

I. Intro

A. In the final stages of Luke's narrative

1. Jesus is heading to Jerusalem for His final Passover – to die
2. On this journey, many events occur – take note of themes

B. The theme of meals and dining

1. Jesus dines with Pharisees in Luke 11:37 and Luke 14:1
2. However, religious leaders aren't the only dinner companions
3. Jesus...eats with sinners!

II. Text

A. Luke 15:1-2

1. The Holy Spirit, through Luke, wants you to consider dinner companions
 - a) Jesus ate with Pharisees. Taught them the kingdom.
 - b) Jesus ate with sinners. Taught them the kingdom.
 - c) What is the primary theme?
2. Jesus used meals, tables, and homes to spread the kingdom
 - a) Taught in synagogues, but primary setting was outside place of worship
 - b) Jesus taught in the market, the street, and in homes around a meal
 - c) Luke continues this theme in Acts [Acts 2:42-47]
3. *What is the Spirit of God saying to us?*
 - a) *Primary setting for ministry is still the home – the dinner table!*
 - (1) *The ancient piece of furniture where family is formed*
 - (2) *Where food is consumed and spiritual meals are digested*
 - (3) *Where sinners are invited to behold the kingdom*
 - (4) *Where hospitality and generosity become an invitation*
 - b) *Your dinner table...is a vehicle for kingdom-building and evangelism*
 - (1) *Little minds are shaped at the table. Relationships are built at the table.*
 - (2) *The kingdom is shared with the broken, the lost...the sinner at the table*
 - (3) *The home, the table, the meal – a foundation of our faith tradition*
 - (4) *Needs to be reawakened in the age we live in today*

4. Back to the story...
 - a) Jesus is eating with Pharisees and sinners – Pharisees don't like this

B. Luke 15:3-7

1. Jesus teaches a parable
 - a) What man of you, does not leave the 99 to go after the 1?
 - b) What man of you, does not find the lost sheep and rejoice with his friends?
 - c) The answer is – no man!
 - (1) These men were Pharisees, not shepherds
 - (2) Not a single man would leave the 99 for the 1, or rejoice
 - d) Why? – because they were bad shepherds
2. Subtext of this parable is **Ezekiel 34:1-10**
 - a) Israel had a long tradition of selfish leaders, selfish shepherds
 - b) By the 1st century, the connection between leader and shepherd was gone
 - (1) No more shepherds – teachers, lawyers, Pharisees
 - c) Transition resulted in the sheep wandering
 - d) Transition resulted in a disconnect between heavenly priorities
 - (1) Nobody was seeking, nobody was rejoicing...like they do in heaven
 - (2) Everyone was comparing, competing, and complaining
3. Jesus presses the issue further – here is another parable you can't relate to...

C. Luke 15:8-10

1. The Pharisees can't relate to being a poor woman who lost a coin
 - a) A coin that is so important she searches the whole house
 - b) A coin so valuable she lights a lamp and sweeps everywhere
 - c) A coin so valuable she throws a party when the coin is found!
2. *Jesus is showing how out of touch the leaders have become*
 - a) *God seeks the lost – like a shepherd, or one looking for a coin*
 - b) *God rejoices with the angels of heaven when the lost is found!*
 - c) *This is what the kingdom looks like! This is what we teach around our table!*
 - d) *God is on the move and He is pursuing the lost! – they don't get it*

D. Luke 15:11-24

1. One final parable that the Pharisees can't relate to
 - a) A selfish, disrespectful son, hates his father and leaves home
 - b) His father gives him over to his desires
 - c) The son squanders his life and comes home in humility
 - d) The father accepts him – no probation – pure forgiveness
2. What Pharisee could relate to this story?
 - a) Well, let's finish the story...

E. Luke 15:25-32

1. The parable reveals the older brother is the Pharisee
 - a) Concerned with his own obedience, not the life of his brother
 - b) Concerned about his own parties, not rejoicing that the lost has come home

III. Conclusion

A. Chapter started with one issue – “he receives sinners and eats with them”

1. Through parable, Jesus exposed their hearts
 - a) The Pharisee can't rejoice in the lost, because they don't seek the lost
 - b) Focused on rule-following and measuring their life against others
 - c) Can't relate to shepherds, women, or fathers with wayward children
 - d) They can only relate to the ungrateful older brother
2. *Through parable, Jesus exposes our hearts*
 - a) *Who are the lost around us, and do we pursue them?*
 - b) *Do we open our homes, offer meals and hospitality?*
 - c) *Is our table overflowing with kingdom teaching?*
 - d) *Can we relate to shepherd life, widow life, or broken-hearted fathers?*

B. One central theme in all three parables – repentance [vs7, 10, 21]

1. *The lost who are found, receive a celebration because of repentance*
2. *Maybe you're a lost sheep. Maybe a wayward son, tired of eating pig pods*
3. *Maybe you are an older brother, boiling with bitterness. Maybe you are a Pharisee*
4. *Whoever you are. Wherever you are. – It is time to repent and come home.*