

Luke 15

“Jesus Loves to Save Sinners Like You” ▪ Listen to the audio of this devotional at bit.ly/210317Luk15



What could make a man grumble at Christ's saving others? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Luke 15 prepares us for the serial reading that we have been doing in that book in the public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these thirty-two verses of Holy Scripture, we are confronted with the need to see ourselves as sinners, so that we will rejoice to see that Jesus urges us to come to Him and treasure Him above all things, and subsequently rejoice when He saves others in this way too.

Thursday, March 18, 2021 ▪ Read Luke 15

Questions from the Scripture text: Who drew near to do what (v1, cf. 14:35)? Who complained (v2)? About Whom? For doing what? How did Jesus respond (v3)? What happens in the first parable (v4)? How would they respond if they find the lost sheep (v5)? What would they do when they got home (v6)? Where is similar rejoicing done (v7)? Over what? What happens in the second parable (v8)? What would she do when she finds the coin (v9)? In whose presence is there similar joy (v10)? Over what? What is the third parable about (v11)? What did the younger son want (v12)? What did he do with it (v13)? What problem did he run into (v14)? What did he do about it (v15)? For what did he long (v16)? What happened to him in v17? What did he say? What did he decide to do (v18)? What did he decide to say (v18–19)? What did he do in v20? What did his father see? What did his father feel? What did his father do? What did the son say to him (v21)? But to whom did his father speak (v22)? And what did he say to do (v22–23)? Why (v24)? Where was the older son (v25)? What did he hear when he came home? Whom did he ask about it (v26)? What did the servant say (v27)? How did the older brother respond to this (v28)? What did the father do with him? How did he answer his father (v29)? What does he claim to have done? What did he want to be able to do? With whom? What did he call his brother (v30)? What is he angry at his father for? But what has his father done for him (v31)? And why does his father say he should have been happy (v32)?

Jesus is just too gracious. That was the complaint about Him (v2) that He was dealing with this entire chapter (v30). After all, He was feasting with repentant tax-collectors and sinners (v1).

So the thrust of the chapter as a whole is that if there's anything worth making merry and being glad about (v32a), it's when God gives spiritual life to the dead, and brings them to Himself in repentance and reconciliation (v32b).

Retrieving the lost is worth effort. This is a main feature of the first two parables. The man with the lost sheep and the woman with the lost coin both exert themselves significantly (v4, v8)—and this out of self-interest (though perhaps there is compassion for the sheep, certainly not for the coin). In the third parable, we see the father running out of compassion.

Jesus is showing us something here about Himself and how sinners come to repentance. It's not like it's primarily their idea or their effort. If we notice the relationship of 14:35 to 15:1, we'll see that the reason that tax-collectors and sinners drew near to hear *was because the Lord had given them ears to do so.*

Retrieving those whose hearts have been made receptive to hear the gospel is worth the effort not only because of the value of an eternal soul (and how great is that value!) but because it's an effort that the Lord Himself is spearheading. It is worth it, because He is worth it. It succeeds because He is doing it.

Retrieving the lost is worth rejoicing over. In bringing sinners to repentance, in bringing sinners to Himself, the Lord is aiming at His own gladness. He does the work because it pleases Him, and when the work is done it both pleases and praises Him. “Rejoice with me!” says the man in v6. “Rejoice with me!” says the woman in v9. “Let us eat and be merry” says that father in v23.

If we are “to rejoice with those who rejoice” as touches our brothers and sisters—and even those among them who are persecuting us (cf. Rom 12:10–16), then *how much more* are we to rejoice in God's rejoicing?! Yet, if we don't value the Lord Himself, then what pleases Him will make little difference to us.

At the beginning of the third parable, it seems that just the younger son fails to value his father and being with him (v12–13). But later we find out that the older son considered it a burden to slave for his father (v29a, more literally translated), or to obey his father (v29b). And that he cared more to make friends with other friends than with his father (v29c). He didn't value either being with his father (v31a) or jointly possessing, as an heir, all that his father had (v31b). This is why he lacked the capacity to be merry and glad with his father in his father's merriness and gladness (v32).

The marvelous thing about Jesus is that this is exactly the kind of lost sheep that He is going after in Luke 15! He turns away from the “99” tax-collectors and sinners who are making merry and glad with Him, and He comes away as it were—like the father leaving the party to plead with the older son. This Man even seeks and receives Pharisees and scribes to eat with them (cf. v2)!

Accurately seeing and valuing God is the path to joy-enabling repentance. At its bottom, sin is an attempt to enjoy the created thing without the Creator. A desire to have the inheritance without Him in Whom alone it is truly ours. When we live for ourselves, we may have the illusion of responsibility like the older son, or may be allowed to suffer more immediately visible consequence and lost like younger son (cf. v13–16).

But in either case what is needed is to have our minds enlightened and hearts awakened to: the goodness of our God (even his hired servants are well-cared for, v17!), our guiltiness against Him (we have sinned against heaven, before Him, v18!) and our unworthiness to be His (we are not worthy to be called His children, v19!)

This ability to see God and come to Him was given to the younger son in the parable and to the tax-collectors and sinners in v1. But if we find ourselves unable to rejoice over others' coming to Christ, the problem may well be that we lack the very life and repentance that they have been given. May God make us value above all things to be with Him and belong to Him!

How glad are you to be with/belong to God? What does your response to sinners' conversion tell you about this?

Suggested Songs: ARP45B “Daughter, Incline Your Ear” or TPH187 “I Belong to Jesus”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via tinysa.com/hopewellarp)

Luke chapter 15, these are God's words. Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to him to hear him and the Pharisees in the scribes complained saying this man receives sinners and eats with them. So he spoke this parable to them saying what man of you having a hundred sheep, if you loses one of them does not leave the 99 in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it and 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 say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven ever one sinner who repents.

Then over 99 just persons who need no repentance or what woman having 10 silver coins if she loses one coin does not light a lamp sweep the

house search carefully until she finds it and when she has found it she calls her friends and neighbors together saying rejoice with me for I have found the peace which I lost.

Likewise I say to you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents? And he said a certain man had two sons and the younger of them said to his father father give me the portion of goods falls to me, so he divided to them his livelihood and not many days after the younger son gathered all together journey to a far country and they're wasted his possessions with prodigal living but when he had spent all there are roses severe famine in that land and he began to be in want then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country and sent him into he sent him into his fields to feed swan.

And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate and no one gave him anything but when he came to himself he said how many of my father's hired servants have bread enough into spare and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father and I will say to him father.

I have sinned against heaven and before you and I am no longer worthy to be called your son make me like one of your hired servants the arose and came to his father but when he was still a great way off his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

The son said to him father I have sinned against heaven and in your sight and no longer worthy to be called your son but the father said to his servants bring out the best robe and put it on him put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet bring the fat and calf here and kill it and let us eat and be merry.

For this my son was dead and is alive again he was lost and this found and they began to be married. I was older son was in the field and as he came into near to the house he heard him music and dancing so he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant and he said to him your brother has come in because he has received him safe and sound your father has killed the fatted calf.

But he was angry and would not go in. There for his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father low these many years. I have been serving you. I've never transgressed your commandment at any time and yet you never gave me a young goat that I might make Mary with my friends.

But as soon as this son of yours came who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him. And he said to him son. You're always with me. And all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make Mary and be glad for your brother was dead and his life again and was lost and his family.

So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent worked. So if we were actually to start at the end of chapter 14, we would hear Jesus saying he who has ears to hear let him hear. And then immediately then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to him to hear him.

And the picture here is of Jesus giving certain ones ears to hear and the ones that he gave years to hear were actually the tax collectors and the sinners but we see the Lord Jesus not only having given the invitation and having given the tax collectors in the sinners ears to hear but also we see the Lord Jesus when the Pharisees and the scribes complain saying this man received sinners and eats with them.

We see Jesus spend the whole rest of the chapter not. Focusing on and enjoying the company of the repentant tax collectors and centers. But reasoning with the Pharisees and Scribes who are. Complaining against him in their hearts. And so we see in all three parables the effort that has put forth the.

Man going after the one sheep, even though there are the 99 the woman going after the one coin even though she has the the other nine silver coins. And the father reasoning with the older brother even though he has the younger son who has repented and he says, I'm a sinner I'm sitting against God.

Sinned against you and I've sinned against God phrase that you guys are hopefully quite familiar with now since that's how we teach you to think about sinning. It's being primarily against God. And he's got the repentant son inside of whom he's rejoicing. Do you see the work of our Savior?

Our God Father. Son and Holy Spirit pictured by a father in the parable that Jesus is the perfect display of the Father. And he's actually doing the same thing the whole chapter isn't he in the conversation with the Pharisees and Scribes? Reasoning with them. And so we see our great need for repentance is ironic.

I think that he is being intentionally ironic in verse 7 when he says over 99 just persons you need no repentance. There are no just persons who need no repentance. In God's wisdom, and God's providence, those are not the kind of people who go to heaven. The first man was the one who sinned and we all sinned in him and fell with him and died and deserved.

Wrath So every man every near man of course the Lord Jesus is a man that this isn't true and every mere man who will be in glory rejoicing forever and ever is one who was saved from his sin and this was the great problem of the Pharisees and scribes and why they were complaining against Jesus and their arts if they knew that they were sinners if they knew themselves to be sinners who needed to be saved, they wouldn't have been complaining that Jesus saved sinners.

They would have been glad that here as a savior for people like they are. And we are to see Christ in this chapter as the one who saved sinners and we are to see him with eyes that belong to hearts that know that we are the kind of sinners.

The kind of people that he came to say he came not to save the righteous but sinners and so we see with delight and appetite the shepherd

going after the one because we're all the one the 99 don't actually exist. I only get to be part of the 99 by having first been the one who were lost and being recovered we see with the light the woman and the parable working and and sweeping her house and searching carefully.

We see with the light the father in both cases when the first son is coming running out to him interrupting him you're letting him finish his word of repentance, but causing a proposing a very different arrangement than he was then the son had come to propose and then also we see with the life the father leaving the party and going out to his still lost son who doesn't know that he's lost he said never broken one of your commitment.

You hear the father gently saying you've had me with you all the time. You'd rather take a kid of the goats and celebrate with your friends because you love them more than you love me and the story actually ends there doesn't it it doesn't tell us if the sunset oh dad you're right.

I have loved them more than I've loved you. I have sinned against you and I've sinned against God I'm no longer worthy to be called your son and yes the dad saying well, we already killed the fan of gas grabbing another garment my son who's been with me the whole time was lost but now he's found and that they go in and continue the party over both of the sons and that's how we hope the parable would end and yet the Lord does leave it open ended to put to us the question did the older son repent to.

Was there a second wave of rejoicing over the repentance of a lost son in the party in that parable and I think that helps us to ask the question of ourselves are we glad that Jesus is the savior of sinners because we know ourselves to be sinners. And are we willing not only to rejoice with him over the salvation of others but to in the first place be occasions of rejoicing in heaven among the angels of God as God who works at saving centers and rejoices and invites all worried his to rejoice with him as saving centers works as saving us and rejoice as saving us will we repent?

Say I have sinned against God and against him but especially against God and that I did not value him more than anything else. Both sons committed the same sin didn't they? The one valued stuff and he acts it actually doesn't say that he spent it on harlots who just as they spent it wastefully it's the older brothers the older brother is the one who does but he considered the stuff and the entertainment in the far country to be more enjoyable than having his dad with him.

In fact, it's kind of bad when you ask for your inheritance before the dad dies. It says it would be better for me if I if you were dead because then I'd get my stuff. Can I just have the stuff now? It was very similar sin, isn't it? And the older brother.

He says, I've slaved for you I ate working for you but I did it anyway. So, I don't like belonging to you. I don't like having to work for you. I wish that you were dead so that it could be working for me and I didn't have to slave another people could.

And I'd rather spend time with my friends. Rather hang out with the youth group. It's really the same. And if you think about it in all of our sins, we can make the same sense. I'd rather have whatever it is that we are sending to get or even whatever sin it is that we want to commit.

Then to have God. No wonder the fool is the one who says in his heart that there is no God. So, Let us see our Savior who labors with centers and pleads with them not just tax collectors who are at the table, but the Pharisees and scribes to whom he is willing to turn aside as he turns aside to us and to see our Savior who works to retrieve sinners.

Let us be occasions of the rejoicing of heaven by repenting of our sin turning from treasuring other things to treasuring him most of them. And let us then to rejoice whenever we can either be used or just get to observe that he has done the same for another. Let's pray.

How we thank you? Oh God. For being gracious to us and sending your son. That the reason that Jesus Christ the God man was at that house and reasoning with those Pharisees and scribes was that you had given him to retrieve us by his righteousness and by his death on the cross.

So we pray that you would give us of your spirit. And that your spirit would apply to us this portion of your word, which he carried the Apostle the evangelist along to write. That he would know work it out in our hearts and that we would see. Not just in ourselves the same sin.

That we see in all of the men in the text but Christ. But that he would work it out in our hearts that we would see Christ and His pleading. And His gladness to save sinners such as we are. So that we would lay hold of Him. And whose name also we ask.

Amen.