

The Lost

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[0 : 00] I'd like us to turn once again to the Gospel of Luke and chapter 15, reading at the beginning of the chapter.

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear them. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them.

So he told them, not just this parable, but these parables. So he told them these parables.

I might have mentioned it before, but it's worth repeating. The Lord had two ideas in mind when he related these parables.

One was to the scribes and Pharisees as a warning. Warning about the lives they were leading. About the way that they judged hypocritically.

[1 : 12] About their own spiritual lives and how they were not really on the path to a saved eternity.

And he also spoke to those who were his followers. Those who were seeking the way to eternal life. And to them he was giving instruction as to how they should live for God's glory.

And so we have these two aspects in almost all of the Lord's parables. Warning on the one side to those who were hypocrites and those who were scribes and Pharisees.

And encouragement. And educating their minds. Re-aligning their minds into the true path of righteousness.

If you think back to the Sermon on the Mount. He said, you have heard it said of old time. He says, well put that away. What you have been hearing there are the teachings of those who have raised their laws and their statutes.

[2 : 20] For their own glory and for the benefit of mankind. But I say unto you. And so throughout that Sermon on the Mount. He has this contrast. What is the benefit of mankind.

And what is the glory of man. And what is for the glory of God. And so instead of as is usually done in this chapter to concentrate on the parable of the prodigal.

I want to look at all three of them. The lost sheep. The lost coin. And the lost son. Among the two or three dozen parables that the Lord told the disciples and those who followed him around.

Few of them can have dealt with the matter of being saved so clearly as these parables here in chapter 15.

And Bishop Ryle says of these verses. There's probably no chapter that has done greater good to the souls of men than this particular chapter.

[3 : 35] To the good shepherd there is no difference between the loss and the finding of one in a hundred. Or one in ten.

Or one in two. And although it seems as though there's no real input God has in these different parables.

It's all the man or the woman lost. Or the son was lost and was found. God almost stood idly by why these things happened. But as we look at these parables we have to try and understand that everything that happens is in the providence of God.

Now in the first two there's the sheep and in the lost coin. They were lost by on the one case the carelessness of the sheep and wandering away from the flock.

And the other the carelessness of the householder who lost the coin in the darkness of her own house. But yet in the finding of the searching for these lost items.

[4 : 55] There is the input of God not to just dismiss what is lost as it doesn't matter. But a desire to find what was lost.

And after being found to rejoice in the finding of it. For instance the person on the farm who has a hundred sheep. He could have might have said well I've got ninety-nine others.

Forget the one that's lost and we'll just carry on with the ninety-nine that are there. But no he goes out. He leaves the ninety-nine and goes out. And seeks the one that was lost until he finds it. And then comes back rejoicing. And the Lord says I tell you there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents.

Just as 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.

[5 : 51] The same applies to the woman. She might have said I might have lost one but there's still another nine. But no as I said she searches in the darkness of the house until she finds what was lost.

And when she finds it she rejoices. And again with the son there was father might have said well there's two sons. One's gone away well I still have the other one. We'll just carry on. But no that's not the case.

In every case of these parables God's sovereign providence is at work. Bringing about especially in the last parable bringing about the return of the son back to his father.

In each case in each of these parables there's joy in finding that which was lost. As joy there is in heaven over one sinner who repents.

The parables also speak of our own condition in this world. Our miserable condition apart from God.

[6 : 56] In each case what was lost was valuable to God. In the case of the farmer and the woman and the father.

It is God identifying himself with these three narratives. And he's placing himself in that situation where he is the one who rejoices.

What was lost was valuable. And he does everything he can in his power. Everything possible by his providence. And by the way he brings incidents into our lives.

That we would turn back to him. He hedges up our ways. He brings us back to him so that we might at last find him. But he brings that to pass by his own sovereign will.

In Isaiah 53. God compares sinners to lost sheep.

[8 : 00] We all like lost sheep have gone astray. Every one of us has gone our own way. But as Isaiah tells us.

Even when we were lost. The Lord was led as a lamb to the slaughter. To find us. And to restore us. He is the one who goes to the cross. He is the one who gives his life. For the ransom. For you. And for me. So when we are lost.

We are still valuable to God. God does not want any of us to perish. But all of us to come to faith and repentance in him.

And so find that eternal life. So that there might be joy in heaven. Over sinners who are repenting. Each of the parables here in chapter 15.

[9 : 02] Speak of. Speak of. The shepherd. The woman. And the father. Representing.

God. As being fully committed. To your salvation. And to mine. The father plans it. The son achieves it.

By his work on the cross. And the Holy Spirit. Applies it to us. Individually. And that's. He does that by. Effectual calling.

As you know. It's the father's plan of salvation. God so loved the world. That he gave his only begotten son. It is God the father. Who has. The plan of salvation.

In his own mind. And in his own desire. To save the children of men. It is the son whose desire. Has always been towards the children of men. Who comes and gives his life.

[10 : 03] For you. And for me. And as a Holy Spirit. Who comes from the father and the son. And works in us. That we might. Be brought. To a saving knowledge.

It is. The power of the Holy Spirit. Who works. In us. By effectual calling. You know again. Your catechism. Effectual calling. Is the work of God's spirit. Whereby he convinces us.

Of us in misery. As he did to the prodigal. In the far country. Where he illuminates our mind. In the knowledge of Christ. As he did to the prodigal. Giving him.

An understanding. Of the father's love. And concern for him. Even though. He was still. Far away. And. Enabling him. To embrace Jesus Christ. The whole aspect.

Of being brought. Back. To God. Is the work. Of the triune God. The father planning it. The son. Working. Achieving it. And the Holy Spirit. Working in you and me. Applying it.

[10 : 59] So that we might be brought. To a saving knowledge. It is. Nothing of us. It is all of God. And praise. And glory to his name. That. He so. Does it.

It is all of God. And so ultimately. That. Is our only hope. Not that. We have to do something. Which would be impossible.

But that he has. Already. Done it. Most. Other religions. Talk about. This do. And you shall live. Live. Whereas. The Holy Spirit. Says. It has been done. Come. And live. By the one. Who has achieved. Your life. For you. And so. In Luke. The Lord. Says. Ask.

[11 : 56] And it shall be. Given to you. Seek. And you shall find. Knock. And it shall be. Open to you. What he says.

He. Shall do. But there is still something. Incumbent upon us. There always is. In the work of salvation. In the same way.

As we told. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you shall be saved. If you do not. Consciously believe. I know the work. Of bringing us to believe. Is the work of the Holy Spirit.

But the decision. The conscious. Act. Of believing is ours. And so also. In the seeking of salvation. Before we come to that position. There is this.

Aspect. Of. Asking. And knocking. And opening the door. We have. To. Engage. In that work.

[12 : 52] It is something. That we don't. We have to. Act in a passive way. We have to be active. In our own part. In response. To what God. Has worked in us. We have to respond.

To that. Work. That he has. Brought. To bear. Upon us. God. What these. Parables. Revealed to us. Is God. Sorrowing.

Over that. Which he has lost. It's. Seeking. For it. Finding it. And then rejoicing. Each one. Of us. Who. Have been brought.

To a saving. Knowledge. Of Christ. Each one of us. Who have been saved. Has been sought. And found. By God. It's not something. We worked up in ourselves.

Engendered. Perhaps. By the church. We belong to. Or the family. That we were born into. It's because. Of what God. Who worked in us. And.

[13 : 48] So. It doesn't matter. What our past. Lives might have been. What sins. We might have committed. God wants us.

For himself. And as you read there. In Isaiah 55. Let the wicked. Forsake his way. And the unrighteous man. His thoughts. And let him return. Unto. The Lord. He will have compassion on him.

And he will abundantly pardon. So. That is the work. Of salvation. Of restoration. That God. Works. In us. So. What is the nature. Of the change. Of the salvation. That God affects in us. As he brings us. To a saving knowledge. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although we've just seen.

It's. God. Who seeks us. It's a God. Who changes us. As I said in the morning. It's the God. Who changes. The. The hardness. Of our heart. To a fleshly heart.

[14 : 45] God. It's never. Without. Without. The saving grace. Of repentance. Unto life. What is required.

Of us. We might. Escape. The wrath. And curse. Of God. Due to us. For sin. Faith in Jesus Christ. Repentance. Unto life.

And a diligent. Use. Of all the outward means. Whereby Christ. Reveals to us. The benefits. Of salvation. Now the. The. Methods of.

Of revealing to us. That salvation. Is by the. Reading of scripture. By prayer. By attendance. On the means of grace. By hearing sermons. By engaging in fellowship. And all these different aspects.

Of. Spiritual. Fellowship. We are brought. To. A greater knowledge. Of. The Lord Jesus Christ. But.

[15 : 41] There is also. The. The other aspects. Of. Faith in Jesus Christ. And repentance. Unto life. Faith in Jesus Christ. Is. Receiving. And resting.

Upon him. Alone. For salvation. We don't look to ourselves. We don't. Remember what we. Have done. Or what. What we might be. Planning to do. It's what he has done. Receiving.

And resting. Upon him. Alone. All the glorious is. It always will be. And none. Will pertain to ourselves. It will. Only be. To the glory of Christ. And to the glory.

Of God. And repentance. Unto life. As I said. Is. Is turning away. From sin. And uncleanness. And turning. Towards God. And endeavouring.

After that. New obedience. We were talking about. This morning. Whenever. We. Read the parable. The prodigal. We always. Seem to think.

[16:36] Of the. The father. Looking helplessly. From. His house. Going to the nearest hill. And looking. For a son. Coming home. When he chooses.

To come home. And we imagine. In the same way. That represents. God. Not being able to do anything. To save him. And bring him back home. He's the one.

Who rebelled. He's the one. Who wasted. The substance. With righteous living. He's the one. Who's fallen into. Bondage and sin. And the father. Seems to be helpless.

To do. Anything about it. He longs. For his son. But he doesn't. Go out. To seek for him. Doesn't try. To find him. And it's all. Down to the son's will.

When he says. I will go. But that's to totally. Misunderstand. What salvation. Is all about. It's not when we decide. It's not that God.

[17:34] Stands by helplessly. And when we've. Come. When we've lost our youth. Perhaps. When we fall on hard times. Or. When something. Could make it more beneficial. For us.

To be in the kingdom. And we search. God's. Kingdom. And he. Gladfully. Gladly. Receives us. That's not how it works.

God is not waiting. Patiently. God is always active. In the work of salvation. Before. We can work. God.

Must. Work. In us. Before. We find the desire. To come back to God. God. Must implant. That desire. In our hearts. By. The work. Of the Holy Spirit.

God. That's why. Sometimes. We say. With people. Oh. The spirit. Is striving. With that particular. Man or woman. Because. There's a change. In that person. They're attending. On the means of grace.

[18:27] They're reading. Their Bible. They're. They're wanting to hear. They want to talk. About the scriptures. And so. That's because. Not because. Something has happened. To them. And. There's.

There's been some sort of. Hard times. In their lives. Although. Providentially. That might. Be a case. It is God. Who perhaps. Brings about. Those hard times. And implants. In that person's. Desire. A need. To know God. And to find God. Both for time. And. For eternity. God. Must work. In us. The willing.

And. The doing. Paul. In his. Letter to the Philippians. Talks about. This aspect of. Working out. Your salvation. We can only work.

Out. The salvation. That God. Has worked. Into us. Work out. The salvation. That God. Has implanted. In you. Work out. That. Which God. Has revealed. To you. And then.

[19:22] You will be. In the right way. When God. Finds us. By putting. His Holy Spirit. In us. We. Come. To our senses.

Sometimes. It might. Take a long time. But if the spirit. Is striving. With us. That. Work. Will begin. And. It will. Grow. And will.

Eventually. Bear fruit. We. Will come. To our senses. Repent. Of our sins. And begin. To seek God. That is the nature.

Of salvation. The nature. Of salvation. Is instituted. By God. Is all of God. The power. Is God. He sends. His Holy Spirit. To indwell us. And the Holy Spirit. Brings us alive.

You know. The. The. The. Idea. Of a corpse. Can't do anything. To help. Itself. It has to be alive. And so.

[20:18] We who were born. Dead. In trespasses. And sins. Have to be made alive. We were dead. And we were made alive. We have been saved.

By grace. Through faith. And that not of ourselves. It is impossible for us. To do it for ourselves. It must be of God. It must be the power of God. Working in us. And restoring us.

And bringing us life. Giving us breath. Giving us a spirit. To know God. A desire to know God. And to find him. In this life. And so.

We. That brings us. To. Know. The misery. That this life.

Brings us to. Because. In the natural heart. We are totally blind to it. We have all seen. Those around us. Who.

[21:13] Who run on in sin. Who are unconcerned. About spiritual matters. And are totally blind. To the outcome. Of such lives.

And such pursuits. The first thing. We come to know. Is the misery. That sin. Brings us. As the Holy Spirit. Brings that.

Work in us. Imagining ourselves. To be happy. When we are really. Totally. Miserable. And dejected. God has said to us.

The wages. Of sin is death. But the devil says. You won't die. In the same way. As he tempted Adam. In the garden. He works that same lie.

In all of us. It doesn't matter. How you live. You can put it off. To another time. You can leave it. Till you're older. You can leave it. Until. Your strength is failing.

[22 : 08] And when. When life has been lived. When you've enjoyed. All. The juices of this life. You can then. Turn to God. And he will accept you. We all know. Tomorrow is not promised. We all know.

Of those. Who suddenly receive. Disturbing news. About their health. We all know. Of those. Who. Die. In a tragic accident. We all know.

Perhaps. Even. Of those. Who are getting older. Who perhaps. Even just die in their sleep. And yet. We carry on. Regardless. So the first thing.

The Holy Spirit does. Is reveals to us. Our sin. And our misery. And. Removes. The power. Of the lie. That the devil. Has implanted. In us. In us. And that's obviously. What happened. To the prodigal. When he fell. On hard times.

[23 : 02] He imagined. For a time. That things. Would turn around. That his friends. Would stand by him. And they would help him out. When the things. Got bad. But they didn't.

It's only. When he was starving. And near to death. It's only. When he was. Without hope. Without friends. Without a future. That he turns.

To God. The absolute. Misery. And. The state. In which he finds himself. Eventually. Brings him. To his senses. That doesn't happen. That's God's providence. For him. As God. Working in him. That providence. Which. Makes him. Thinks of his. His house. In the same way.

He does that with us. In. Perhaps different. Circumstances. Which we might find ourselves. And secondly. In coming to his senses. There came.

[24 : 00] An honest. Evaluation. Of his sin. Very often. We can go on. In sin. And. Think it. Insignificant. Though it.

Matters. Very little. And again. Your catechism. Tells you. Every sin. Deserves. God's wrath. And curse. Both in this life. And that. Which is to come. And so.

The second thing. The Holy Spirit does. It. Brings us. To a realization. Of the seriousness. Of the sin. That we are committing. Against God.

And in this story. Of the prodigal. He. Comes to his senses. And he says. I have sinned. Against heaven. And in your sight.

And I'm no more worthy. To be called. Your son. He didn't. Try and make excuses. He didn't try and blame. Somebody else. Remember in the garden. Adam. The first person.

[24 : 56] He thought of. Was Eve. The woman. It's the woman. Whom you gave me. The first person. Eve does. No. It's the serpent. Who beguiled me. And so. It's always.

Someone else. It wasn't me. But here's the. Young man saying. It was me. It was my sin. I sinned. Against heaven. And in your sight.

David. In his psalms. Against thee. The only. Have I sinned. In thy sight. Down this hill. As he speaks about. His sin. With Bathsheba. And so.

There's always. This aspect of. Being brought. To realization. In David's case. The input there. Was by Nathan. The prophet. And the working.

Of the spirit of God. God. And so. Here also. In the prodigal. It's the spirit of God. Working in him. Revealing to him. The seriousness of his sin. And that was about time.

[25 : 50] He turned away from it. And giving him. This. Knowledge of his sin. And how he was sinning. Against his father. And. In the same way. Sinning against God.

And finally. He confesses his sin. And turns. From them. Immediately. And. Makes to return home. To his father. That again. Is. What the catechism. On repentance. Tells us. He sees. Has an apprehension. Understanding. A deep understanding.

Of the mercy. Of his father. Of the mercy. Of God. In Christ Jesus. Do we realize. The mercy. Of God. In Christ. As he gives up. His only son. To die.

For you. And for me. Who. The father. Who makes his son. A curse. Who bruises him. Who puts him. To grief. For you. And for me. He does that.

[26 : 49] So that we might not be lost. But that we might be saved. That's. That's the crux. Of the whole. Understanding. In the text. God. God. So loved the world. That he gave. His only begotten son.

He gave. His back. To smiting. He gave him. To the cross. He gave him. To the curse. He gave him. To. The outer darkness. Where the son. Has to cry. My God.

My God. Why? That's all for us. Beaten. With our stripes. And so finally.

He confesses his sins. And. Turning from them. Immediately makes. To return to his father. Thinking. About his sins.

Didn't save him. Thinking. That he was a sinner. Thinking. That. That his life. Was wrong. And he was going to turn over. A new leaf.

[27 : 46] That was not going to save him. Confession. Of that sin. Was. Was not going to save him. What good. Would be. Confessing to himself.

In that far country. In the pigsty. Yes. He realized. He was wrong. That he was wrong. To his father. And he sinned against his father. No. He had to get up. He had to do something. As I was saying. There's a. A responsibility. Placed upon us. To actually do something. And. What the son. Had to do. Was to get up. Place one.

Foot in front of the other. And go home. To go home. To the father. Who was waiting for him. In the same way. God. Waits for us. He waits for us. To call upon him. He waits for us.

To go home to him. He does not want. Any of us to perish. And so. Thinking about it. Didn't save him. Confessing it to himself.

[28 : 40] Didn't save him. He needed to go home. There's one other. Tragic element. To this chapter. And that's the elder brother. The outcome of the.

Prodigal returning home. To his father. Resulted in a great feast. Of celebration. Bring on the best robe. Father's own robe.

Was the best robe. Put on him. The ring. Of sonship. Like the seal. Of God's. Acknowledgement. The seal of the father's.

Love to him. That he was son. And kill. The fattened calf. Almost. An idea. Of the great. Heavenly feast. That there will be. But there was just one person.

In the whole company. Who wasn't celebrating. He was. Working in the field. As he's always done. A dutiful son. That's what he did.

[29 : 43] That's where he went out to work. And he arrived home. To find music. And dancing. And rejoicing. And when he found out.

What was happening. He was absolutely. Furious. Incandescent. With rage. Couldn't understand. What his father. Was thinking of. And his father. And his father. Comes out to him. He. He is furious. With his father. All these years. He said. I've served you.

Never did he give me. Even a kid. To celebrate. To celebrate. With my friends. And we can. We can almost sympathize. With the elder brother. He's been there at home. But.

What the story wants to tell us. About. Is a son. Who's doing it. Not out of love. For his father.

Because he'd. Never have spoken to his father. In this way. If he'd loved him. He was doing it out.

[30 : 39] Of what he could get out. Of the situation. In the same way. As someone who's unconverted. Does things. That they might perhaps. Be able to. To bring their plus side. Before God.

In any terms of judgment. And that's what. Happened to the elder brother. He's saying. All these things. That never once. Did you reward me. And now the son.

Of yours. Come. Won't even. Admit him. He's his own brother. The son of yours. Came home. The one who's. Devoured your property. With prostitutes.

And you've killed. The fattened calf. For him. This son of yours. Who's wasted your property.

Who was a. Drunkard. Who slept with prostitutes. All these things. Which dishonor your name. And yet. You still love him. Love him even more.

[31 : 37] Than you love me. The father says no. I love you both. But you've always been here with me. And all that I have. Is yours.

I said it's easy. To sympathize. With the elder brother. That perhaps. We are so. Like him. Serving our time. Obeying.

And then expecting to receive. Some sort of reward. For our faithfulness. We imagine. We imagine. We're not. Like the prodigal. But.

We're faithful. And obedient. But we're not. Or if we are.

We've the spirit. Of the hired servant. Expecting. Expecting. A reward. Not out of love. Toward God. The problem for the elder brother.

[32 : 38] Was that he'd been perfectly content. For the son to be lost. And the money and the property. To be brought home. he was angry because he'd long since given up on him calling even his brother the son of yours the Lord as I said spoke this parable and the other ones as well to the scribes and Pharisees who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on others how is it with us do we see ourselves in the same light as the prodigal that we are guilty of sinning against God sinning against light of not entering into a relationship with him in spite of all the promptings of the spirit in spite of all the sermons we've heard down through the years that we still stay where we are going to do something about it sometime in the future when we've achieved our latest plan remember what

God said to the foolish farmer this night your soul shall be required of you may it be that in providence none of us will be in the situation tonight but may it also be that today is the day of salvation today is the day we will call anew upon our God and our heavenly father let us then conclude our worship seeing to God's praise in Psalm 50 50th Psalm on page 66 the Lord the mighty one is God alone he speaks and summons all the earth abroad from rising of the sun to where it sets from heaven from Zion's perfect beauty shines our God we sing down to the end of verse

Mark 7 again four stanzas to God's praise the Lord the mighty one is God alone he streams and summons all the earth abroad from rising of the sun to where it sets from Zion's perfect beauty shines our God our God will not be silent he who will come before him fire will burn and tear his rage he summons all the earth and heaven above that he may judge his for his heritage now bring to me my consecrated ones those who I sacrifice are pledged to thee the heavens will proclaim his righteousness for

God himself is judged and none but he hear all my people listen while I speak against you Israel I will testify you are my people I am God your God hear me as I address you from on high and now may grace mercy and peace name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit one God rest on you and abide in you now and always Amen