FINDING OUT ABOUT CHRIST · STUDY NOTES

Study 2: What did Jesus teach?

For personal study or groups

Your name

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How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

Lost and found

A good teacher

Do you remember the teachers you had at school? Some were good – and you learnt a lot from them. Jesus was a very good teacher. He often used parables in His teaching. Parables are interesting stories with a hidden meaning.

See also: Jesus taught with authority (Luke 4:32) and was even admired by His opponents (Luke 4:22).

Three of Jesus' parables compared sinful people, like us, to things that are lost and joyfully found: the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son (Luke 15). The lesson of all three parables is plain. There is rejoicing in Heaven when lost sinners come "home" to God.

God searches for lost sinners

The first parable is about a lost sheep that a shepherd searched for and found. This parable (and the one after it) speaks of God looking for sinners, not sinners looking for Him.

1 **Read Luke 15:3–7**

What does the shepherd say when he has found his sheep (verse 6)?

Jesus is just like that shepherd.

2 **Look up Luke 19:10**

Why did the Son of Man come?

God takes the first step

Sinners would remain lost, unless God chose to seek and save them (see Ephesians 1:4).

God welcomes lost sinners

The third parable is about a son who had lived a very bad life. When he admitted his sin, his father welcomed him home. The son had lost his way in life. God is compared to the father in the parable. When we admit our sin, God joyfully welcomes us back.

3 **Read Luke 15:21–24**

How does the father describe his son in verse 24?

This parable teaches us about repentance. Repentance is turning away from sin and returning to God. We shall think about this further in study 6.

PART 2

God's standard

Laws for our good

Our laws are meant to make life safer and happier. The law that tells us to drive on one side of the road prevents accidents. Laws against stealing protect our property. God's laws are also given for our good. But God's standards are much higher than ours.

Jesus taught that we must be perfect

He taught that we must be as good as God Himself. This may sound impossible (and it is), but it is what we were originally made to be.

4 **Look up Matthew 5:48**

How good does Jesus say we must be?

Jesus taught how far God's law reaches

He showed us that God's law covers everything we think and say, as well as what we do.

5 **Look up Matthew 5:28**

Where does Jesus say this sin has already been committed?

See also: Matthew 5:21–22 and 27–28.

Jesus taught the importance of love

Jesus said that if we love God and other people as we should, we will do what God's law requires.

See also: Matthew 22:36–40.

We may think we love everyone – but do we love our enemies?

6 **Look up Matthew 5:44**

Whom does Jesus tell us to love, and what does He tell us to do for them?

PART 3

Born to die

Death: an unwelcome intruder

We all know that we must die someday. But we are not born for the purpose of dying. We are born to live, for a long time. Death is an unwelcome intruder!

Jesus, on the other hand, spoke as if His death was the main reason for His birth. He foresaw a cruel death by crucifixion – one of the most painful and humiliating deaths anyone could suffer. It was a remarkable prediction. Why would anyone want to kill someone as kind as Jesus? He also predicted that He would come back to life within three days of dying.

Jesus said He was born (on purpose) to die

He said it was necessary for Him to die and to rise again. He told His disciples about it on three separate occasions.

7 **Look up Matthew 16:21**

What did Jesus say must happen to Him?

See also: Matthew 17:22–23 and 20:18–19.

Jesus said He would die for His sheep

In Jesus' day, a good shepherd would risk his life to save his sheep from wolves. Jesus said He would die for His sheep – that is, for those who believe in Him. He looked ahead to the day when He would give His life in place of His sheep.

8 **Look up John 10:11**

What does the good shepherd do for the sheep?

An eastern shepherd
A shepherd in Israel walked in front of his flock, knew each sheep by name, and stood between them and danger.

Finally, Jesus said that His death was a "ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). And just hours before He died, He taught His disciples a symbolic lesson with bread and wine. He spoke of them as signs of His body and blood, to be taken as a lasting reminder of His dying love for them (Luke 22:19–20).

We shall look in study 4 at how the New Testament writers explain Jesus' death.

PART 4

The perfect Judge

Judging the wrongdoer

Wherever there are laws, there are penalties for breaking them. But the people appointed to judge are not perfect themselves. Because they are not perfect, they make mistakes – the innocent sometimes suffer, and the guilty sometimes go free.

Earthly judges deal with the more obvious wrongs, like theft, violence and rioting. But the hidden sins of hatred, impurity and greed go unpunished by people. Anyone appointed to judge others for these sins would need to be without fault themselves.

All wrongdoing is sin in God's eyes, and deserves to be judged. But who is sinless enough to do this? Who is perfect enough to judge fairly? Who understands enough to take into account everything that makes us act the way we do? Jesus is the only person qualified; no ordinary person is good enough. So, consider what Jesus said about this.

Jesus said He had been appointed as the world's Judge

This great honour, said Jesus, was given to Him by God – His Father in heaven.

9 **Look up John 5:22–23**

What has the Father given to the Son, and why?

Jesus said He was the "Son of Man" as well as the "Son of God". By saying this, He declared Himself fully human. As a human being, He understands our trials and difficulties. As a sinless human being, He understands perfectly, and will judge perfectly.

10 **Look up John 5:26–27**

Why has Jesus been given authority to judge?

The God-Man

Jesus can see things from both sides: as God, and as a man.

Jesus said He would judge the world when He returns

Jesus did not say He would judge the world straight away. He said He had not come to judge it, but to save it (John 12:47). But He spoke of a day when He would come back to judge it. All nations would gather before Him, and He would separate the saved from the unsaved.

11 **Look up Matthew 25:31–32**

What will the Son of Man do when He comes in His glory?

A new birth

Jesus spoke of the need for an inner change that only God's Spirit can bring about. This change is so radical that He compared it to being born all over again. Without this change, He said, no one can enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3–5).

Not reincarnation

Being "born again" does not mean coming back in another life. It is a new life from God, here and now.

Have you experienced this change? If you have, you will want to follow the teaching of Jesus outlined in this study.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Which of the three "lost" parables speaks to you most, and why?

2. Jesus said we must love even our enemies. Who do you find hardest to love?

3. How does it make you feel that Jesus will one day judge the world, and that He also came to save it?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 2

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

FINDING OUT ABOUT CHRIST · STUDY 2 · MEMORY VERSE

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Luke 19:10

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Luke 15:3–7** *3Then Jesus told them this parable: 4“What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the pasture and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? 5And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, 6comes home, and calls together his friends and neighbors to tell them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep!’ 7I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous ones who do not need to repent.*

2 **Luke 19:10** *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

3 **Luke 15:21–24** *21The son declared, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let us feast and celebrate. 24For this son of mine was dead and is alive again! He was lost and is found!’ So they began to celebrate.*

4 **Matthew 5:48** *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

5 **Matthew 5:28** *But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

6 **Matthew 5:44** *But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

7 **Matthew 16:21** *From that time on Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.*

8 **John 10:11** *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*

9 **John 5:22–23** *22Furthermore, the Father judges no one, but has assigned all judgment to the Son, 23so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

10 **John 5:26–27** *26For as the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted the Son to have life in Himself. 27And He has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.*

11 **Matthew 25:31–32** *31When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. 32All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says ‘man’, ‘he’ or ‘brothers’ where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 2: What did Jesus teach?

> **Memory verse:** “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- See God's heart for lost people in the parables of the lost sheep and the lost son.
- Understand how high God's standard is (perfect, inside and out), and that we can't reach it on our own.
- Hear Jesus say that He came to die, and that He will one day judge the world.
- Point to Jesus' answer: a new birth, God's work in us.

Suggested timing (about 80 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **20 min** Part 1 video (4 min); Luke 15:3–7, 19:10 and 15:21–24.
- **15 min** Part 2 video (4 min); Matthew 5:48, 5:28 and 5:44.
- **15 min** Part 3 video (3 min); Matthew 16:21 and John 10:11.
- **20 min** Part 4 video (4 min); John 5:22–27, Matthew 25:31–32 and the discussion questions.
- **5 min** Summary and closing prayer. Encourage everyone to take the online quiz.

If time is short, spread the study over two meetings (Parts 1–2, then Parts 3–4).

Tips

- Part 2 can feel uncomfortable ("Be perfect"). That is intended: let people feel the weight of it, then point to Parts 3 and 4.
- Be gentle when discussing judgement. Jesus is also the Saviour who came "to seek and to save the lost".
- People may confuse being "born again" with reincarnation; the lesson note explains the difference.
- Some may have questions about God choosing to save (Ephesians 1:4). The authors hold both truths together: sinners would remain lost unless God chose to seek and save them, and everyone is responsible to respond to the gospel.

Answers to watch for

- **Luke 15:6:** the shepherd calls his friends: "Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep!"
- **Luke 19:10:** the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.
- **Luke 15:24:** "This son of mine was dead and is alive again! He was lost and is found!"
- **Matthew 5:48:** be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
- **Matthew 5:28:** lust in the heart is already adultery; God's law covers thoughts as well as actions.
- **Matthew 5:44:** love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
- **Matthew 16:21:** Jesus *must* suffer, be killed and be raised on the third day.
- **John 10:11:** the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
- **John 5:22–23:** all judgement is entrusted to the Son, so that all may honour Him as they honour the Father.
- **John 5:26–27:** He has been given authority to execute judgement, because He is the Son of Man.

- **Matthew 25:31–32:** when He comes in glory, all nations will be gathered and separated before Him.