

Luke 15:1-10

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[0 : 00] and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God found in Luke 15, verses 1 through 10. The Word of God says, When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing, and when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?

When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost. In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Would you pray with me? Lord, we thank you so much for this day, and Lord, we rejoice in the opportunity we have of gathering together. Lord, we are so thankful for the choice and the privilege we have of reading your Word, and we pray, Lord, that your Word would speak to our hearts and minds.

Lord, we pray that the truth of it would captivate us, that it would draw us closer to you. Lord, that we would be more effective for your use and for your sake in the work of the kingdom. And we ask it all in Jesus' name.

[1 : 32] Amen. You may be seated. We see two parables here, back-to-back, recorded for us by Luke, and they are in response to what we find in the first and second verse. As a matter of fact, everything that is recorded in Luke 15 is Jesus' response to what happens in the first two verses.

And it is a response that is directed towards the righteous, if you will, or the self-righteous, the religious people of his day, referred to here as the Pharisees and the scribes.

These are those who thought they had it all together, those who thought that they were accepted by holy God and were striving to the best of their ability to please God. And that was the problem. It was their ability.

I always say we must be careful not to cast too many stones at the Pharisees and the scribes. The Sadducees, we tend to look at and say, well, we can understand that because they neither believed in angels, they did not believe in the next life or the resurrection, they didn't believe in their life after death, and as some say, this is why they were sad, you see.

And we can understand that. But the Pharisees and the scribes were those who were really putting forth their best effort. They were laboring and striving and seeking to please God by obeying the law.

[2 : 40] And the law was recorded here in the Old Testament and also the law that was passed down through oral tradition referred to as the Mishnah. These were those who were, yes, very legalistic and, yes, very works-oriented, but were striving to please God.

But they had this major problem. It's that which caused God to rejoice was causing them disdain. That which caused God to celebrate was really being looked down upon by them. And this was a call that Jesus is giving them here, showing them the parables of the lost and found that we have recorded.

And we'll see three great truths from these two parables and things which must captivate our heart and things which must lead us to more have the joy of heaven. If you know Luke 15, you know as we get down to the parable of the prodigal son, that most of that parable is not really stressed with the prodigal.

Most of that parable, the emphasis on that parable, is on the son who stayed home. And that would be the religious one, right? That would be the one who was striving. I believe many Bible scholars are accurate that the parable of the prodigal son really is not about the prodigal at all.

It's about the son who never left home. And we see that because to interpret parables accurately, usually the climax of the parable or what the story is all about is found at the end.

[3 : 58] And it is at the end that we find the one who never left, the one who stayed behind, the one who was always there seeking to please the Father. But we don't want to get ahead of ourselves because before we get to that, Jesus shows us what is cause for rejoicing in heaven and should be cause for rejoicing in our life.

We see here that now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near to him to listen to him. Isn't it amazing that those who were outcast by the world, those who were cast aside and looked down upon on the world, that when Jesus walked the face of this earth, were more than welcome to come into his presence.

I don't know about you, but I am so thankful that those whom the world looked down upon, Jesus welcomed. Those whom the world cast out and threw stones at were those who Jesus welcomed into his presence.

Because while they could not approach a holy God, a holy God chose to come down and dwell among them and make himself approachable. These are the things of grace and mercy which we must never get over.

But as a result of this, verse 2 says that both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them. We say, well, what does that mean? They got a little upset about the crowd Jesus was hanging out with.

[5 : 08] And if we ever want to test the waters in that, why don't we as good church people go hang out with people that would cause some other church people to get upset, right? Why don't we start hanging out with people who are outside of church and see how upset others around us would get?

Because by the way, as we see here, that's exactly what Jesus was doing. He was hanging out with those that nobody else wanted to hang out with. He was allowing those to be in his presence and he was allowing them to come.

And as a result of his response to them or because he was doing that, it caused disdain with the religious institute. It caused disdain with the self-righteous and those who thought they had it all together.

This is why we must be very careful that we are living in a relationship with Christ, not living out an effort of religious activity. Because we do not want to be those who are weeping over that which heaven is rejoicing over and celebrating over that which heaven is weeping over.

And Jesus gives us these parables to show us what it is that should cause us great rejoicing. And I want to tell you, friend, that if these things would cause us great rejoicing or if this thing would cause us great rejoicing, then we as a church would be a better place all the time.

[6 : 14] Number one, we see a great concern. We see the great concern of heaven. Jesus telling a parable which is a story that could relate to others. We understand that parables neither have names nor specific persons mentioned because they are general stories which would relate.

And here Luke records for us two parables simultaneously given which are telling the same thing, the parable of the shepherd and the parable of the woman. And he is giving it so that everyone in his presence could relate.

It was a very shepherd-driven community and it was something that they were very familiar with. And the women could refer to this or would be familiar with this as well. So he wanted to relate to all that could hear him.

And we see here that both of these parables come to us with a great concern. It says, What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?

Or he goes down and says, Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? What Jesus is emphasizing for us here is the great concern of heaven.

[7 : 18] That heaven is concerned about even one that is lost. Heaven is concerned about one that is separate and one that is not where it should be. That heaven's concern is so great that great effort is put forth.

I love how it says it here that they will not go until he has found it. He will search until he finds it and the woman will do it until she finds it. It is a relentless pursuing effort that is not casually looking after or casually being concerned about, but it is a concern that has led to such an effort, such a

work that great effort is put forth.

And we notice here that Jesus is emphasizing for us the great concern that heaven has over those which are not there. And this should be the concern of the church. We can look around.

If we want to be honest this morning, we can look around and say there's a lot of people not here.

And we can understand that we have a lot of people, some that are sick, some that are traveling.

But I wonder if our concern for those who are not here that are church members is equal or greater than our concern for those who do not know Christ that are not here.

Because, see, the church that is just concerned about self-containment, maintaining, self-maintenance, who fails to look outside its walls is a church that is going to slowly decay and die.

[8 : 32] Because the concern of the church should always be over those who are not here, not those who just aren't present. The concern should be over those which are separate and those who are away from. And it says here that the concern is so great that they left behind the 99.

What we see here is this shepherd did not look around and say, well, as long as I have most of them, I'm okay, right? As long as I have most of them, I'm okay. The shepherd looked at them, and it does not say, the question is, well, who did he leave them with?

Friend, this is a parable, so it's not an exact teaching, right? This is not an actual event. This is a parable that is just emphasizing the concern that heaven has over those which are lost. As far as the story with the woman goes, these are probably, we don't want to allegorize it too much, but most people would understand that this was the dowry price that the woman held in her possession. So it was something that was given to her as a dowry that she would be able to give to her soon-to-be husband and something of very great worth, and to lose just one of them would have been so diminishing that she would have stopped everything until she found it.

What Jesus is emphasizing is that the believers, the followers of Christ, should live with the concern of heaven, and that is being concerned about those who aren't there, those who have never been there.

[9 : 43] And why do we have this great concern? It leads us to the second thing, is a desperate condition. The great concern is really birthed out of a desperate condition, and the condition is really not on those who are there.

It says, what man among you if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them? He does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it. Matthew records this parable as well.

In Matthew 18, verse 12, it says that this sheep has went astray, or is wandering, depending on your translation. And that wording there is a little easier. It's like, well, he's wandered away, he's just a little bit astray.

But Luke records for us really the desperate condition. It is not one that has wandered off or one that is astray. It is one that is absolutely 100% lost. And this is the desperate condition of that one who is not there.

And Jesus is emphasizing, right, he's hanging out with the tax collectors and the sinners. And what he is referring to here is the desperate condition that they are in. Jesus said in response to the questioning of why he hung out with those, it is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick, right?

[10 : 48] It is understanding the desperate condition that those people are living in that led here in the parable for Jesus to say the man would leave behind to go find that one. Because those who are there, those who are present are okay.

But those who are separate, those who are not present are not okay. They're in a desperate condition. You know, we just have a few sheep at our house. I've been around sheep a lot growing up. I showed sheep growing up.

And I always say this, when Jesus says he's the great shepherd and we are the sheep, that's not really a good job right there, right? Because sheep don't think very often. Sheep are not the smartest animal. You know, they're cuddly and gentle and all this other good stuff, but really not highly intelligent.

But one thing I found out growing up and one thing I've seen now that when a sheep is lost, he doesn't know he's lost, right? He thinks it's okay. Wherever they're going, they think they're okay. They're just, I'm just eating. I'm just eating.

I'm just eating. And they just keep going and going and going. And what we understand is that those which are lost really never understand how desperate their condition is. Friend, when you look around in the world, those who do not know Jesus Christ are living in a state of desperate existence, but they don't realize it because in this life, everything looks okay.

[11 : 56] You can walk around and eat and get fat all you want to, right? It always looks like the grass is better over there on the other side of the fence. It always looks like the grass is better over there. And you can be separate from Christ and not really know how desperate you are.

And it is not sad that the lost and dying world does not know how desperate their condition is. What is sad is that the church has forgotten how desperate their condition is. That is the reality. That when sinners do not understand how desperate their condition is, that's understandable because they are living a life that is, at least in this world, providing all the comforts which they need or long for.

Everything they need outside of Christ. If we're to be honest, Jesus doesn't offer you a better life now. Jesus offers you eternal life in his presence, right? But in this world, Satan can offer you everything that makes you comfortable right now.

And you can live a comfortable state of desperate existence. The sad reality is the church has forgot about that because we begin to measure those around us on how they look in this life, not how they're going to look in eternal life.

We must never lose sight of eternity when we have a growing concern for those around us. We must never lose sight of the eternal destination of every individual as we look at those around us.

[13 : 09] Paul says in one of his letters that we are compelled by love to be ambassadors for Christ. We are compelled by love to be ambassadors for Christ. Why do we share the gospel with people around us?

Why do we go to such great efforts to seek out those which are lost? Or why should we? Because we should be compelled by love to proclaim the gospel. Friend, they don't know.

They don't understand their desperate condition. And this is not a judgmental thing. This is not the cast stones. This is just a reality, right? That if someone is living in a very dangerous state of existence, and we know that, but we do not proclaim that to them, then as the Bible tells us in the book of Ezekiel, his blood will be on our hands.

What was it that God told Ezekiel? That if a sword is coming and you sound the trumpet and they do not repent and they do not turn away, then the blood is on their hands. But if the sword is coming and a day of judgment is coming and you do not sound the trumpet so that people can repent and turn from their wicked ways.

And if you are silent and they die anyhow, then their blood is on your hands. Because what he is saying is, Ezekiel, you know how desperate the time is. It's your responsibility to share it with those that may or may not want to listen.

[14 : 20] One thing I have found, every animal that is lost, that has found that great patch of grass somewhere else, does not always want to be brought back. Right? They like where they're at. But when you know that they are not in the best of place, it is your responsibility to bring them back.

And this is what Jesus is saying here. That this shepherd found the one and put it on his shoulders and carried it in. Why? Because he knew that to be with the 99, somewhere it did not want to be, was better than where it was now.

May we never lose sight of the desperate condition of those who do not know Christ. Third and finally, we see here, and you'll be very happy, right? I just happened to look at my watch.

We'll be a lot quicker this morning, and that's okay. Because it's very, when we go through the parables of Christ, we do not have to really break into them very often because I love how he tells it just very plain to us.

Third and finally, we see the great concern, which leads to a realization of the desperate condition. We see a heavenly celebration. We see a heavenly celebration. It says, And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing.

[15 : 24] And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. In today's time, that may not mean as much to you, but at that time, when the sheep were their whole livelihood, then it would have been a time of celebration.

And it would have been a time of sharing with those around us. And it says in verse 7, I tell you that in the same way, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over the 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.

Now, we need to stop right here and kind of break this verse down because what Jesus is telling us is that in heaven, there is this great proclamation, right? Over a sinner who has repented.

Not over a sinner who has prayed a prayer, not over a sinner who has acknowledged the name. We're doing this in light of the parable of the souls. But over a sinner who has repented from his ways and trusted in the Savior, he says, then over the 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.

Now, the reality that we'll see in all of Luke 15 is there are none that are righteous who do not need repentance. So really, the wording should be here or more likely is here than over the 99 self-righteous people who think they do not need repentance.

[16 : 36] Heaven celebrates and rejoices over the repentant heart more so than a man would rejoice over that which he has found which was lost. It says in verse 10, or in verse 9, that when she has found it, the woman has found the coin.

She calls together her friends and neighbors saying, Rejoice with me for I have found the coin which I had lost. And in the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

The reality is that in heaven, we see a celebration over those who repent. We see a celebration over those who turn from their ways. That is what repentance is and turn towards the Savior. And if we, as the people of God, living in the place of earth, want to join in heaven's celebration, then we ought to be near those who are living in a repentant lifestyle.

And the way that we can do that is to lead men and women to repent. I'm not saying that we can lead people to Christ because Christ calls people to himself. Right? It is Jesus who calls people. The Bible tells us that the Spirit draws man and no one comes to the Father yet through the Spirit and through the Son.

But we ought to be those who are boldly proclaiming this great news, this good news. And we ought to be those who are intentionally, and I'm preaching to the pastor here, hanging out with those whom the world may have rejected simply for the position of seeing them turn from their ways, that is repentance, and joining in with the celebration of heaven.

[17 : 54] There is nothing better than seeing people who are coming to faith in Jesus Christ in a genuine manner. And how do we know that it is genuine? Because it is always combined with repentance.

If we do not come to Christ, let's see, we want to interpret this in light of the parable of the soils. That good soil is that soil which has been prepared by repentance, an acknowledgement of their faults, an acknowledgement of their wickedness and their sin, an acknowledgement of my own, and a repentance from that, turning it over, turning the ground of my life over, and allowing Jesus Christ to plant the Word of God in me to bear much fruit.

Friend, listen to me. These are the things which cause heaven to rejoice, and these should be the things which call heaven's people to rejoice. May we be those who constantly surround ourselves with repentant hearts so that we can join also in the celebration of heaven.

How good it is to be people on earth who are celebrating in the joy of heaven. And the only way that we can do that is to be bold proclaimers of the gospel to those people we come into contact with.

Let's pray. Lord, I thank you so much for this day.

Lord, I thank you for the simple truths that we have in the parables of Christ. But Lord, while they are simple in matter, they are also often difficult in practicality.

[19 : 07] Lord, may we be those who are proclaimers of the gospel to the people we come into contact with. May we be those who share the good news. Lord, in light of the desperate condition of those around us.

Lord, may we be moved by love and compelled to be ambassadors for the name and the sake of Christ. Boldly calling people to living lives of repentance so that we can join in the celebration of heaven.

We ask it all and pray it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[22 : 35] Amen. Amen. Thank you.