

Parables About the Upside-Down Nature of Heaven's Kingdom (2)

How (and What) the

Parables of Jesus

Help Us See

Lesson 8

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable... (Luke 15:1-3)

This bit of context provided by Luke is important for us to remember throughout today's study.

- The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus. *Why?*
- The Pharisees and the scribes grumbled. *Why?*
- So Jesus told them three parables in rapid-fire succession. *Why?*

When There's Joy in Heaven, Shouldn't We Have Joy in Our Hearts?

If you haven't already, take the time to read [Luke 15](#) uninterrupted.

- What do all three parables have in common?
 - ▶ Something or someone was lost -
 - ▶ Something or someone was found -
 - ▶ A call for rejoicing was issued -
- How is the third parable different from the first two? Why is that?
- How did Jesus' response to those who were grumbling—"This man receives sinners and eats with them"—encourage an "upside-down" way of looking at life (then and now)?

What does it say about me when there is joy before the angels of God over a sinner who repents, but I'm so blind to my own need for mercy, so calloused to my own unworthiness before God, that I not only grumble about the sinner who has turned his or her face toward home, but I shake my head at the God who is fulfilling his search-and-rescue mission? If that's me, what needs to happen?



For Next Week...

We'll continue our investigation of parables revolving around the **upside-down nature** of heaven's kingdom. Want a sneak peek? Take the time to thoughtfully read the parable of the laborers in the vineyard in [Matthew 20:1-16](#). Once you have, look at them through the "kingdom of heaven" lens we've been spending so much time studying. How did Jesus' parable encourage an "upside-down" way of looking at life (then and now)?