

God Wants You

by G.W. North

G.W. North's sermon emphasizes God's desire for a personal relationship and the importance of responding to His call with humility and commitment.

Duration: 1:26:40

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 13:34-35, Luke 15:4, Luke 15:8, Luke 15:11-32

Topics: "God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having multiple perspectives on the word of God. He highlights the value of having four Gospels written by different authors to bring different insights and perspectives. The speaker then focuses on the 14th and 15th chapters of Luke's Gospel, specifically the three-part parable of the prodigal son. He urges the audience to make a choice between worldly pleasures and eternal salvation, emphasizing the need to listen to God and surrender to Him. The sermon concludes with a reminder that God is always present and ready to forgive and restore those who have strayed.

Transcript

Let's turn to the words for tonight, beloved, shall we? And I want to come with you into the Gospel according to Luke, which you know is a gospel full of lovely stories. We call them parables. He loves storytelling, dear Luke, and the Lord was an absolute expert at it, of course, and he told his wonderful stories, and you and I are left to discover exactly what he means.

That's a tremendous thing. You know, when, say, Ezekiel, you will have read the book of Ezekiel, and he had lots of things to say. When he wrote his book, he told them plain truth.

And they said, oh, he told you a parable. But Jesus told parables, and there you are. People never come to the truth in it, often.

Or, sometimes we're so limited in our reading and in our going, of course, everybody's in the mould of having a portion for a day, something like that. So, it begins to get a bit unbearable if it's got beyond about ten or twelve verses. So, tonight, I want to take you into Luke's Gospels and take at least two chapters as our subject matter.

Oh, that's encouraging. Thank you very much. Here, then, in this great section, I want to turn you to the fourteenth and the fifteenth chapters of Luke's Gospels.

Of course, you will know all about the fifteenth chapter, and the wonderful three-part parable, if you like. One parable, really, in three different parts, dealing with three different things. You'll know that, especially the last part, the prodigal son.

But, even to make it worse, I want to go into the last part of chapter thirteen, so you will see we're going to cover a lot of ground, and if you have to be in bed by nine, I shall not be finished. So, and I don't promise to continue it in the morning. I've been banned from the meeting tomorrow.

He's the leader now, and he's part nursemaid. So, in the end of this wonderful thirteenth chapter, you will find one of Jesus's laments. Thirty-four.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not. That, in itself, of course, is a parable, isn't it? Just that. Speak volumes.

Behold, he says, your house is left unto you, deathless. And verily, I say unto you, you shall not see me until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. One of the great lamentations of Jesus Christ.

Showing how disappointed he was. I wonder if you're one of these people that are a disappointment to the Lord. I wonder if you are.

Disappointment. Now, skimming quickly over the other chapters, the other verses, ignoring them for the time being, I want you to turn to the end of the fifteenth chapter, which you will know contains the parable of the prodigal son. And now listen to the father.

We've heard the lamentation of the son. Let's hear the heart of the father, shall we? Here it is. He said, verse thirty-one, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thy disappointment again.

Disappointment. His son disappointed him. Both of them.

You may stick up for the young one, you may stick up for the older brother, but both of them were a disappointment to their father. And in between, beloved, we have the matter that I really want to stay on, and you can tell that we're going to be a long time tonight. And I'm going to take full advantage of the fact that I must stop home tomorrow.

And so, beloved, let's really get into it as God wants us to get into it. You know, don't you, that these precious things that are said by the Lord Jesus, he uses language which you use too. When the Lord takes up these things, they become wonderful.

They have a heavenly meaning. A light shines through them that doesn't shine through them if they be the mere words of man. And we find him, after this great lamentation, in thirteenth chapter, in verse one of chapter fourteen, he goes into the house of one of the chief Pharisees, and that's it.

Now, whether he was invited in or not, we're not told. I don't think he gatecrashed much, and he went into this house. And I expect, having read the chapter, which you will have done, I trust, avidly, during your life, you will know what happened.

He's in this house for some kind of meal, and he tackles them on this. Verse fifteen, verse five, which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they couldn't answer him to these things. And this is the whole thing.

There's been a lot of talk, and there's been a lot of things going on in that feast that the Lord Jesus noticed. And you know, he does notice a lot. He's not looking for faults.

You don't have to look for faults. The things of the wrong glare at you. And very outstanding, he noticed that people were going around choosing the chief rooms and the chief seats, and everybody trying to make a big show.

Everybody who's nothing is always trying to be something. Everybody who wants to be recognized. And you know, lots of people who say they don't, go and hide themselves up in the corner, only trying to be recognized then, because you're the only one in the corner.

And that's the whole thing. It's an attention-drawing thing. But this is the way it goes.

You needn't ask, beloved, to get noticed by God. You needn't get petulant. You needn't go, I'm nobody and nobody loves me, or I'm somebody and everybody ought to know I'm somebody.

These two extremes. But God sees through you, you know? He sees through me. And you know, he loves us.

And one of the greatest things that's always in my, well not part of my mind, is this, I wonder why he loves me. If you think that you should have been loved, well you should really, but you know what I mean. If you think it for any virtue in you, beloved, you're one of how many hundreds of billions of people on the earth? I don't really know.

And the wonder of it is, beloved, that he does love you. And he wants to talk to your heart tonight. Will you let him do that? Will you let the Lord Jesus Christ be the real person he is to you? And not some figment of your imagination, what you think he is, what you think he ought to do, or something like that.

You know, idolatry is only built on that. Whether you make an idol, stone, wood, some sort of thing, or in your imagination, it's all built on this, that you think God ought to be what you think, and what you make him in your mind. And that's one of the greatest discoveries the soul ever makes, is that he's totally different from what we think.

And it's all so wonderful. And they invited the Lord into this meeting, and he says something like this. We won't read it all, so I said we're going to cover three chapters.

We're not going to read everything about him. All I want you to see is this. Verse 12.

He's leading up to something. Remember that. You must always remember, beloved, that when the Lord Jesus starts something in your life, he's leading up to something else.

Always. This idea of being a Christian, of static, is as far from the mind of God as East is from the West. He's always, and we all take it in your heart, that he's always concerned with something yet in the future.

He embraces the present, he deals with the past. But always, it's onward, friend, always, always. He's not like Elijah.

He's far greater than Elijah, who said to Elijah to carry here. I'm going somewhere, and I'm glad, old Elijah, this is not on your life. But he didn't say it like that.

And off he went after that great man of God, Elijah, and see what he got as a result. Onward, ever onward. But listen to what Jesus says.

He says, in verse 12, he, speaking to the Pharisees who invited him, he said, when thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends. What you could do with that kind of a word from the Lord. It's a convenient what we pass over, just to suit our own.

Oh, he didn't mean that, Fritz. Well, all right, you'll have to tell him he didn't mean it, that's all. If he's a liar, or can't be trusted, I can't see how you can claim to be a follower of his.

He said, now don't call your friends. Don't call your brethren. Don't call your kinsmen.

When he speaks about brethren, of course, he's talking about what you might call brothers in the Lord, you know. And then he's talking about your kinsmen. Don't call them your aunt, your uncle, your cousin, your granddad.

Some of us are granddads. We, you see, don't call any of them. He said, oh, whatever you do, don't call the rich people.

Don't call anyone like that. He said, well, that's the circle we move in. Well, you'd better move out of it.

It's pretty dangerous, you see. He said, don't call those, and I hope, beloved, you're beginning to see the standards of Jesus Christ, lest you be tempted to want to be a disciple. He said, you see, the answer to that is they, they might you, they might call you to them, their party.

It becomes a tit for tat. You come and have coffee with me tonight, we will, you know, I'll come to your house and we'll have coffee together. And I'll say, this is fellowship, or something like that.

But that's the way it goes, and that's the way the church is turned up, upside down, all the teachings of Jesus Christ. It's part of the reason why we're so powerless. Oh dear, you sound, you seem as though you're carved in stone.

I hope I haven't upset you. But it's an amazing thing how Jesus puts his finger on the spot. This is what he said, but that's leading up to something else, and he means it.

When thou makest the feast, he said, call poor, the lame, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee. For thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. That's marvellous, isn't it? Praise the name of the Lord.

But we're laid wide open by the Lord Jesus Christ, and that's what he wants to do, beloved. He wants to lay our hearts wide open tonight. We're only just starting, but he has to do that.

What do you think those people sitting at that party felt like? Because they were doing it. You're doing it, you call them Tupperware parties, or coffee bits, or something like this, and it's always your friends that come, and all these kinds of things. Beloved, I've got an idea of the church, it's nothing like Jesus wants it to be.

That's what I think. Become a clique. There's no chance for the outsider.

The blind, the poor, the lame, the haute. The blind would have to be guided in. They wouldn't know the way.

Do you think they'll be most surprised if you asked them, so they wouldn't know how to get to the house? Just think about it, what the Lord says. You'd be surprised how many things I get asked out to tea here, and asked out to something else, I hope you get the state where nobody asks me anymore. Here is the tremendous thing to understand.

God wants you to live, to spread the gospel. There's nothing else worth spreading. Nothing.

Your interpretation of it comes in your life. You may not ever stand on a platform like this to expand scriptures, or whatever it may be called. But every one of us is an exposition of something, and of someone.

And the Lord wants us to see this right deep down. But as I say, he's only really just preparing for what he has to say. And then somebody that was sitting at the meeting, verse 15, to turn him off.

They didn't like it. Say something pious and good, as though you can turn the sword away. You can't, beloved.

He's going to stick it right in. But somebody coming up with this pious stuff, you go, oh, blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. I hope he keeps off this other line.

We'll get him on something else, but you can't. Beloved, don't try and turn the point of the sword when it's going to slay something that's anti-Christ in your heart. Don't ever try that.

But let's go on. And then he really launches into it. Now you'll see why he didn't produce it.

Let's read this parable. He said, a certain man, verse 16, made a great supper and bade many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, come, for all things are now ready. Now listen, before we go any further, let us get this settled.

When the Lord speaks to you, it's because things are ready, and you've got to come then. Don't think you can choose years time, and don't think you can put it off and say, when I'm 45, or when I'm 81, or something. Things are ready when he calls you, and the moment of readiness will pass for you, from you forever, possibly, according to this story.

It's a very tremendous thing. A man and woman is not allowed to play around with God. Oh, they can appear to, they can satisfy themselves that they're doing it, but what does it matter whether you and I are satisfied or not? It matters whether God is.

He wants compensation for sending his son into the world. Not money, of course, not lip service, not quoting nice things to palliate him if you think he needs it, but you and I have to pass on to these great understandings of this blessed Lord Jesus Christ who came on the earth. Let's go on with the story, and when they said that, they all, with one consent, began to make excuses.

If I had been putting a word in there, which is not in the Greek, I would have put one heart, not just one consent, with one heart, and that is an old, cold, and wicked heart. It may be in you. Ordinary men and

women have it.

Here's the thing, then. Let's read it on. The first said, I for the feast of ground, I must meet, go, and see it.

Oh, I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have brought five yoke of oxen. I go to prove them.

I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife. Therefore, I shall come.

What kind of woman did he marry? So that servant came and showed his Lord these things. But you know, there are many men that won't do what God wants them to do, because they're frightened of their wife's tongue. And there are many women the same, too.

When Jesus speaks to you, you've got to get away, probably, from your nearest and your dearest. He warned them, don't call your friends, don't call your kinsmen, don't do those kinds of things. That's what he said.

Not that they don't need salvation, but there aren't many people who get saved by going to a tea party. The Lord Jesus Christ wants us to see this tremendous thing. And that servant came and showed his Lord these things.

Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, go out quickly into the streets, lanes of the city, bring in here to the poor, the lame, the whole, and the blind. Well, that's what he'd been saying. It was all preparation for this thing that he was going to bring out for them.

Not just now in a context of a party where he'd gone, but in the context of the great universal salvation. In that context. When I say universal, I mean it for all men, everywhere.

And that's the great thing that he has on his heart. Oh, beloved, the rittering away of time, the loss of opportunity, the wasted years, and the Christless grace. Now, God wants us to move in, beloved, on these great things.

And you know what happened? The servant said, Lord, it's done as thou has commanded, and yet there is room. Thank God there are those who anticipate and know their Lord. And the Lord said unto the servant, go out into the highway hedges, compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

Beloved, you've heard that marvellous thing that Jesus said. Perhaps you've read it for yourself. In my Father's house, he says, are many abiding places.

I'm not calling you there for a tea party. I'm not calling you there for just a passing meal that in 24 hours will find you as empty as the moment before you step down to Egypt. Not that.

And this is what he's talking about, beloved. This is what's in his heart. He doesn't say it all at once.

He can't say it all at once. Thank God there are four men who wrote gospels so that they can bring us this, and bring us that, and bring the other, and bring something else. And in between it all, or by reason of it all, we can find something of the wonder of the truth that's too great for one man to speak or write.

For everybody gets their own glance on it, if that be the word. Even if he be inspired of God, he can only ever be the person he is, the writer or the speaker. And this is why it's good in a conference like this to have at least four preachers.

God wants us to see these great things, beloved. And you know this, it isn't often that we read that God is angry. You can't go on day by day, year by year.

You cannot keep going on and turning your back on God, and snubbing him when he's at your very door, wanting you for your own sake, for your own safety, for your own eternal life. You can't expect him to be anything else but angry. In his anger, he shows mercy, love.

And when love gets angry, that is anger. It's pure anger. For a loss of temper, you must understand that the love of God is strong and true.

He loves you. He loves you. You're invited.

It's all so wonderful. In verse 24, he said, I tell you, none of those men which were bidden should taste of my supper. Long-standing invitations, beloved, can end in your case with complete delusionment, whereas the snap invitations and the thing that you meet from the lips of God through some man or woman can be the moment of your salvation.

And that's so very, very wonderful. It's the pre-planned attitude. It's the step of the life.

How many of you know this invitation? You've heard it in church. You've heard it since your childhood. I did.

I thank God for that. You've heard it, and heard it, and heard it, and heard it. Well, what have you done about it? There's a sort of an idea.

Jesus did it. Oh, you've got to do nothing. That's nonsense.

Absolute nonsense. You can't save yourself. You've got to react.

You've got to give all, and you've got to buy up the time about it, too. And God wants us to see this. Now listen to Jesus.

He says this. There went great multitudes with him, and he turned and said unto them, If any man come to me. Now listen.

He's not inviting you to a supper. He's not here in these parables of what he's doing. He's not just inviting you all to come and have.

Heaven's going to be a marvellous tea party. If you prefer coffee made from a bag, or if you like it to come through a percolator. Well, you can sit in.

What would you like? What would you like? Coke, you like? Hallelujah. Everybody that's there is going to have one taste. He said, wouldn't that be monotonous? Yeah, well, all right then.

It's monotonous. Plenty of monotony. Hallelujah.

Wonderful food. Glorious. Hallelujah.

One name. One glorious heaven. One eternal spread.

One glorious life. And we've all got to share it, and love it. And you're given an opportunity to love it while you're on this earth.

That's why the Holy Ghost has come. And so we move on. Listen to him.

He says, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life. Also, I would say, first of all, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

There it is. Discipleship is made so cheap these days. Jesus never made it cheap.

The invitation of the Lord Jesus Christ is unto bliss eternal. But you will find there's such a change in what we call bliss as human beings, and what Jesus Christ came to reveal as eternal bliss. There's such a difference, isn't it, beloved? That a cross becomes sweet, and suffering for Christ's sake becomes wonderful.

That's what it's all about. The salvation of Jesus Christ is a topsy-turvy thing, so far as the world is concerned. Nobody brought it on in the first ages, although I came to the meetings in 1901, not my own.

You have to see, beloved, what it's all about. He's called it a bravery. He's called it a reality.

He's called you never to have a bottle always in your mouth, and I mean a milk bottle, I wouldn't mean the others. The whole glorious thing, beloved, is that you understand what Jesus Christ is after. Man, woman, you need Him to get right hold of you.

And you have to commit yourself one hundred percent. Because that's what the Lord Jesus said. Well, pity me, I had this, I had that, I had the other.

Then you've never been to the cross yet, because that all goes. Part of the cross is to cross that right out of your mind, right out of your life, right out of all the excuses you've tried to make. You, my beloved, are here to be what the Lord Jesus Christ alone can make you.

Ah, let me tell you this. Only the brave get there. Only the brave.

Yeah, I know. You can be brave even though you may be weak. You say, what? Yes, that's right.

How can a weak person be brave? Oh, look at me. Don't you understand? You only save weak people. He doesn't save the strong.

They're too strong for Him. There's got to be a new strength. Don't you understand? It's all given to you, provided, free.

If you've got a brave spirit, that is, He's tried to bring us all back to down to sense. The common sense that God imparts through the blessed Saviour. Hallelujah! Ah, there's a time when He goes into a home and bends over a still form, breathes on it, and it comes to life, and you say, He handled me tenderly.

He handled me so wonderfully. Do you know He can't do anything else but that? He can't. So the Lord moves us on, this pleading, oh, He understands me, He understands me.

Yes, He does, but He provided the salvation for you, because He understands you. He is not the minister of weakness. He ministers to weakness, and He makes it strong.

Amen. Hmm, now listen, you mustn't try to find an excuse, because if you can't find the right one, the devil will supply you with it, if that's right. And that's what He'll do.

Those people in that meeting, the tea meeting, whatever it was, they just had to sit there dumbfounded, I guess. Just had to. This, beloved, is the hurt, the disappointed, the lamenting Jesus that speaks.

We read about it in the end of the other chapter. Oh, Jerusalem. Listen, how often I would, here's an invitation.

Will you come? Here's an invitation. I'm going to test you here and now. While I speak, this is Jesus.

Will you? Oh, I've had so many disappointments in my life. Think of God. He started with disappointment, beloved.

He started from disappointment. The revolt of angels in heaven made a man put him in the garden with a wife. They must have been a wonderful pair, but he was disappointed.

They had twin children, they say Cain and Abel were twins. I don't know, and Cain was just the first one out of the womb. I don't know, it's been suggested.

Disappointment. Murderer. Beloved, have you ever thought about the Lord weeping over you? Have you? Say, I, Lord, break your heart.

You'll say it's been broken many a million times. Over this, or that, or the eye. Wonderful Jesus.

But see him now, says, if you want to be a disciple of mine, I want you to know I'm just not inviting you to a feast. I'm inviting you to a cross. That's right.

That's what I'm inviting you to do. Hallelujah. Well, let me ask you a question.

I'm not now asking you whether you believe in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, or whether you've taken it up. Or have you just taken up a chair, in a seat, a seat in a church? What have you taken up? A lovely tune like Brother of Britain, a tune to sing to lovely words. What have you taken up? You get rid of a load of sin, and you take up another load, a cross, not made from the leaf of a palm tree.

My burden is light, he says. Hallelujah. How wonderful it is.

And you see what he has in mind. This, he says this. Look, I want you people to put yourself in my place.

Now will you do that? You now put yourself in Christ's place. He is intending to build something in this world, in this earth. When you're intending to build something, what do you do first? You sit down, and you reckon out the cost of it.

That's what you do. That's right. Now I'm calling men and women that are going to count the cost.

I'm calling men and women that are going to know what it's all about. Men and women who are going to help me build. He's going to build something.

How about it? Which of you, he says, if you were building a tower, wouldn't you sit down? Wouldn't you be very careful if you wanted a brick layer? If he did build in brick, if you wanted a brick layer, do you think you'd get somebody who only handled trusses of straw? He counted the cost. If he was going to build

something, son, it's going to cost you blood. It's going to cost you your resignation of this glory that you share with me in heaven, son.

If you want it, if you do, if you say you're going to build, that's right. Now come on. God is not offering you an easy passage to the realms of bliss.

Something's got to be done in this world. People have got to build and build together. That's right, you have.

You get no card for glory if you won't work. Not for that glory, but because you have it. You've got to do it.

If you belong to the church of Jesus Christ, you've got to. You've got to take up the cross and do it too. You know, beloved, in, you can read this back in the Old Testament, in the days when they were building the walls of Jerusalem, beside a trowel in one hand, a man had to have his sword in the other.

That's right, because we've got enemies. We've got Christ's haters. We've got people who have systematically resisted the call, and they're the hardest of the lot.

We've got to face the people who are all putting up some pretentious excuse, always. Always. It's in their bones now.

It's going to slip off their tongue any minute. Christ wants dedication. He wants men and women.

Well, He wants you not to wear a rosy wreath, nor doing something in the end hoping to get a crown. He doesn't drive you by promises. Take up the cross, He says.

We'll sort out the crown business presently. This is the Lord I can admire. I want to be told straight.

I want to be told what it's about to you. Have you taken up a Christian ethic, and you aren't wearing me in the life of it? The Lord wants us to know His heart. He said it.

So then, He's not only calling for workmen, He's calling for soldiers. That's His next thing. He said, He's the king.

He says, any king going to make war against another king should be knocked down first, and consulted whether he'd be able with 10,000 to meet Him, but come up against Him with 20,000. Or else, while the other is here, to come a great way off. He sends us in ambushes, desires conditions of peace.

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. And that's that. Now, you may not like to hear the real Jesus speaking.

You might like to hear my sermons. But it's the blessed Christ. He wouldn't deceive you one minute, or one iota.

Oh, but I am weak and poor. Excellent. I was crucified through weakness.

You can read it in the Corinthian letter. Excellent. You come.

He's an absolute expert of turning weaklings into strong people. He's absolutely right on it for that. Hallelujah.

He wants you. Praise His wonderful name. You say, oh, it's my mind, you know.

I'm always tormented in my mind. He's absolutely expert at giving you another mind, a newer mind. That's what it's all about.

Having a mind that's always fashioning excuses. Hallelujah. He'll give something in you.

Yes, this thought's good, he said. But if the thought of loss is savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It's neither fit for the lad, nor yet for the dunghill, but men can't sit out. He that's happier to hear.

You hear this. I'm not only going to be denied entrance to the feet, nor one of them is going to be cast out. There it is.

I'm never so glad I didn't write the Bible. I'm never so glad I didn't think it up. I'm so wonderful I can testify, so wonderful that I can tell you the word that came out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah. I feel he's been misrepresented. He is the meek and the lowly Jesus.

He is the great one that suffered our sins on the cross. He is all that. I say, Lord, you understand me.

You want me. I come, weak as I am, vile as I am, helpless as I am. But I want to tell you, you can come if you have to crawl.

You can come. But know what it's all about. It isn't making sure that you have a seat in heaven one day.

It's recognizing righteousness and truth and holiness and love, and the only thing that's real in the whole world, and coming to it. That's what it's about. It's the awakening of the soul.

It's the opening of the eye and the ear. It is the inspiration of truth into you. That's what it is.

It starts there. The Lord having mercy upon you. Of course he loves you.

Of course he understands. Of course, beloved. We do love that.

He also understands that if all he did was to be pitiful to you, and didn't care about this great work that's needed to go on now, he would be guilty of negligence. And he's not negligent. He loves you too much to save you and then let you perish for lack of incentive or something to do, and get on with it, and serve your neighbor, and serve the world.

That's what it's about. People say, I found rest, false rest. The only way to show you at rest is to get in there and work hard.

Yes. You know, if some people only worked hard, they'd have less time to think about themselves. It's very wonderful.

God's a great psychologist. Always more than that, of course. But God wants us to see the truth.

Man, woman, you're letting it slip away from you. You're letting the opportunity go. And if he took you home tonight, what would you say? What have you done? You might say, oh, I believe this.

I believe that. Supposing Jesus had said, Father, I believe it. I believe I shall have to go there.

I believe they're found in sin. I believe they're in great need. I believe it.

I can see it. And if he hadn't one day gotten up and said, take this vow, take this, take that. Oh, Father, if I go, I want you to make me in the form of a slave.

So where do you say that? Oh, through the tombs. I'll tell you what a great man will tell you this. Have you not discovered it? Let's go on into the 15th chapter.

Listen, beloved. I'm so glad that our Lord Jesus Christ, looking upon us and knowing that me, I, I would only ever fit for the dunghill. That's all I would fit for.

Stand up, anybody who thinks that they were never fit for the dunghill. Let's have a look at you. You were ever only fit for the dunghill.

Oh, God, thank you for not abandoning us. I'll do it. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you. I feel I drop him on my knees and say, oh, Lord, thank you for giving me the chance. I didn't know it was my chance when I first heard it.

I was born blind and deaf. I was born dumb so far as the language of heaven was concerned. I didn't know it.

Ignorance. I knew nothing. Though at three years of age, I could repeat the scriptural alphabet.

Of course, they don't see that. I'd give them a sand plate to play with and tell them a nice little story and give them a prayer to draw something. That's Sunday school now.

I was taught the Bible. I suppose you can see the evidence of it. Well, what were your Sunday school chances? Be right.

What kind of? It's education that's done it. We're school teachers, so we'll apply our abilities to the Sunday school. And you don't teach them the A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K on through the alphabet and teach them a verse of scripture.

Very funny. What a wonderful idea. Wouldn't you like to do that? You'd be outstanding in this age, you Sunday school teacher.

Outstanding. If I was in charge of a church, that'd be one first thing that I'd ask them. What are you going to teach these children? What are your materials? Oh, I'm going to send out some such and such.

I'll send you all the material, and I'll be able to teach them. And oh lord, how ever did Sunday schools operate before all these things came into existence? But anyway, I'm old-fashioned. But I'm not as old as the Eternal One yet, the Ancient of Days.

And in this 15th chapter we come to this. The people to whom the Lord was speaking hadn't got much appetite for what he had to say. So, there was a group of people there.

They rather liked this. They were the publicans and the sinners. They thought this was wonderful.

They really did. You say, well, it's pretty fierce stuff, isn't it? I mean, well, whatever you mean. They liked it.

They thought this is real. They thought this is real. And they came.

And the sooths, they turned up. The Pharisees said, oh, he received sinners and eaters with sooths. They didn't say hallelujah.

They didn't say that. He received sinners and eaters with them. And then he told his marvelous story.

You know them. But look at the diminishing numbers. You who know the story.

That is the chapter. First it's a hundred sheep. Then it's ten.

And then it's two. Mm. Mm.

Hundred sheep, ten pieces of silver, two sons. The diminishing number. What's he telling everybody? What is he saying? In the end, may I ask you this? Shall he find one? You know, old Abraham thought like this.

When he was interceding, or wanted to intercede for lots of his family. Oh, he said, you don't destroy the sinner. You said it's because of this.

If you can find such and such a number. And then the diminishing numbers. He came down and down and down and down.

For he knew that in the cities of the plains, there weren't ten people free of this terrible homosexuality. Diminishing numbers. We start out with worldwide visions.

And we so on and so on and so on. Beloved, beloved, how many people in this world are going to be bearing the neck? How many? How many? The only answer to that is, I don't know. But I'm going to be there.

That's it. That's got to be your answer. But let me assure you, you won't drift in on dreams.

There was a purposive Christ. One. The Lord Jesus Christ.

He didn't bring a host of angels. They stand in wonder at this one. When he was born.

They would have done anything to pour him up in their hands. They would have done anything. But he was one.

Now friends, God wants this one. There may be a hundred of these ones in this room tonight, I don't know. That's what he's after.

You're sitting there, aren't you? And when Jesus came and he said these things, and the Pharisees said, yes, he's gone through the gates, the publicans of sin. He's gone through the temple. Okay.

And he spoke this parable. He told them. I mentioned it.

A hundred sheep. Lost one. He leaves the 99.

And he goes off to find this one. I believe, and I believe it with all my heart, that the Lord Jesus has come to this tent and to this camp for you. You don't live here, but he's brought you here.

I don't know why. Perhaps you like to come. I certainly do.

But it's not that, beloved. It's you. He says this.

It's so simple. Listen. That sheep was lost.

Lost. See? It didn't say he's willfully gone away. You can read what you like into the parable.

You can look for points for preachers. You can do what you want. But this is what Jesus said.

Lost. He lost. It was his loss.

His loss. Keep it clear. Listen.

No blame attached to the sheep. Keep it, keep it plain. Never add fancy ideas to it.

He lost it. Entrez. And he felt that loss.

And he went and he found that. Blessed be his name. Come home, put it on his shoulders.

He doesn't say, you naughty sheep, now you shall walk all the way home. You see? He puts it on his shoulders. You won't get there on your own four legs, lost friend.

You'll get there on his, too. If I may put it that way. When you're lost, he comes to find you.

That's a marvelous thing. No conversation. He didn't bow, bleat, or sting.

He didn't say, you horrible sting, and all this. They never used to talk into a sheep anyway. He doesn't understand.

All you need to understand, beloved, is that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, loves you. That's what you've got to understand. There was a man named Saul of Tarsus once.

He still is, by the way, but he's not known by that name now, except in Scripture. And he said, the Son of God. You want to know what I think about the Son of God? Oh, tell us.

Yeah, he says, he loves me. That's what he says. And gave himself for me.

That's it. Listen, how many of us in this room? Over a thousand, I'm sure. You can cut everybody else out in this room.

Now think of yourself. He loves me. Go on, forget about your wife, or your friends.

Forget about them now. You love them best by coming to this realization that you were loved by Jesus, and he's given himself for you. And so you were the only person in this place.

He's given himself for you. Sometimes we could stop here and say, and heaven came down, and I was in heaven. I often go there.

Oh, not like Paul, I've never been out of the body, or is it? I often go there. Way beyond. I go there.

That's where I live. Yeah. Don't you understand he loves you? Come to you, friend.

Now you can say no, or you can say yes. I said it 25 years ago, or was it 10 years ago, or was it two months ago? He said, he comes to you again, because you didn't know you've got to take up the cross, because you can be a disciple, did you? You didn't realize it. He talks to you about going to heaven when you die.

He says, oh wait a minute, I'm going to leave you 40 years on this earth now, and I've got a cross for you. Do you know what qualified Jesus for heaven? As a man, the cross. He had to go there, and from thence into a grave, and then up from it, and then latterly up from the earth, and go back to heaven from whence he came.

You can only come by the cross, and he knew that. He doesn't say take up the cross or you can't be saved. That's not what he's saying, but he is saying that you've got to come and be washed in the blood of the cross.

That's what he says. You've got to get so near, so close, and there learn what it's all about. You're a sheep.

He finds you, he says, now rejoice with me. It's happy and wonderful to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, to let him pick you up, to let him take you home. Doesn't even take you to the flock.

You read it, he left in 1909, he left then. He took the sheep home. Later added it to the flock, no doubt, and it took its place again as the hundredth one.

Hallelujah! To take you home. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Get to know his loving heart, lest you think he was so severe in the preceding chapter.

He has to be. He has to tear away the veils of lies. He has to tear away the misconceptions.

He has to do all that. He has to be true to you. He will never deceive you into glory.

Bless his wonderful name. Yet we say, can't we all come tonight? Hallelujah, you can all come. But you come as an individual in full realization of what you're doing.

Knowing what it's all about, God forbid that from this platform, this salvation should be made anything other than it really is. Amen and amen. And you know the next story, again, he was lost.

It was this piece of silver from the woman's headdress, whatever it was. I'm relying on my memory for this. I can remember saying that these women used to have this, it was called a wedding gift, and wear it.

Lost one piece of silver, and she searched and searched diligently till she found it. Now you will know the great truth, O Jew, and what God is wanting to impinge on your heart, beloved, that the sheep wandered off that fall. It shouldn't have done it, but the piece of silver wasn't his fault, wasn't its fault for being lost.

What Christ is trying to bring out to you, beloved, is this great sense of loss. You mean something to God, don't you see? You mean something to him. In one breath he tells you that you've got to really mean it and come, and know the fact of the cost.

In the other breath he says, you're like a lost sheep, you're like a lost coin. I've come to find you, and I'm going to find you, and I'm going to search diligently and diligently, and I'm never going to let up, because I love you. I want to tell you this, beloved, just for the fact that you've left your homes, and left your

practices, your pursuits, and you've come to this conference.

I want to tell you that that counts with God, and he loves you for it. You know, of course he does. Millions out there would have ignored it, but you can't.

You've no idea of how simple God is. He can be blessed and loved with the simplest things. Oh, beloved, when you go home, if you go home, you'll do.

You'll go home such a different person, if you'll just do as he says. She finds it. You see, beloved, in all of these parables, you will find this one note.

It is always restoration. The sheep was restored to what it had left. The coin was restored to where it should be.

And the son, just two of them. You know the story so well, I need not recount it to you, but just to mention this. So when at last he came back home, and this time, beloved, note this.

So during the first two parables, the shepherd went after the sheep, and the woman went after the coin. The father didn't go after the son. You see, the son was not a bit of silver that had rolled away somewhere into some dark hole.

The son was not a sheep that had wandered away. The son was somebody who knew he'd been with the father. He knew.

The son made up his mind that he was going to go out into the world. He made up his mind he was going to do it. He asked for a portion of the inheritance that was his, and his father never demurred with him.

Let him have it. Let him have it. Stand up if you want to say, I lay my claim to what belongs to me.

Somehow in God's wondrous love he has given some things to you, what he has in his heart for you, who can tell? Bountiful riches, oh not gold or silver or anything like that. A bountiful, wonderful life, a mind that's pure and clean, a heart that's full of love, a kingdom and a home where nothing can improve. Oh, beloved, were you wrapped up in him, where everything is couched, lost and dung by comparison.

All yours. He chose to leave it. And the father didn't go for him, didn't go after him.

He left him until he came to himself. And you know what he said in our language, what a fool I am. Could be someone like you, like that in this room, maybe you, saying what a fool I'd be, what a fool I'd be, to give up father for some wasteful action.

That's what he did, he just wasted everything. When he came back, he came back as a wasted person. Wasted, time wasted, substance wasted, opportunities wasted.

He wasn't bearing the cross, if I may take up the thought, he wasn't building anything. He had left the army, if ever there was one, he had left all that, you see, gone. Where are you, friend? What are you doing? I think the most horrible thing that could ever happen to me, I don't know, God, God will have to tell me, is that I should have to stop preaching and linger on this earth for a long time, not that all life is bound up in preaching.

To have to give it all up, what I want, it'll have to be taken from me. Here is the thing for you to understand, beloved, you've got to be in this utterly, comes back and you know the rest of the story, not a word of complaint from father, not a word of reproof, not anything. He's just glad that his boy has come to his senses at last, and found a filthy, rotten world out there, nothing but a sinkhole from which he had poured himself, to run amok on the sewers of the earth.

That's right, all the potential gone, and he comes home, and father doesn't even reprove him, you know why? He's here, my son, my son. All father had for him were kisses, and that's all, all the rest was nothing much. Oh, he had a pair of shoes, he was given a ring, what a golden ring, what a kiss from father, hey, you're my son, you're my son.

He's been disappointed in him, so his son should ever want to leave, his son should ever want to choose the world instead of that home he provided, should ever want to leave his elder brother, but he hadn't, that's it. His father ever said anything to him that was their business, but not mine. What's he ever said to you? Perhaps he has sometimes, that's all he's put in his head, foolish words, just loud enough for you to hear, but you should never have gone away.

I love you, I love you. Gilbert had his cough, but do this, do this, make merry, let's rejoice. He was dead, he was alive again, he's lost.

Amen, amen. And then this elder brother, he comes up, and he says all the things, you've read this parable, somebody's told it to you, I won't prolong the time by reading it to you now. He comes in, and he's got all the complaints in the world, and so father had disappointment added to disappointment.

The disappointment in his youngest son did finish up in joy of restoration, and then the youngest son came along and poured a cup down his face. Fancy being stabbed with a father like that. I spit at the sons like that.

You've got some sons, I've got daughters. Fancy being stabbed with that, and that youngest son heard his father say, speaking to the eldest son, he heard him say, son, start ever with me, all that I have is thine. And the young man heard that, too.

Let it be the name of the Lord, who loves, and loves, and loves, and loves, and calls you, and offers you a cross, as well as a banquet, offers you work, as well as belief, offers you a sword, and puts you into the army of God. And what will you have instead? A packet of cigarettes, or a lot of dope? What will you have? Make your choice, make it real, and make it eternal, you may never get another opportunity. Listen to the heart of your Father, the Father, not only the Father, but God.

Father who provides everything, God who creates everything that's good and wonderful, is yours for the taking. Oh, what are you sitting there for? Why are you holding back? What dreams are you dreaming? What sin is there that you want to keep? What excuse do you want to make? Here is God. He's on this platform, but He's also down there where you are.

Tell Him. Tell Him what you're going to do. Tell Him, Father, I've been dead.

Yeah, you're alive again, son. Oh, Father, I've been lost. Yeah, you're found again.

Hallelujah! Oh, good news, good news. In your heart, in your life, are you the good news? Oh, you say, no, Christ was dead. But you ought to become it.

Good news to someone. Well, the chapter finishes. I don't know about you, I'm, I'm sorry I'm finished.

It's finished. Shall we put a postscript? Oh, you mustn't ask for a scripture. Oh, the Lord won't mind if you do, as long as you don't write it in.

Lord, I'm coming home. Lord, here I am. Pick me up.

You found me. That's what it's about. No recrimination, no condemnation.

Jesus Christ laid it all bare. He has said it all. You don't needn't say it.

See. Can the sheep speak? Can a coin speak? Can a son speak? I tell you how best to speak to Him. Let Him take you up in His arms and say, I've done it all, son.

I've had a fatted calf waiting for you. I've got the minstrel's facial play. I've got everything for you.

You, you either say yes or no, man, woman. You either respond or reject. There's no such place as limbo in these things.

That's an imagination of the Catholic hierarchy. You come right into it, 100 percent, from every hair on your balding head and down to every thing in your thing, and you'll have come. That's what you're to do.

Let the devil strip you of more than these things, and you'll be beyond recall. Hallelujah, Jesus loves you. Don't be a disappointment to God.

Don't. This shall spend eternity with those who've done so, and who wants to live in such a madhouse. Come to Him with all that you are.

Come now. We're going to pray. I'm going to pray first, then I'm going to give you an opportunity to respond.

I pray, God, that I have stepped before you the truth this night, and I pray that you will make the response that He is expecting of you, because of His gospel. Lord, Father, pity the inadequacies of man. Thou didst make no demands upon the sheep, nor didst thou lecture the piece of silver, O blessed Lord.

How diligent thy search to find someone. How wonderful, Lord. O God, in Father's house there are many mansions.

We should relax in His arms, or have our cares kicked away, and all the apologies and what else smothered in His love. O God of understanding, who faced the bitter cross with thy Son, and finally left Him on earth, to win our souls and shed His blood to redeem us. O God, have mercy upon us this night in thy presence, and let thy blessed Spirit move in every seat, in every heart, that the reality may come to light.

Amen. Now, here is the opportunity. If God has spoken to you tonight, and you know it's got to be done, you rise from your seat and come here.

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