

The Character of Jesus 58
Summary about the Lost
Luke 17:1 – 10

- **Characteristic: A forgiving attitude**
 - Jesus is still responding to the objection from the Pharisees and scribes concerning the company Jesus kept (15:1 – 2)
 - First He talked about the importance we place on lost things, including the risks we take to find them.
 - Second, He told the parable of the shrewd steward to illustrate that the Jewish leaders were not good stewards of the things of God, whereas the tax gatherers and sinners were shrewd about recognizing the opportunities of the Kingdom of God.
 - Third, the Jewish leaders are the rich man who do not listen to Moses and the prophets, whereas the tax gatherers and sinners are represented by Lazarus.
 - Turning to His disciples, He summarizes about a forgiving attitude, not just on the part of God, but the necessity of such an attitude among believers toward the lost.
 - (1) Thoughtless people will be with us always, pushing away the lost because the lost tend to be a nuisance. The Pharisees and scribes were the case in point here.
 - (2) Note that Jesus referred to the “tax collectors and sinner” (15:1) as “little ones,” as if they were children.
 - (3) A forgiving attitude does not ignore sin. Forgiving is “pushing aside” past untrustworthiness, accepting the promise of another to do better despite a poor track record. But, the sin itself is still sin and needs to be recognized or the growth of the sinner will be stifled. The point is to move along with the progress of the sinner, not to get stuck in the past.
 - (4) The Pharisees taught that seven occasions of forgiveness were sufficient. See Matthew 18:22.
 - (5) The apostles considered such a level of forgiveness to be impossible.
 - (6) Faith prompts reception of the Holy Spirit which in turn enables the impossible.
 - (7 – 10) The key to this forgiving attitude is to consider oneself to be a servant of God, just doing the job.
- **Application: A forgiving attitude.**
 - In what ways are congregations or individuals “drowned” by their lack of forgiveness?
 - What is the advantage of seeing the lost as children?
 - Is my forgiveness dependent on the sinner’s repentance?
 - How do I overcome an unforgiving attitude?
 - How do I develop a forgiving attitude?