to reduce to the barest minimum the difference between the human and the swine.

Notice, however, the parable's portrayal of the divine Father. First, He waits. He cannot force the son to return. The Father's love is for those who choose to accept it. God never forces one's will: no one can be redeemed by being robbed of that which defines human choice. Second, the Father restores the prodigal without any condition: no reparations asked, no quarantine placed, no judgment pronounced. Pardon, forgiveness, restoration, acceptance, rejoicing, the ring, the shoes, the robe—one after the other leads to the overflow of God's joy at the return of the prodigal. Third, the Father saw him " 'while he was yet at a distance' " (*Luke 15:20, RSV*). Distance or the distant land cannot keep the prodigal child away from the seeking eyes of the Father, for the return home takes into account that "on a hill far away stood an old rugged cross." The Cross ensures that no returning child remains a prodigal.

Consider This: Rebellion is governed by the grammar of *I* (*see Isa. 14:12–14*). *I* is the subject, *I* is the verb, *I* is the object—all in all, *I* is the sentence of life. So the rebellious younger son approaches the father and demands, "Give me. I want to be me." Whenever self demands to be its own beginning, center, and destination, that self chooses to reject the father's home and becomes a creature of the distant land.

II. Lost Opportunities (*Review Luke 16:19–31 with your class.*)

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is not abstract theology. It is a powerful statement on responsible living in an irresponsible society; on the meaninglessness of luxury in the midst of abject poverty; on Heaven's humbling of the proud, and God's embrace of the rejected, the lonely, and the marginalized soul called Lazarus (meaning "God is my helper"). If God is one's helper, neither the banquets of the rich nor the dogs that lick one's sores can keep one away from God's great embrace.

Eternity's final reckoning does not take into account how large a bank account one had, how large a house one dwelt in, or how many servants one had at one's beck and call. All worldly measures of success vanish, and God's scale of real worth weighs each soul in terms of those everlasting word's of divine vocabulary: love, grace, reaching out to the least of those among us, sowing the seeds of tears, and returning with the harvest of joy.

That is theology—love embracing the Lazaruses of life and bringing them into Abraham’s bosom.

And that theology has a second point: now is the day of salvation, and after that, death. There’s no second chance. Decide, therefore, now. Decide for God.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ The rich man cries for mercy (*Luke 16:24*), but mercy was not available. Why?
- ❷ What is meant in *Luke 16:26* by the great gulf?
- ❸ Why is heeding “Moses and the prophets” (*Luke 16:31*) so decisive in the reward of eternal life? (*Compare with John 5:38–40*.)

III. Two Blind Men (*Review Luke 18:35–19:8 with your class.*)

In the week before the cross, Jesus encountered two blind men—one outside Jericho, with rags for clothes, a worn-out mat for his bed, and a bowl for begging. Blind and helpless, Bartimaeus (*Mark 10:46*) awaited the day when deliverance would relieve him from his affliction and hopelessness.

Deliverance did come, but not in the form of death, which so many hope for when life reaches its nadir; it came in the good news he heard from the milling crowd that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. Bartimaeus knew Jesus. He had heard of His miracles. He knew His power. He knew who He was. He knew how He cared. Suddenly, Bartimaeus explodes into a Messianic confession, the lost soul’s only plea: “ ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me’ ” (*Luke 18:38, NKJV*). Blind though he was, his spiritual vision was in tune with heavenly realities. His Messianic discovery was sufficient to open his eyes and behold heaven’s greatest wonder: Jesus. What discovery are you waiting for?

The second blind man was spiritually so and lived inside Jericho—the chief tax collector. He lived, ignoring the difference between good and evil, tax and plunder, flesh’s pull and spirit’s obligations, today’s spoils and tomorrow’s reckonings. To him, eternity had no meaning, righteousness had no relevance, and God had taken a holiday from his life.

He, too, had heard of Jesus and was anxious to see what this wonder-working Man was like. He could have seen Jesus easily face-to-face at the tax booth at the entry to Jericho. Was he afraid of his moral failings, his social exploitation of others for gain, and his spiritual bankruptcy?

Luke is a gracious writer and suggests no such thing, only that he was of short stature and sought the help of a sycamore tree to compensate for his lack of height. But Christ’s penetrating eyes can find the sinner anywhere, and the Savior saw the need of Zacchaeus. Immediately, Jesus offered to fill the void in Zacchaeus’s soul and told him to come down from the lostness of the treetop to the intimacy of his home. There the self-invited Guest gave to the host the

best meal one could hope for: the bread of life. Jesus made the spiritually blind to see. To have Jesus in the home and in the heart is better than being the richest man in Jericho or anywhere else. Zacchaeus found his salvation.

An encounter with the living Christ opens our eyes, heals our wounded hearts, provides peace to our souls, and assures us of eternal life.

Discussion Questions:

- ① Luke 18:40–43 provides a progression from blindness to discipleship: sensing one’s need, realizing the power of prayer, acknowledging Jesus, experiencing faith, rejoicing, and following Jesus. Why are these steps important?
- ② Review how Zacchaeus gave meaning to his repentance (*Luke 19:8*). Can you recall an instance in your life where you may have had to make a turn-around like Zacchaeus? Why is salvation never complete until repentance and restitution take their course?

►STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: Luke provides an amazing reason for Jesus telling the three parables of the lost and found: they were in answer to Pharisaical criticism of Jesus’ eating and fellowshiping with tax collectors and sinners (*Luke 15:1–3*). The parables affirm His mission that saving one lost soul is worth any sacrifice, and that so doing brings the greatest joy to God. With that in mind, read *Luke 15:4–7* (the lost sheep) and consider the questions below.

Thought Questions:

- ① Ninety-nine versus one. Why is just one in number important to God?
- ② “Lost.” How was the sheep lost?
- ③ “Go after.” How pursuit oriented is God’s love?
- ④ “Until.” To what end does the Seeker go?
- ⑤ “Rejoice.” Why is saving even just one such a joyous event?

►STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: Jesus asked Bartimaeus, “‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ ” (*Luke 18:41, NKJV*). What a caring, inviting question, typical of the Savior. He is our Creator. He is our Redeemer. He is our Enabler. All things are possible in and through Him.

Application Question: Ask the class: What would you ask Jesus to do for you today? Encourage each one to make a short list of three or four important needs they have and share them with the class.