

Luke 15
“Once Upon a Time” Week 1
Sermon date 9/14/2025

Ice breaker

- 1) What’s the most valuable thing you’ve ever lost—and did you find it again?
- 2) Have you ever had a family member do something outrageous at a holiday gathering?

Unpack It

What stood out to you from Sunday’s sermon and why? What was a takeaway or something that left you wondering about?

Looking Back

Luke 15 is a chapter of parables spoken by Jesus in response to criticism from the Pharisees and scribes. These religious leaders were scandalized that Jesus welcomed and ate with sinners—a serious social and religious breach in their eyes. In response, Jesus told three stories: the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son. All three center around something lost, its recovery, and the resulting joy, illustrating God’s deep love for sinners and His joy in their repentance. This chapter is at the heart of Luke’s Gospel, emphasizing God’s mercy, grace, and relentless pursuit of the lost. At this point in His ministry, Jesus was gaining attention for His inclusive, boundary-crossing love. While religious leaders emphasized purity and separation from sinners, Jesus demonstrated that the kingdom of God was open to all, especially the marginalized. These parables flip societal expectations on their head: a shepherd leaves ninety-nine sheep to find one, a woman rejoices over a single coin, and a father runs to embrace a disgraced son. Together, these stories paint a revolutionary picture of grace that would have stunned Jesus’ original audience.

Diving In

Read together: Luke 15

Diving Deeper

- 1) Why do you think Jesus chose to tell three similar stories back-to-back? What is the effect?
- 2) What does repentance look like in each of the three parables? What role does the community play in celebrating restoration?

- 3) How does this chapter redefine what it means to be "righteous" or "deserving" in God's kingdom?
- 4) Have you ever found yourself in the role of the "older brother"—struggling to celebrate someone else's grace or restoration? What did you learn?
- 5) What would it look like for you to embody the father's grace in a relationship right now?
- 6) How can this story reshape the way you see people who are far from God?

Closing It Out

- 7) Suggested prayer time together to close out: Pray for any unreconciled relationships or however your group is led to pray.

Take It Home

If you would like to press in a bit more this week, here is a prayer and reading guide for the week:

Day 1: Luke 15 (Re-read)

Take time to slowly re-read all three parables. Reflect on how God seeks the lost and celebrates their return.

Day 2: Jonah 4

Jonah's frustration with God's mercy toward Nineveh contrasts with God's compassion. Reflect on where you might struggle with grace being given to others.

Day 3: Genesis 33:1–11

Watch how Esau forgives Jacob, embracing him after betrayal. Notice the echoes of the father's welcome in Luke 15.

Day 4: Matthew 9:9–13

Jesus calls Matthew, a tax collector, and dines with sinners—just like in Luke 15. Consider what it means to follow Jesus from a place of need, not merit.

Day 5: 2 Corinthians 5:17–21

Paul describes believers as new creations and ambassadors of reconciliation. Reflect on your role in extending God's reconciling love.