

The Greatest Gift

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[0 : 00] And if you will turn back with me this evening to the portion of scripture that we read, and with the Lord's help this evening we'll look at Luke chapter 15.

Luke chapter 15, and if we take as our text the words of verse 7. Luke chapter 15 at verse 7. Where Jesus says, just so I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance. There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.

We often say that Christmas is a time for giving and receiving.

[1 : 11] And we often tell our children that it's better to give than to receive. It's better to give gifts than to receive gifts.

But what is the best gift that God could give you? What is the best gift that God could give you? And of course the answer to such a question is the gift of salvation. The gift of salvation. And this question, what is the best gift God could give you?

It's actually the first question which is asked in the new Life Explored Bible study. It's a seven week Bible study that's going to be starting in January. And I'll just highlight it to you.

It's informal. It's very relaxed. It gives you an opportunity to ask questions about the Bible or just to sit and listen. You won't be forced to ask questions or even speak.

[2 : 12] But you can just sit and enjoy listening. But as you would expect such a question, what's the best gift God could give you? It's based upon the premise that every one of us is searching for true happiness.

We're all looking for that thing that will satisfy us. We're all looking and searching for that one thing that will make us complete and give to us that true lasting satisfaction and happiness in life. And we look for true happiness in many places. We will look for it in our possessions, in our money, in our work, in our family, in our children, in our friends, in our parties, in our entertainment. My friend, we will look for true happiness and satisfaction anywhere and everywhere. But we will only ever find it when we see that everything else in this life doesn't fill that void. Everything else in this life doesn't fill this void in our heart. And we will only ever see salvation as the greatest gift that God could give us when we see our greatest need.

[3 : 27] That we are sinners in need of a saviour. That's our greatest need. We are sinners in need of a saviour.

But until we come to that point in our lives, we will never seek to obtain the greatest gift that God could give to us. The gift of salvation. And we will never find true happiness.

We will never find true happiness until we seek the gift of salvation. And you know, when we come to this well-known chapter in Luke 15, we are very familiar with all the illustrations that it contains. The lost sheep and the lost coin and the prodigal son. But what we ought to see right from the outset is that these three illustrations, they're actually one parable.

They're one continuous story with the same meaning and the same emphasis. Because the context of the parable is important.

[4 : 27] That's what we're told at the very, very beginning. We set it in the context. So look at verse 1. It says, Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, Jesus, this man, receives sinners and eats with them.

So he told them this parable. The whole thing is a parable. And so the sinners and the tax collectors, they're coming to Jesus, even though they are the outcasts of society.

They don't deserve salvation. They're coming to Jesus, but Jesus doesn't drive them away. In fact, we're told that Jesus does the opposite. He receives sinners and he eats with them.

And this observation that Jesus receives sinners and eats with them, it was made by the grumbling scribes and Pharisees. But the observation of the scribes and Pharisees is what actually becomes the point of the parable.

That Jesus receives sinners and Jesus has a love for sinners and Jesus has a place for sinners in his heart. And this is emphasized by the words of our text.

[5 : 39] There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.

And that's because the sinner sees his or her need. They see that in their exploration of life and trying every other avenue, they haven't found happiness there.

Therefore, they seek the greatest gift in God's salvation. And you know, far too often we come to this chapter and we have a tendency to spiritualize the parable.

And sometimes that's good to do that. But this evening, I want us to hear the parable as the original hearers heard it. I want us to hear the parable from the perspective of these four groups.

The tax collectors, the sinners, the Pharisees and the scribes. But in reality, there are only actually two groups. Those who are searching for salvation because they see their need.

[6 : 42] And those who don't search for salvation at all because they think they have it already. And the point which Jesus is making is that we need to see ourselves as the sinners who deserve nothing.

And we need to see that salvation is a gift from God which cannot be earned at all. It's freely received. And so Jesus tells this parable.

And in the parable, there are three illustrations used that we're very familiar with. But I'd like to title these illustrations as the filthy sinner, the frugal scrooge and the foolish sons.

The filthy sinner, the frugal scrooge and the foolish sons. So if we look firstly at the filthy sinner. The filthy sinner.

Read again at verse 3. So he told them this parable. What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?

[7 : 44] 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 that was lost.

Just so I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. And so Jesus begins this parable in verse 4 with the question, Which man of you?

Or which one of you? Which one of you? And this question is of course directed towards these four groups present. The tax collectors, the sinners, the scribes and the Pharisees.

And with this, Jesus brings all four groups into the parable. And he makes them see that the parable isn't just this little story to entertain his crowd. The parable is seeking to get his listeners, get the listeners involved, and see that they are being portrayed and represented in the parable.

And that when they see themselves in the parable, it will compel them to make a personal decision about following Jesus. And so the parable is seeking to ask the question, Where are you in the parable?

[9 : 00] Where are you in the parable? And that's what Jesus is asking as he begins the parable. Which one of you? Which one of you, tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees and scribes, which one of you, if you had a hundred sheep and you lost one, which one of you would leave the ninety-nine in the field and go after that one lost sheep and search for it until you find it?

And immediately with this question, there is a separation. As these groups are listening to the parable. Because the tax collectors, they wouldn't go and search for a lost sheep.

They have no interest in sheep. And sheep, to them, are filthy animals and certainly not the responsibility of a tax collector. And they would say to themselves, that's the job of the sinner.

And the Pharisees, they wouldn't go either. Because their place was in the temple. Their place was a place of purity and honour and worship and righteousness and holiness.

So there's no way that the Pharisees would have sheep, let alone search for one that is lost. And they too would have said among themselves, that's the job for the sinner.

[10 : 15] Then there are the scribes. And they wouldn't go after sheep either. Their position was far too important for such a menial task as sheep. Because their position was to read God's holy

scriptures publicly and explain what it means.

And what it means from all their wealth and from all their knowledge. It certainly wasn't to go traipsing over all the hills and countryside of Israel's landscape, looking for one lost sheep.

And they too would have said to themselves, that's the job for the sinner. And so by the illustration, everyone knows that Jesus is talking about the sinners.

And then you have the sinners. And when Jesus asks, Which man of you, having a hundred sheep, have he lost one of them? Does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after that one which is lost until he finds it?

And with such a question, the sinners immediately know that Jesus is talking about them. The sinners see themselves in the parable. And they listen intently to Jesus' illustration because, well, they're so familiar with it.

[11 : 25] Because they would have been the only group out of the four who would have kept sheep. The tax collectors, they were paid by the Roman government. The Pharisees and the scribes, they were provided for by all the freewill offerings of the people.

But for the sinners, sheep were their livelihood. Sheep were their source of income and survival. And so sheep were precious to them.

And they would have done anything for them. And had they lost one sheep, they wouldn't have hesitated for a moment to leave the ninety-nine behind in a field and go and search for that one lost sheep.

The sheep would have meant nothing to the tax collectors, the sinners, the tax collectors, the Pharisees and the scribes. But the sheep meant everything to the sinners.

And the sinners could see themselves being portrayed so clearly in this parable. Because to find that one lost sheep was to them the greatest gift.

[12 : 29] It was the greatest gift. Their sheep were so precious to them that to find what they had lost was the greatest gift to receive.

And as Jesus tells us in the parable, finding that lost sheep gave the sinners the greatest happiness. Because we're told in verse five, it says, And when he had found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing.

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost. And with the sinners now engaged in this parable and engaged in what Jesus is saying, because they can relate to it, Jesus then drives home his point in verse seven.

Just so I tell you, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over the 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.

And in that one statement, Jesus turns the entire illustration on its head by explaining to the sinners that they're not only like a lost sheep, but they are a lost sheep.

[13 : 45] They're not only like a shepherd who lost a sheep, but they are the lost sheep. They are lost sinners. And so having narrowed his focus towards these sinners by giving them a familiar illustration, Jesus emphasises to them that there's not only something missing in their life, they're lost.

They're completely lost. And with that, Jesus says to them, you are in need of an even greater gift than precious sheep. You are in need of salvation.

And you need to see that you're a sinner in need of repentance. Because you're only ever going to find true happiness when you seek the gift of God's salvation.

And there will only ever be through rejoicing in heaven when you turn away from your sin and turn to the Lord. And that's the message which Jesus is trying to get across in the parable.

That we are lost sinners in need of salvation. that we need to be saved. We need to be delivered from our sin. Because if our sin is left undealt with, then it will take us all the way to hell.

[14 : 57] My friend, you need to see that you are in need of an even greater gift than precious sheep. You are in need of salvation.

But in order to see how precious this gift of salvation is, you need to see that you're a sinner in need of repentance. You need to see that you are only ever going to find true happiness when you seek the gift of God's salvation.

And there will only ever be through rejoicing in heaven when you turn from your sin and you turn to the Lord in repentance. There will only ever be through rejoicing in heaven when Jesus Christ is

your Lord and Savior.

And the point that Jesus is making is that there will never be rejoicing in heaven over those who think that they are righteous in God's sight. Heaven will not rejoice over those who think that they are worthy of God's salvation.

No, my friend, heaven, he says, will only rejoice when there is a repentant sinner on their knees seeking God's gift of salvation. Just so I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over the 99 righteous persons who need no repentance.

[16 : 20] And the 99 righteous persons, they are the scribes and the Pharisees. They think that they need no repentance because they know their Bible but they don't do what their Bible tells them.

They attend church but they never listen. They are those who are grumbling against the sinners and the tax collectors and they're grumbling because they don't like to see that Jesus receives sinners and Jesus has a love for sinners and that Jesus has a place for them in his heart.

But that's why Jesus came into the world. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. And so my friend, the question we need to ask is how do you see yourself?

Do you see yourself as a filthy sinner in need of a saviour? Or do you still see yourself as a righteous person who needs no repentance?

How do you see yourself? But as Jesus continues to tell this parable to these four groups the tax collectors, the sinners, the Pharisees and the scribes he moves on from the lost sheep to speak about the lost coin.

[17 : 40] And from this we move from seeing the filthy sinner to the frugal scrooge. The frugal scrooge. If you look at verse 8 he says, Or what woman having ten silver coins if she loses one coin does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?

And when she has found it she calls together her friends and neighbours saying, Rejoice with me for I have found the coin that I had lost. Just so I tell you there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

And as we saw earlier Jesus began his parable with the question which man of you or which one of you? And in the first illustration of the lost sheep everyone knew that Jesus was talking about the sinner.

And with the same question Jesus continues the parable by asking what woman? And with that Jesus he is again asking the same question which one of you?

And this question is again directed towards the tax collectors the sinners the scribes and the Pharisees. And again Jesus brings all four groups into the parable because he is seeking to get them involved in the parable and see that they are in the parable and it is all in the hope that it will compel them to make a personal decision about following Jesus.

[19 : 06] And so Jesus is again asking these groups which one of you is being described here? Which one of you tax collectors sinners scribes and Pharisees which one of you if you had ten silver coins and you lost one coin which one of you would light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully for it until you find it?

Which one of you would do that? And immediately everyone knows that Jesus is talking about the tax collectors because the sinners they wouldn't sweep the house to look for money because they never had any.

Their currency was always food and animals and they don't have the luxury of owning one coin let alone ten. And the scribes they wouldn't need money because they had everything paid for them. Their wealth was based upon all the offerings that people made to the temple. Their business was religion not money. And the Pharisees they wouldn't be found in the possession of any coins because they all bore the inscription of Rome.

The Roman Caesar was imprinted on the coins and as far as the Pharisees were concerned Rome was an enemy of the Jews. And so as soon as the coins were mentioned in the illustration everyone knew that Jesus was talking about the tax collectors and even the tax collectors knew that Jesus was talking about them because they can see themselves in the parable.

[20 : 41] And they listen intently to Jesus' illustration because they're so familiar with it. They're so familiar with coins and counting and accounting money because they're tax collectors.

And this illustration it was so relevant to them and it immediately grabs their attention because any mention of money and the tax collectors would have been there.

And I suppose well there's no doubt that we all grudge paying tax. We lose so much of our wage in paying tax. We lose so much of our wage paying the tax man.

But in ancient Israel tax collectors were hated by the Jews. And they were hated by the Jews because they were notorious for being dishonest and corrupt.

And corrupt where they would increase all the taxes so that they could pocket a higher percentage of the money. And that was certainly the case with Zacchaeus.

[21 : 42] You remember little Zacchaeus who climbed up into the tree. He was a frugal scrooge when it came to money. But tax collectors they were also hated because they worked for the Roman government.

And at that time Israel was under the government of the Roman Empire. And as a result they were required to pay taxes to Rome.

But what really got to all the Jewish people was that all the tax collectors were Jews. And because they were imposing taxes on their own people and gaining from it they were viewed by their fellow countrymen and women as traitors.

Tax collectors were hated by their own people especially by the scribes and the Pharisees. And it's interesting that in his illustration Jesus describes this person who has lost a coin as a woman.

And the reason he does that is significant because in ancient Israel women weren't given much of a position. They weren't given a place in society. They weren't to talk to men they weren't to sit and eat with men and they were to be covered up all the time.

[22 : 59] And in the mind of many of the Jews especially the scribes and the Pharisees women were only good for keeping the home and bearing children. And you could see that in the eyes of the Jews women were the lowest rung in the ladder of society.

But in the minds of the scribes and the Pharisees tax collectors were even lower. they were below the bottom rung of society's ladder. They were worse than the sinners and worse than women.

Tax collectors were completely written off. And this is why the scribes and the Pharisees are grumbling against Jesus for receiving sinners for even talking to sinners and tax collectors and eating with them.

Because in their eyes the sinners were filthy sinners who didn't keep God's law. and tax collectors were scrooges who were corrupt and traitors of God's people.

But you know this is the very reason why Jesus told the parable. He tells the parable to highlight the point that Jesus receives sinners and he has a love for sinners and he has a place for sinners in his heart.

[24 : 14] And by giving this illustration Jesus would connect with the tax collectors. he would grab their attention because well they knew that they were viewed by others as lower than women.

But also because money was precious to them. Money was their idol. Money was their God. And their money was so precious to them that to find what they had lost was the greatest gift to receive. And as Jesus tells the parable finding that lost coin gave to the woman the greatest happiness.

Because we're told in verse 9 and when she has found it she calls together her friends and neighbours saying rejoice with me for I have found the coin that I had lost.

And so with the sinners and the tax collectors now engaged in the parable and alert to what Jesus is saying Jesus again drives home his point in verse 10.

just so I tell you there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. And again in that one statement Jesus is turning the entire illustration on its head by explaining to the tax collectors that they are not only like the woman who lost a coin but that they are the lost coin.

[25 : 35] They too are lost sinners. and having narrowed his focus towards the sinners and the tax collectors by giving them familiar illustrations Jesus emphasises to them both that there is not only something missing in their life they are lost.

They are lost. And with that Jesus says to them you are lost sinners and you are in need of an even greater gift than precious sheep and precious coins.

you are in need of salvation. You need to see that you are a sinner in need of repentance. And you are only ever going to find true happiness in this life when you seek the gift of God's salvation.

There will only ever be through rejoicing in heaven says Jesus when you turn away from your sin and turn to the Lord in repentance. And as we said that is the message which Jesus is trying to get across to us in the parable that we are lost sinners in need of salvation.

That we need to be saved. We need to be delivered from our sin because if our sin is left undealt with then it will take us all the way to hell. My friend you need to see that you are a lost sinner and that you are in need of an even greater gift than anything else that this world can offer you.

[27 : 04] you are in need of salvation. You are in need of salvation. But in order to see how precious this gift of salvation is you need to see that you are a sinner in need of repentance.

You need to see that you are only ever going to find through lasting happiness in this life when you seek the gift of God's salvation. That there will only ever be through rejoicing in heaven when you turn from your sin and turn to the Lord in repentance.

There will only ever be through rejoicing in heaven when you confess Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Saviour. And again the point which Jesus is making is that there will never be rejoicing in heaven over those who think that they are righteous in God's sight.

heaven will not rejoice over those who think that they are worthy of God's salvation. My friend heaven will only ever rejoice when there is a repentant sinner on their knees before God seeking God's gift of salvation.

And let me remind you again Jesus receives sinners he has a love for sinners and a place for sinners in his heart because he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

[28 : 38] And so the question we need to ask is as we look at this parable how do you see yourself? Do you see yourself as a sinner in need of a Saviour?

Or do you still see yourself as a righteous person who needs no repentance? But again as Jesus continues to tell his parable to these four groups the tax collectors the sinners the scribes and the Pharisees he moves on from the lost sheep and the lost coin and he begins to speak about two lost sons.

And from this we move from seeing the filthy sinner and the frugal scrooge to the foolish sons. The foolish sons. If you read again in verse 11 and he said there was a man who had two sons.

And the younger of them said to his father, father give me the share of property that is coming to me. And he divided his property between them. Not many days later the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country and there he squandered his property in reckless living. As we saw earlier Jesus began his parable with the question which one of you? Which one of you? And in the first illustration of the lost sheep everyone knew that Jesus was talking about the sinners.

[30 : 04] In the second illustration of the lost coin everyone knew that Jesus was talking about the tax collectors. And so with the same question being implied and directed to those who were present hearing the parable the tax collectors, the sinners, the scribes, and the Pharisees, Jesus continues the parable by asking which one of you?

And again he's bringing them into the parable and he's wanting them to be involved in the parable to see that they need salvation for themselves. And so Jesus is again asking the groups which one of you is described here?

Which one of you tax collectors, sinners, scribes and Pharisees? Which one of you is the younger brother? And which one of you is the elder brother?

And what's remarkable is that because Jesus has already grabbed the attention of the sinners and the tax collectors by using the first two illustrations and he's alerted them to the fact that they are lost sinners in need of a savior, the sinners and the tax collectors can immediately relate to the younger brother.

Because the younger brother lost his way, he was lost. He went to his father and asked for his inheritance because his greed and his desire for money had taken over his life.

[31 : 29] So much so that he wished that his father was dead so that he could increase his wealth. And with that, the tax collectors could certainly relate to the younger brother and his unhealthy desire for wealth.

But so too could the sinners. Because the sinners were those who didn't take the laws of God seriously as the scribes and the Pharisees. And to ask your father for his inheritance while he was still living, well that's a disgrace.

Then to go and squander all that inheritance on prodigal living, it was even more of a disgrace. But then to lose everything and end up in a pigsty, feeding unclean animals, that was going beyond hope.

And that's how the sinners and the tax collectors viewed themselves. They viewed themselves like the prodigal son as those who were beyond redemption and unlovable.

And that's because they had been told time and time again by the scribes and the Pharisees that they were far too sinful to be forgiven and that God doesn't love them. And yet Jesus tells us in the parable that it was when the prodigal son came to the end of himself that he began to turn back to the father's house and confess his sin.

[32 : 52] And that's what we see in verse 18. If you jump down to verse 18, he says this is the prodigal son. He's come to the end of himself and he says, I will arise and go to my father and I will say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants. The prodigal son turned back to his father's house and confessed his sin.

And that's what the word repentance means. It means to turn back, to turn around. It means to turn away from our sin and our sinful lifestyle and turn to the Lord seeking his forgiveness.

And that's what Jesus has already told the sinners and the tax collectors. That there is rejoicing in heaven when a sinner turns away from their sin and turns to the Lord in repentance.

And you know, the assurance which Jesus gives to the sinners and the tax collectors that when they repent is that they will not be met by rejection. When they repent, they will not be met by rejection.

[34 : 07] And that was emphasized to them in the reaction of the father towards the prodigal son. You look at verse 20. It says, The son arose and came to his father, but while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

And the son said to him, Father, I've sinned against heaven and before you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, bring quickly the best robe, put it on him, put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet and bring the fattened calf and kill it and let us eat and celebrate.

For this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. And for the sinners and the tax collectors listening to Jesus' parable, they're being shown that they're not beyond hope and beyond redemption.

The scribes and the Pharisees, they may have told the sinners and the tax collectors again and again that they're far too sinful to be forgiven and that God doesn't love them.

But God's son, Jesus Christ, was telling them, telling the tax collectors and the sinners, and he's telling us tonight that God loves lost sinners and he moves with compassion towards us and he wants us to come and embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel.

[35 : 38] Because this Jesus receives sinners. He has a love for sinners and a place for sinners in his heart. And he came into this broken and fallen world not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

He came to call sinners to repentance. But as Jesus tells this wonderful parable about God's great gift of salvation that's being offered to sinners, you can almost hear the scribes and the Pharisees and they're asking one another, where are we in the parable?

Where are we in the parable? We can see the sinners. We can see the tax collectors. But where are we in the parable? Which one are we? And you know, my friend, isn't it ironic that the scribes and the Pharisees can't see themselves in the parable?

And that's because they can't see themselves at all. They can't see that their self-righteousness is what's keeping them from Jesus. The tax collectors and the sinners, they are now searching for salvation urgently because they can see their need.

They see their need to be saved, but the scribes and the Pharisees, they don't search for salvation because they think they have it already. They think that they're right with God.

[37 : 19] They think that their good deeds will outweigh the bad deeds. On the day of judgment that everything will be fine with them. And so on to the parable steps the elder brother.

And it says in verse 25, now his older son was in the field and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.

He heard the rejoicing. There was rejoicing in the father's house over the prodigal son who had repented. Which is of course a picture of the rejoicing in heaven over every sinner who repents. But you notice down in verse 28 that the elder brother, he refuses to go into the father's house and celebrate because he was angry.

He grumbled against his brother because he thinks that he deserves his father's inheritance. His self-righteousness like that of the scribes and the Pharisees prevents him from seeing the beauty of

salvation.

[38 : 27] And it only causes him to view his sinful brother as unworthy of the father's love and all the blessings of the father's house. But Jesus makes the point that the older brother was a foolish son.

He was a foolish son and he was more foolish than his sinful younger brother because he refused to believe that salvation was a gift.

He thought he could earn his father's inheritance. That's what every self-righteous person thinks. They think they can earn salvation, earn God's favor, earn God's privileges. The older son thought that God would accept him and all his good merits.

But as Jesus has stressed throughout this parable, we need to see that we are lost sinners in order to see the wonder of God's gift of salvation.

[39 : 35] And my friend, salvation is a gift and it's freely given. I don't suppose any one of us will ask our family members on Christmas day or whenever we will have it, when we open our presents, none of us will ask, how much did my present cost?

Neither will we ask them how much we owe them because it's a gift. It's not earned, it's not worked for, it's not achieved by merit, it's freely given.

Freely given. Why? Christ paid for it. His death on the cross paid for it.

That's why salvation is a gift. Freely given. it's the greatest gift that God could give to us.

He's, and he's more than willing to give it to us. All we have to do is ask. You do not have, said Jesus, because you do not ask.

[40 : 56] My friend, in order to be saved, you need to see that you're a sinner. In order to be saved, all you have to do is turn away from your sin and turn to the Lord and ask him to save you.

And he promises that he will. He promises that he will. And so the question is, the question you need to ask is, do you see yourself as a sinner in need of salvation?

Or do you still see yourself as a righteous person who needs no repentance? my friend, you need to see that you're a lost sinner in need of salvation.

Because this Jesus, he receives sinners. He has a love for sinners. And he has a place for sinners like you and me in his heart.

And he entered into this world not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. So will you not come to this Jesus tonight and fall down before him and confess your need often?

[42 : 14] Because in doing so, you will receive the greatest gift that God could ever give you.

may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we ask tonight that there would be rejoicing in the presence of the angels over one sinner in here who repents.

We plead with thee that thy word would find lodgment in our heart, that we would not see ourselves as those who are righteous, but as those who are sinners, in need of repentance.

Sinners in need of that great gift of salvation, help us, Lord, we pray, to come to thee, to be like the prodigal son, to confess, Father, I have sinned against heaven and against thee, and that we are not worthy to be called thy hired servants.

But yet, Lord, we bless thee for the privilege of being called sons and daughters of our heavenly Father, that when we come to thee, seeking thee that we will find thee.

[43 : 30] Oh, bless thy truth to us, keep us on the narrow path that leads to life. Help us, Lord, to see it, to follow it, to walk in it. Do us good, we ask, take away our iniquity, and receive us graciously for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Amen. We shall conclude by singing in Psalm 119. Psalm 119, page 415.

We're singing from verse 172. Psalm 119, at verse 172. We're singing down to the end of the Psalm.

My tongue of thy most blessed word shall speak and it confess, because all thy commandments are perfect righteousness. And down to the end of the Psalm, I like a lost sheep went astray, thy servant seek and find, for thy commands I suffered not to slip out of my mind.

these verses to God's praise. Amen. Amen. My tongue of thy most blessed word shall speak and it confess, because all thy commandments are perfect righteousness.

[45 : 18] Let thy strong hand make help to thee, thy peace and peace are my choice.

I long for thy salvation Lord, and in thy love rejoice.

O let my soul deviant child, give praises unto thee, and let thy judgment let thy judgment face be help for love to me.

love to me. I like a lost sheep went astray, thy serpents see confine for thy commands I command I suffer not to slip out of my mind.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.