

MAKING ANGELS REJOICE

Luke 15:1-10 Text vs. *10 "There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* Following a thrilling performance in New York's Carnegie Hall, celebrated classical cellist Yo-Yo Ma went home to sleep. He awoke the next day exhausted. He still had another concert and called for a cab to take him to the other side of Manhattan. It arrived. He placed his Viennese hand-crafted \$2.5 million cello into the trunk of the taxi and got in. When he reached his destination, he paid the driver and got out. After the cab had disappeared, he remembered, his cello was still in the trunk of the taxi! His receipt with the cabby's ID number was in his pocket. He called the company, and the taxi was located in Queens with his priceless cello still in the trunk. His performance in Brooklyn went on as planned later that evening. The cello he thought had been lost, was found! Those words, "lost", and "found", appear throughout Scripture. They are used in preaching. Gospel songs use them. Amazing Grace says, *"I once was lost, but now I'm found."* There's no doubt about it, those two words have a rich history in Christian vocabulary. Let's look at how Jesus used them when He told The Parable of the Lost Coin. It went like this: *"Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* Now, I have a coin collection, Kennedy half-dollars, Eisenhower silver dollars, a Susan B. Anthony silver dollar, Indian Head pennies. But I must use a Coin Book to find out how much they are worth in today's market. And in our lesson a woman lost one of her ten silver coins. A tiny, little drachma. There are no other references of a drachma coin in the New Testament. One commentator said, a drachma was worth a fraction of a penny. Another, 18 or 19 cents. Another said you could buy a piece of a sheep with it. Another said you could buy an ox. But why such a difference? Supply and demand! The price of a drachma depended upon the market at the time. So, when asked, *"how much is a drachma worth?"* the answer is, *"it depends"*. And that fits right into our lesson. There's a wide variety of opinions as to how much a human being is worth, because a body can be divided into two main groups: *macro* minerals and *micro* minerals. They are known as *trace* minerals. The difference is in how much the body needs. Macro minerals, such as calcium, phosphate, and magnesium, are required by the body in large amounts. Micro minerals such as iron, manganese, zinc, and fluorine, are needed in much smaller amounts. That's why your body worth about \$160. But if there's a kidney needed for a transplant your body could be worth \$263,000. And if you insure your body, it could be worth millions, if you're willing to pay the premium. But in our world today, the man who shoots a ball through a hoop is worth millions, while a woman who brings a child up in a proper manner is worth minimum wage. Robert Schuller, a televangelist with five decades on television, pastor, motivational speaker, and author claimed we are worth *great value*, because we are made in the image of God. However, Romans 3:12 says, *"All have turned away. They have together become worthless."* What? Why is that? Well, when you lose the image of God, you become worthless! So, according to God's Word, if a drachma represents a sinner, that will indicate a sinner is not worth very much! But in this parable, Jesus says a drachma represents more than just sinful human nature. Look at the context of our lesson. The Pharisees and teachers of the law were complaining Jesus was eating with *"sinners"*. Who were those "sinners"? They were the Jews who had fallen from the faith. And God warned in His Word about falling from faith. In Galatians 5:4 Paul said, *"You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ. You have fallen away from grace."* But, in John 10 Jesus promised no one can snatch His children out of his hand or fall out of His hand. He said, *²⁷"My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹And no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one."* A terrorist had taken refuge in Palestine for years. The United States couldn't get him. So, they lured him out of the country and were then able to arrest him. That seems to be what happened in our lesson. This drachma Jesus used as an example was far worse than a *run of the mill sinner*. It symbolized a *runaway unbeliever fallen from the faith*. Now, the woman had a choice. She could just leave that drachma behind. Or she could go back and look for it. It all depended on how much that lost coin was worth to her? There's was a popular song back in 1953 sung by Kitty Kallen. It reached No.1 on the Billboard chart in 1954. And it goes like this; *Send me the warmth of a secret smile, to show me you haven't forgot. That always and ever, now and forever, little things mean a lot.* Maybe, when you ask God for blessings or help, you may question your own value. Are you worth it? You may not think you matter much to God. In fact, you don't feel much self-value at all. You've lost your self-esteem! But my friend, as the song says, *"Little things mean a lot"*. You're worth so much to God He willingly gave up His only Son to suffer and die on a cross for you, so that in Him you can have righteousness, blessings, and eternal life. (Rom. 8:32) So, how much is God worth to you? Is He valued like a diamond in your life? Precious. Priceless. Regardless of what you are going through. Or is God more like a brand name label? He makes you feel good, and He's okay. But it's amazing how people talk about how important God is in their lives, yet value Him so little. The true value of how much you love God can be seen in the way you handle your possessions. Jesus said, *"where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* What about a man who drives an \$80,000 Lexus, has a \$21,000

Rolex Oyster Submariner watch on his arm, wears nothing but \$6,300 Brioni suits, and falls in love with a beautiful young lady. He then presents her with a \$700.00 *cubic zirconium* ring. It may look like a diamond. But it's not a diamond. She asks him about the ring. And he says, "Well, it's the thought that counts." Isn't that what some people have done with God? They have given Him some thought. But not their life! Think about that! How much does God really mean to you? A man said, "I dreamed I saw God walking down the sidewalk, as if He was looking for something. What could it be? What was He looking for in all those hidden holes and dark places? Then He found it! He tenderly picked it up and put in the special pocket He keeps for *found souls!*" What's God looking for now? What's God celebrating whenever He finds it? It's you, of course! He's looking for you! He doesn't mind stooping down and lifting you up from where you are. It may be a very dark place. But to Him, you are still just as shiny and precious as you were when He first minted you when you were born. He lifts you close to His heart and whispers, "*Precious child, I am so glad I found you. I've been looking for you everywhere. Let's go home. I'm going to wash you white as snow and polish you up, so we can start all over again. You couldn't rescue yourself. I knew that! That's why I came looking for you. And listen, there's a party waiting for you in heaven. All the angels will be there!*" Then God checks His watch. Gives a thumbs up, and says, "*You know, angels don't like to be kept waiting. Let's go!*" Just remember why Jesus told this parable. The woman was God looking for you. And you are the coin that was lost! That's why Jesus said, "*There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*" Gods lost and found! AMEN! HALLELUJAH!