

- A. What brings you joy? Among many things that God delights in, today’s text teaches that He has joy in those who repent.
- B. Great multitudes followed Jesus, yet our Savior warned the multitudes of the cost of discipleship.

Heaven has joy in your faith and repentance.	I. JESUS RECEIVES SINNERS WHO REPENT II. THE SEEKING LOVE OF GOD III. HEAVEN’S JOY IN YOUR REPENTANCE
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I. **JESUS RECEIVES SINNERS WHO REPENT** →**vv1-2**

A. It may help to clarify **vv1-2** if we put in the word “notorious” before “**sinners.**”

- 1. The word “**sinners**” here was used in a labeling sense to point to those whose lives were dominated by sin. Such persons were not in good standing with the local synagogue.
- 2. Earlier in **Lu 7**, Jesus was invited to eat at the home of a Pharisee. While there, a notoriously immoral woman anointed the feet of Jesus with perfume, wet them with her tears, and then wiped His feet with her hair. The Pharisee said to himself, “**If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner**” (**v39**).
 - a. According to **Jn 11:1f**, this woman was the sister of Martha and Lazarus of Bethany.
 - b. She continued to follow Jesus and His gospel rather than remain in her immoral life.

B. Other notorious sinners such as tax collectors repented and followed Jesus. According to **Lu 5:27f**, one such man was Levi, also known as Matthew, who wrote a magnificent gospel account.

- 1. After Matthew began following Jesus, he was so zealous that he invited his tax collector friends and others to a big reception where they could meet Jesus and hear His teaching.
- 2. At this time, “**The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, ‘Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?’**” Jesus answered by saying that He did “**not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.**”¹

C. The Pharisees had a very wrong notion that they could please God by their flawed efforts at keeping the ceremonial and moral law of God.

- 1. They at times condemned others, including those without theological education, who did not follow in their ways.
- 2. They said that those of the crowds who followed Jesus did not know the law and were cursed (**Jn 7:49**).
- 3. Pharisees did not believe Jesus could be the Messiah if He welcomed such notorious sinners to follow Him and especially that He would eat with them.

¹ See **Lu 5:30-32**.

II. THE SEEKING LOVE OF GOD →**vv3-5**

- A. These Pharisees and scribes were not the sort of men who would go out to look for lost sheep.
1. **Ezek 34** rebuked men like these who did not seek the lost sheep of Israel. They instead fed themselves. God promised, **“I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd” (v23).**
 2. In this parable, Jesus was appealing to what their offices and roles as teachers should have compelled them to do, when He asked the rhetorical question, **“What man among you... does not leave the ninety-nine... and go after one which is lost until he finds it?”**
- B. A shepherd might be motivated to stay with the ninety-nine and just cut their losses with this one wayward sheep.
1. That is not how our loving, merciful God treats His sheep.
 2. He has compassion on those who are His even when they fall into sin and wander off.
- C. Jesus used another parable to show God’s seeking love for lost sinners. →**v8**
1. The effort to sweep the entire house to seek the lost coin represents the seeking love of God.
 2. The Pharisees barely lifted a finger to search for a lost sinner for the kingdom of God.

III. HEAVEN’S JOY IN YOUR REPENTANCE →**vv5-7**

- A. One might expect the shepherd to have some degree of upset with that lost sheep after he found it.
1. This parable represents the love of Jesus, the Good Shepherd who calls the angels in glory to join Him in rejoicing over the one sinner who repents.
 - a. Our triune God rejoices when lost sinners repent of their sin.
 - b. The Greek word for repentance here means “to change one’s way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude with regard to sin and righteousness.”²
 - c. This is a bit different than what we see in some evangelical circles that stress the importance of someone praying the sinner’s prayer, walking an aisle, or raising their hand while everyone else in the congregation has their eyes closed.
 - 1) As important as confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior is, our God demands repentance— a change of life— as well.
 - 2) If we just call Jesus **“Lord, Lord”** yet continue practicing lawlessness, He will say that He never knew us when we go to face the judgment.
 2. The repentance in this parable involves the lost sinner, separated from God because of sin, who comes to faith in Christ and turns from that sin unto God with an endeavor after new obedience.
 3. This does not exclude the fact that God delights in us when we grow in grace to resist and turn away from sin even as those who have been Christians for many years.
- B. One misinterpretation of **v7** is that the Pharisees and scribes were righteous and didn’t need to repent.
1. Because of the manifold **“woes”** of rebuke Jesus pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees in **Mat 23**, they were in desperate need of repentance.
 2. The Lord Jesus used language in **v7** to refer to how the Pharisees and scribes saw themselves. These men considered themselves righteous in God’s sight. Much of it was for show.
- C. In the parable of the lost coin, the woman represents heaven’s joy when one sinner repents. → **vv9-10**
— Because God and the angels rejoice over sinners who come to faith and repentance, so should we.

Review, further application, and conclusion:

² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In *Greek-English lexicon of the NT: based on semantic domains*, Vol. 1, p. 509