

# Seek and Save the Lost

by Chuck Smith

---

*Jesus came to seek and save those who are lost by giving us the capacity for choice and taking the responsibility and guilt of our sin upon himself.*

**Duration:** 35:37

**Scripture:** Numbers 6:24-26, Isaiah 53:6, Luke 19:10, John 3:16, John 10:11, Hebrews 11:6

**Topics:** "Faith And Trust", "Salvation Through Christ"

---

## Description

This sermon delves into the significance of faith in establishing a relationship with God and receiving His promises. It explores the potential of faith, the need for increased belief, and the blessings that come with trusting God. The focus shifts to the purpose of Jesus' coming, emphasizing His mission to seek and save the lost, as illustrated through the encounter with Zacchaeus. The sermon highlights the importance of choice in fostering genuine fellowship with God and the restoration of that fellowship through Jesus Christ's sacrifice.

---

## Transcript

Tonight we're going to be studying the 11th chapter of Hebrews, probably one of the most important chapters in the Bible as far as your relationship with God is concerned. It is by faith that we come into a meaningful relationship with God. It is by faith that we become the beneficiaries of the promises of God.

When the disciples had heard Jesus talking about faith and the potential and the possibilities of faith, they said, Lord, increase our faith. For Jesus had said if you had faith as of a grain of mustard seed, you could say to Yon Mountain, be removed and cast in the sea, and not doubting in your heart it would be done. So we realize the tremendous potential of faith, but all of us, I'm certain, live short of the blessings and those things that we could receive if we would only believe and trust God.

So the 11th chapter teaches us about faith, what it is, how that we might gain more faith. So that's tonight, Hebrews chapter 11, but this morning we want to continue our Christmas, pre-Christmas series on the purpose of His coming. We're going to be celebrating the coming of Jesus Christ into the world in a few days now, but what was the purpose of His coming? And the Bible actually speaks of many of the reasons why God sent Him into this world, but today we want to consider that reason that Jesus said that He had come.

He said He had come to seek and to save those who were lost. Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, and as He passed through Jericho, there was a great number of people that were crowding around Him, so much so that it was hard to get close to Him. There was a blind man there by the wayside, crying out to Him that He might receive His sight, and when Jesus healed him and He was able to see, the crowd even increased.

Now there in Jericho, there was this little fellow who was probably the most hated man in the city. He was a noted sinner. He was a Roman tax collector.

He was known to gouge the people, and everybody hated him, but although he was just a small little fellow in stature, he was also a curious little man, and he was curious to see this man that he had heard about, the man that was doing all of these miracles. He knew that he dared not get into a crowd. They would elbow him, shove him, push him, kick him, and because they all hated him, so he noted the path that Jesus was on, and he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree that was adjoining the path, and as Jesus came walking under the sycamore tree, he looked up and he called him by name, and he said, Zacchaeus, come on down, because you're going to entertain me in your home today.

Zacchaeus came down out of the tree, and as he was walking off with Jesus to his house, the people all began to grumble, and they said, he's going to stay at the house of this sinful man, and they were troubled that Jesus would keep company with such a sinner, and almost as in an apology, Jesus turned to them and declared the purpose for his coming into the world. He said, the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. He said, those that are well don't need a physician, but those that are sick.

What does it mean to be lost? It means that men have lost the purpose for their existence, and that is fellowship with God. You've been created by God, originally man was created, in order that he might enjoy the blessings of just knowing God and living in fellowship with him, but because of sin, man lost this privilege of living in fellowship with God, but God desired that men have fellowship with him, and so God created a means whereby men could live again in fellowship with God, by sending his son, who took the responsibility and the guilt of our sin, and died for our sin, that we might be able to live again in fellowship with God, because sin is the thing that separated us from fellowship. The Bible says that God's hand is not short, that he cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear, but your sins have separated you from God, and so the sin issue had to be dealt with, and Jesus came to seek and to save those who were lost.

For fellowship to truly be meaningful, God had to create us with the capacity of choice, in order that we might have true fellowship with him, choice is essential. You see, I can choose to love God, or I can choose, as some, to hate God. I can choose to believe in God, or I can choose not to believe in God.

I can choose to live my life so as to please God, or I can choose to live my life so as to please myself. Choice is what makes it possible for me to live in fellowship with God, or not to live. If you should say to me, come I would like to get acquainted with you, I would like to enjoy fellowship with you, and I respond to you, I'm not interested in creating a relationship with you, I hate the way you look, I hate the way you act, and so you pull out a gun, and you say, I said come so we can enjoy fellowship together, and if you don't come I'll blow your brains out, so I come over to your house.

Now, can we have true fellowship? Can you say, well he's really, you know, coming to fellowship with me, this is wonderful. No, of course not, because you've got that gun pointed at me, and I know that it's something that I'm being forced to do. God doesn't force us to love him, he leaves it up to us.

If someone should hold a knife to your throat and say, tell me you love me, or I'll slit your throat, and so you say, I love you. Can it truly be something that excites you, and you know, you really say, oh isn't that wonderful, they love me. Freedom of choice is essential to ascertain the true desires of my heart, whether I am responding because I'm being forced to respond, or I'm responding because I want to respond.

In the same token, if you push one of these little Christmas teddy bears by the paw, and the little voice says, I love you, do you go around and brag to everybody, I've got a little teddy bear at home, and he loves me, you know, oh my, I'm so thrilled, I'm excited, he loves me. No, you know it's mechanical, and because it is mechanical, it doesn't turn you on, it doesn't get you excited, it's just a little mechanical device in there that when you push the paw says, I love you. God doesn't want a mechanical relationship with us, nor does he want a forced relationship with us, and so God has created us with the capacity of self-determination, or what we call free moral agency.

God leaves it up to our choice. I can choose to love, or I can choose not to love, and thus my choosing to love God brings a meaningful loving relationship with him, because I don't have to. The alternative is there, but there has to be an alternative.

A lot of people ask, why in the world did God put that tree in the garden of Eden, acknowledging good and evil, and then say to Adam and Eve, you can freely eat of all of the trees that are in the garden, with the exception of that one that's in the middle of the garden, and why would he put it in the middle? Why not way off somewhere where you wouldn't find it very quickly? Because giving man the capacity of choice, there had to be something to choose, and so God placed that tree in the middle of the garden, and the fruit of it was very attractive. It probably had the most wonderful aroma you had ever smelled, sort of like baking bread, and just you thought, ooh, that must taste great. Look at the beautiful reddish color, ooh.

It had to be an attractive choice to be meaningful. If it was some old ugly fruit that just had moss on it and just stunk like everything, for you to keep away from it, God couldn't say, oh, is it that wonderful? You know, I told them not to eat, and look, they won't even go close to it. Of course, you wouldn't, because you'd gag if you got close, and so it had to be attractive in order that the choice might be meaningful, and it was probably the most attractive tree in the garden, and thus God gave to us, or to man, the choice.

The world is very attractive. The things of the world can be very attractive to my flesh, and yet the Lord tells me not to love the world, nor the things that are in the world, for if I have the love of the world in my heart, I have not the love of the Father, so I have the choice. Do I obey God, and do I have a passion and love for the world, or do I disobey God and have this passion and love for the world? My choice.

I can choose to obey, or I can choose to disobey. God doesn't force me, and my obedience is not mechanical. When Adam and Eve ate of the tree that God had told them not to eat, they did that by choice.

They exercised this self-determinant capacity, and thus, when they did, they lost fellowship with God. There was no longer that meaningful relationship with God. There was no longer that beautiful communion with God that they once enjoyed.

They lost it in the exercise of free choice. Now, Jesus said that he had come to seek and to save that which was lost. Man who had lost his fellowship with God because of a bad choice now has the possibility of restoring that fellowship with God by, again, the exercise of free choice.

God has made it possible now for this sin which separated you from God to be taken care of. God made Jesus Christ to be sin for us, the one who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him. And so, by choosing to receive Jesus Christ, my sins are forgiven, and with my sins forgiven, that which was lost, this purpose of God for my existence, can now be restored, and I can live in a meaningful relationship with him.

You might ask, what must I do to be lost? Nothing. Just continue as you are. Just keep doing your own thing.

Just keep walking in your own path and in your own will, and you will be lost. Paul was in the jail in Philippi, and after the earthquake, the jailer came and said, what must I do to be saved? And Paul said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved and your house. To be lost, do nothing.

To be saved, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for he came, he said, to seek and to save those who were lost. That is the story of Christmas. As we read in Matthew's Gospel, he tells us the story of Christmas.

He said, now the birth of Jesus Christ happened like this. When his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, before they had come together, she was found with child by the Holy Spirit. And then Joseph, being a just man, did not want to put her away privately, make her a public example, did not want to make her a public example, but decided to put her away privately.

And in a dream, an angel spoke to him at night and said, Joseph, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which she has conceived is from the Holy Spirit, and she's going to bring a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. The name Jesus is the Greek name for the Hebrew name Yahshua. Yah is a name for God.

The J-A-H with the English, the pronunciation is with a Y. Yahshua. Yahshua is salvation. It means Jehovah or Yahweh is salvation.

That's the name Jesus. And thus the angel said, you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. You see, that's why he came.

He said he has come to seek and to save, save them from their sins. Those who were lost, those who had lost the purpose of life itself, the purpose of your existence, the meaningful relationship with God, Jesus came to seek and to save those who were lost. Jesus spoke a parable about a lost sheep.

The shepherd was counting the sheep as he was leading them into the sheep coat, and when he got to 99, he realized that there was one sheep missing. So, Jesus said he left the 99 who were safely in the sheepfold, and he went out on the mountains to seek the one lost sheep. And when he had found him, he carried him back on his shoulders, and he called to his friends, and he said, rejoice, that sheep that was lost I have found.

He said, I've come to seek and to save that which was lost. Jesus said, I am the good shepherd, and the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know my sheep, and I'm known by my sheep, and my father knows me, and so I know the father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.

So, how did he save that lost sheep? Isaiah 53 said, all of us like sheep had gone astray. We turned every one of us to our own way, that is, we exercised our own will to do our own thing, but God laid on him the iniquities of us all. That's how we're saved.

God laid on Jesus our sins. He has brought, Isaiah said, as a lamb to the slaughter. He was caught off out of the land of the living, and God cried for the transgression of my people.

He was stricken. You have made his soul an offering for sin, and by knowing my righteous servant, many will be justified, for he shall bear their iniquities. Jesus said, I've come to seek and to save those who were lost, to take your sins, and the responsibility, and the guilt of your sins upon himself, and as a good shepherd to give his life for the sheep, that he might save you from the destruction that awaits those whose sins are not forgiven.

That's what Christmas is really all about. It's amazing to me how that Satan has diverted the attention of the world from the true meaning of our Christmas celebration. He has made Santa Claus the center of stage in the Christmas season, and caused the little children to believe that it is Santa Claus who gives them all of their toys, and all of the goodies at Christmas time, and so the children look forward to the coming of Santa Claus.

They sing, here comes Santa Claus, led by Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer, and in school they're not allowed to sing of silent night, or it came upon a midnight clear, because they feel that that is prejudice, and causing some children to be offended who don't believe in Jesus. He causes us to look forward to the perishable gifts, rather than the gift of eternal life that God has offered to us through Jesus Christ. Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost.

That's what Christmas is all about. It is interesting that for years, even before the birth of Jesus, the pagans celebrated at the time of the winter solstice, they called it a pagan holiday, they called it Saturnalia. Here in the northern hemisphere, because of the 23 and a third degree tilt of the earth on its axis, and its relationship to the sun, our days, that is of daylight, the days remain at 23 hours, 46 minutes, five and 25th, 100ths of a second, but the days remain, but the daylight, as you notice, the daylight is getting shorter and shorter every day.

One minute shorter in the evening, and one minute shorter in the morning. The sun comes up one minute later, and it settles one minute earlier each day. That will go on for another week, until the 22nd, when we reach the winter solstice, and then by the 25th, you'll begin to notice the days are getting a little longer.

Well, the pagans, they thought the sun is dying. It could be total darkness. We better help the poor sun out.

Let's light bonfires. Let's light candles. Let's put up a lot of lights to save the sun from going out.

As the days get shorter and shorter, there's panic among those in the northern hemisphere, but by the 25th, as it's obvious, the days are getting longer. Oh, there was great celebration. There were office parties.

Everybody was getting drunk. They were giving gifts to one another, and they were going around saying, Mary Saturnalia, we've saved the sun. It's coming back to life.

The days are longer, and it was celebrated by the pagans as a pagan holiday, a good excuse for getting drunk. It's interesting, as we look at our world today, that that is the way many people celebrate Christmas. The office parties with the drinking, the day itself with, well, the spirits of Saturnalia, not the spirit of Christmas, but beginning to celebrate it more and more in a pagan way, the celebrating of the coming of Santa Claus, rather than the celebrating of the coming of Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save

those who were lost.

The world around us is preparing to celebrate Saturnalia. It's interesting how that they don't even like to talk about Christmas. They put the X there instead of Christ, and I guess that for the world that's proper, because they've certainly sought to eliminate Christ out of Christmas.

But I trust that this year, for you and for your home, that it will be a true celebration of Christmas, Christ coming into our world to seek and to save those who were lost, and thus it will be a day of rejoicing, a day of thanksgiving, and as the angel said on that first day when he was born, joy to the world, and may it be joy in your home and in your heart and in your life, because Christ the Savior was born to seek and to save those who are lost. Father, we thank you that you so love the world that you sent your only begotten Son who came to seek and to save those who were lost, and we thank you, Lord, that you have sought us out and you have given to us the choice of living in fellowship with you, that we might know the peace and the joy and the blessings of living in fellowship with you. And so, Lord, we pray this day that those who are here might realize the real meaning of the celebration, that God loves us and wants us to know Him and to love Him and has given us the choice and the capacity of loving Him.

And now, Lord, we pray that we might exercise that choice and that we this Christmas might come to appreciate and enjoy the blessings that were lost as the result of sin but restored through the Savior who seeks and saves those who are lost. In His name we pray, Amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to pray for you today.

You know, Christmas is a day of joy and all, and yet for many people it's one of the saddest days of the year. It's interesting that suicide seemed to hit the highest rate during Christmas because so many are going through difficult circumstances. And at this time of the year, those seem to magnify.

If you're out of work or if you can't, you know, really celebrate as you traditionally have celebrated, it becomes a heavy mental burden. When I was 14 years old, my dad suffered a nervous breakdown because he had always made Christmas such a fabulous day for the family. He just really relished in extravagant gifts at Christmas, but things had been going bad for him financially.

He was a salesman, and on my 14th birthday, sales were down that year. The nation was in sort of a depression, and not being able to give the gifts that he was always giving and to do the things that he always did, it so troubled him that he had this nervous breakdown. He just went to bed and would just, well, he couldn't even communicate.

He would just sort of gasp, and it was this tragic thing to see him in that condition. And it is a time of depression for many people when maybe they've lost a loved one during the year. Maybe things are going bad financially, and the world around them is, you know, giving gifts and happy and joyful, and things are not going well for them.

I would encourage you if you are experiencing difficulties, come on down and let these men pray for you today. God can take care of the things and the issues that are troubling you, that particular Christmas, I had a paper route, and so I became the giver of gifts that year. Using my paper route money, my one brother wanted a BB gun, another one wanted a basketball, and my sister had a doll she wanted, so I went out and I got them each the gift that they wanted for Christmas, and we had a great celebration, because it really isn't the gifts.

And a lot of times when we can't give the gifts, it brings us back to the true meaning. So, we don't have maybe the means to give the kind of gift that we would like. It doesn't matter.

The real gift is the gift of God to us, his only begotten son, who came to seek and to save those who were lost, and perhaps it will refocus our attention back on the true meaning of Christmas. Maybe you don't know the joy of fellowship with God. Maybe you don't have the peace of God in your heart and in your life this Christmas season.

These men are here to pray with you, that you might know what Christmas is truly all about, and that you might know the joy of living for God, living in a meaningful relationship with him. And so, I would encourage you as we're dismissed, come on down. Let them pray for you today, and God will give you a very wonderful gift worth more than anything the world could ever give.

This is the record. God has given to us eternal life. This life is in his son, and he who has the son has life.

Your choice, it's available, but you must make that choice. I pray that you would do so today. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee.

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. God bless you.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/zlf8q9IBL0I.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/seek-and-save-the-lost/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**