

The Shepherd Seeking the Sheep

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance and the love of God in seeking and saving the lost, highlighting the role of the Shepherd in finding and keeping the sheep.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:6, Mark 8:36, Luke 15:7, John 3:16, John 10:28, Acts 17:30-31, Romans 3:23, Revelation 22:11

Topics: "Repentance And Salvation", "Gods Relentless Love"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the parable in Luke 15:1-7, emphasizing that all individuals, regardless of their perceived goodness, need to repent as all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. He highlights the immense joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, showcasing God's relentless pursuit of those who are lost. The sermon delves into the Trinity's involvement in seeking and rejoicing over the repentant, illustrating the great value God places on each soul. Vine passionately urges listeners to recognize their lost state and accept Jesus as their Savior, who seeks, saves, and carries them home with unwavering love and joy.

Transcript

Luke 15:1-7

The last verse which I have read to you, dear friends, gives no authority whatever for the thought that there are in this world men and women so good and so respectable that they need no repentance.

The Son of God is showing in this parable that were it so--that if some needed not to repent--still there would be a peculiar joy over the one who had gone astray, and afterward turned in repentance to God, that would be unknown in regard to persons who had never gone astray and, therefore, never needed to repent. But there are no such persons in the race of fallen Adam.

True is that Scripture which says, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Consequently we are told in the Scriptures that God "now commandeth all men everywhere, to repent!" (Acts 17:30), and none can afford to ignore that command, for "He has appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He has ordained" (Acts 17:31), and the ordained One is the Lord.

We should observe, dear friends, that it was those who thought they needed no repentance who complained in regard to that which caused joy in heaven! They were the cultured people, the scholars of

the colleges of that day: they were the leading religionists of those dark times when the Son of God was upon earth; and we read that, in answer to their taunt when they said, "This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them," the Son of God spake this parable to show that God Himself not only received sinners, but that He actually and diligently sought them, that they might be found, saved and brought home to Himself with rejoicing. This is the chapter of divine merrymaking over the returning one.

The three parts of this one "parable" in Luke 15, tell the wonderful story of the great joy of God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and God the Father over the repentance and home-coming of "one" wanderer. We have the "Trinity" in this chapter. The actual word is not mentioned, but the truth is. The Son is the Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep; the woman illustrates the Spirit, seeking the lost piece of silver; the Father, shows to us God the Father running to meet the returning prodigal--and then we have the feasting the merry-making, the dancing and the great joy! He who said at creation, "Let us make man," now says in redemption, "Let us make merry."

Why should there be such great joy in heaven, my dear friends, over one out of the tens of thousands, yea millions, of this world, that turns in repentance and faith to God? Because of the great value that God sets upon your precious soul! The Lord put it beside the whole world, and He said, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). There would be no profit, for one soul is of far greater value. And God, having even one soul saved, will have a worshipper in heaven that will be able to render praise to Him for all eternity, in songs of grateful rejoicing that the mighty sun, moon and all the starry hosts, yea the whole of the vast material universe could never utter to Him.

The Lord shows in this vivid picture that He came out to seek the lost one--the sheep that had gone astray. Moreover, He shows that the Shepherd seeks until he finds that one which was lost. And He tells the beautiful story in the hearing of the vast crowd which was surging about Him. There were the publicans, as the tax-gatherers were called, and the sinners, as those who were ostracised from religious society were called, and such were present to hear this wonderful Preacher of the grace and the love of God: they heard Him gladly.

But the others--the Pharisees and the Scribes--murmured and criticised. They found fault with the very thing that gave joy in the presence of the angels of God, but it was just this, however, which gave occasion, dear friends, for the unfolding of this parable, which shows that the triune God had come out to seek and to save the lost one, to find joy, too, in bringing them home to Himself; and with feasting and music to make merry over him in the Father's House! As the Father says, "This My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And all this is over one sinner that repenteth! But there is just this one thing, we are deeply concerned about:--it is that there shall be someone right here and now, who will truly turn in faith to God and be found amidst the rejoicings of the home above. If, as a repentant sinner, you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, accepting Him as your own personal Saviour, as sure as you do this, you will be in the Father's home above! Oh! do not miss this opportunity! "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!" While the Shepherd is seeking and saving the lost, do not miss the opportunity of receiving Him as your personal Saviour!

We are told that the moment He found the stray sheep, He laid it on His shoulders rejoicing, and He never put it down again until He had brought it safe home. He carried it all the way. He sought it, He found it, He saved it, He rejoiced over it, and safely bore it home.

But, notice! It was a "lost" sheep that was found--one "sheep that was lost." And you must learn that you are lost before you can have the joy of being found by this wonderful Saviour. I am not going to deal with this great matter as if I were addressing a lot of theologians, nor need I dwell upon the fact that as the children of fallen Adam the human race is away from God. Does that need any proving? Look at the world at the present time. Not only in pre-war days, but worse still since the days of war, the lost estate of man is plainly evidenced by the lawless and sinful condition in regard to God. Do you mean to tell me the race is walking with God? It is clearly seen that man is away from a holy and righteous God of love--man is a lost sinner! It is true we have turned every one to his own way (Isa. 53:6). There is something within man that always turns away from God, and he goes hastily down the broad road that leads to destruction and unless he discovers that he is lost, and turns to the Saviour, it means greater and still greater distress until he is lost irretrievably in everlasting woe where his God-forgetfulness and sin have hurried him and then that word will be true, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still and he which is filthy let him be filthy still" (Rev. 22:11), and he is lost in his sins for ever. The downward way leads down and deeper down to steeper declines and to ever deepening misery. Thank God however, there is a Saviour for you even at this moment.

That Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God, came over the hills of time. The eternal Son came forth from the eternal Father into a world of sinners lost and ruined by the fall, and He came to seek and to save. He came into the world to save sinners. His heart of love goes out to the needy, and gladly will He make you His now and for ever and ever!

I often wonder what men have against our Lord Jesus Christ that they do not accept Him. What ails you at Him? Has He ever done anything that you can find fault with? Some of you treat your dogs and your pets better than you treat Him! You give attention to your domestic animals, and leave Him out of your life altogether, and yet He came to suffer for us to redeem us, to save us.

See Him as He goes on His journey of suffering love to seek the sinner--the wandering sheep. What deep waters He had to cross in His lonely path and what wastes of weariness had to be passed. See Him, too, scaling those mountains of difficulty on His toilsome way. Look at Him treading through those dense forests of human darkness as He goes onward. And now, behold Him as He stems those tremendous torrents of Satanic opposition which rose up against Him so mightily, and as He went forward forty days and forty nights not one bit of food passed over His holy lips. At last we find the Saviour nearing the end of His journey, when in His love for the lost, He would have to bear the sinner's sins before the work could be completed and in anticipation of having to say to sin we see that holy Son of God bowed in agony and sweating, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground, and He said to His Father, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." There was no other way but through suffering and death, through forsaking and judgment, through His atoning work at Calvary, that the sinner's sins could be put away and the lost sinner be saved. And so, on He went until at last, reaching the uttermost distance, He hung a crucified Saviour upon the Cross, and cried, "My God My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"He yielded up His spirit! He died for our salvation! He lay in the tomb, but He arose from among the dead a triumphant Saviour,

"But none of the ransomed ever knew

How deep were the waters crossed,

Nor how dark was the night the Lord passed through,

Ere He found the sheep that was lost."

It is a living victorious Saviour who saves today. He has settled the sin question on the Cross and now He saves the lost ones.

And we desire to bring home to you this stupendous fact, that not only does the Lord receive sinners, and eateth with them as the Pharisees and Scribes complained; but that He is seeking, earnestly seeking, your soul's welfare, and He will save you and bring you home, and there will be great rejoicing over you, for it is not simply that there was, but we are told, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents."

"Lord, whence are these blood marks all the way

That mark out the mountain track?

They were shed for one who had gone astray,

Ere the shepherd could bring him back;

Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn?

They are pierced tonight with many a thorn.

Then all through the mountains thunder-riven,

And up from the rocky steep,

There arose a cry to the gates of heaven,

"Rejoice, I have found My sheep!"

And the angels echo around the throne,

Rejoice for the Lord brings back His own!"

Some one may say, "Yes I do earnestly desire to be saved but I have a little misgiving about the future." Do you think after the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered as He has done for sinners, that He is going to forsake those who have trusted in Him? No! There is an old theological doctrine once strongly held in the Universities of Scotland called "The final perseverance of the saints." It means that once a person is really saved he will persevere through everything right to the end and eventually get to heaven. In a certain way that is true enough but let me ask you: Was it the sheep that finally persevered or was it the Shepherd? There is but one answer, and the proper way to state that doctrine would be, not "The final perseverance of the saints," but "The final perseverance of the Saviour." It is the great and glorious Son of God who sought until He found us; it is no less a Person than God the Son who laid us upon the shoulders of almighty power with rejoicing and it is our loving all-the-way-home Saviour who will never put us down till He sets our feet upon the land prepared for us. Once the great Shepherd makes us His, He says, "None shall pluck them out of My hand." He holds the saved sinner with the grasp of omnipotence. This does not mean that the saved one is always joyful. It says the Shepherd rejoices and there is joy in heaven, but it does not say, the sheep rejoiced. One may struggle and doubt and be tempted, but the sheep cannot get

away. The Word says, "He shall never perish." It does not say, "He shall never know a cloud." One said, "The Saviour saved me many years ago. He has kept me ever since. I have done all the kicking, but He has done all the carrying, and will do till the end."

"Sinner, 'tis Jesus like the Good Shepherd

Out in the desert to find His sheep,

When He has found it heaven rejoices,

Sinner, thy Saviour can save and KEEP."

This is a matter of eternal import. If you put it off it may be too late! Are you going to trust the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you going to accept Him as your living, loving, personal Saviour here and now? Oh! my friends, what I have told you is true: I have but emphasized what is told us in that grand old Book of inspiration, God's holy Word. Notwithstanding what men with modern doctrines and sceptical notions may say about it, I urge upon you the truth of God, showing that Christ came to seek and save us. What then are you going to do in regard to Him? Will you not trust Him? God has entrusted the upholding of the universe to His Son, "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand," and if God can trust Him with everything, cannot you trust Him with your soul? May God help you to do so.

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