

The Seeker and Saviour of the Lost

by Horatius Bonar

Jesus, the Son of Man, came to seek and save the lost, bringing salvation to humanity through his love-driven search.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:6, Ezekiel 34:11, Matthew 18:11, Luke 19:10, John 3:16, John 10:11, Romans 10:13, 1 Timothy 1:15, Hebrews 7:25, 2 Peter 3:9

Topics: "Salvation", "The Love of Christ"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the mission of Jesus Christ as the Seeker and Savior of the lost, highlighting that He came specifically to save humanity, including children, who are equally in need of salvation. Bonar explains that Jesus, referred to as the 'Son of Man,' embodies true humanity and came to seek out those who are lost, demonstrating a divine love that pursues even the most unwilling. He stresses that salvation is not merely about moral improvement but a profound rescue from separation from God, emphasizing the urgency and depth of the lost condition. Bonar reassures that no one is beyond the reach of Christ's saving grace, as He actively seeks to restore the lost to their Creator. The sermon calls for recognition of our lost state and the hope found in Christ's relentless pursuit of our salvation.

Transcript

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."--Matthew 18:2.

"For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."--Luke 19:10

Many of our Lord's words were spoken twice over, if not oftener. He did not think it beneath Him to repeat Himself; and the Holy Spirit did not think it unnecessary or unbefitting to record the repetition.

Here it is in connection with little children that the words occur, "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Elsewhere it is in connection with Zaccheus, the publican. In the former case his errand is said simply to be "to save," as if "seeking" were not needed in the case of infants who have not yet plunged into the labyrinths and thickets of earthly wickedness. In the latter his errand is, "to seek and to save," as if search were needed in order to find the lost object.

A very particular and personal message this to our children! The mission of the Son of God has a special bearing on them. The good Shepherd came very specially for them. He singles them out as most prominent objects of his love. So far from their being overlooked or getting salvation in some side way, his

errand was particularly to them. And does He not plainly tell us here that they need salvation? They can only get into heaven by being saved. They were as truly lost as others; and they need salvation as truly; and they get it as fully.

But let us put the two passages together and take them as embracing our race. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "Preach the gospel to every creature."

I. The Son of man. This means, of course, one who was truly and thoroughly man,--very man. Adam was man; but he was not a "son of man," or "the son of man." This name brings out very expressively his true humanity. It is like, and yet unlike, to the ancient words of the first promise, "the seed of the woman," and the expression of Paul, "made of a woman." It is more than these, for "son of man" means "son of humanity;" son both of the man and the woman. He is indeed "the Lord from heaven" (I Corinthians 15:47); yet is He "the second man," the "last Adam." There must have been something in Ezekiel which made him in this respect resemble Messiah, for upwards of ninety times he is addressed as "son of man," and it is in his prophecies that the expression occurs so often. Daniel uses it in reference to Messiah, and David uses it as expressive of complete and true humanity. He whose name is Jesus, Emmanuel, Christ, the Lord, is truly Son of man.

II. The Son of man came. He came! From the beginning He had been known as the coming one; now He is the one who has come. The Son of God has become the Son of man. He has descended to earth. He came to Bethlehem first, and afterwards He might be said to have come to all Judea. For ages the coming was prospective; yet even as such it was replete with gladness; now it is accomplished; He has arrived; how much more of gladness is contained in this fact! "We know that the Son of God is come." "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

III. He came to seek. "I will search my sheep, and seek them out," says He by Ezekiel (34:11). He was the Shepherd who had lost his sheep, and He missed it, valued it, left the rest, went after it, sought for it, all the world over. His was a seeking life, a seeking ministry. His were seeking words and seeking works. He is the great seeker, the heavenly seeker. His days were spent in search. He sought when He was here; He is seeking still. His is the same seeking attitude and earnestness now in heaven as formerly on earth. He seeks in love. Not as the officer seeks out the hiding criminal; but as the mother seeks her lost child. It is the search of love, divine yet human love; love that will not wait till the desired object of search shews symptoms of concern or willingness to return, but love that pursues the flying, the unwilling, the resisting. Many are the places in which He finds and has found his stray ones: one He found upon a cross, one by a well, one in a boat, one in a sycamore tree. It matters not.

IV. He came to save. His name is Saviour; his errand is salvation. Nothing less than this. It is salvation that man needs; it is salvation that Christ brings. He is "mighty to save." He is "able to save to the uttermost." He says, look unto me and be ye saved. He came not simply to make men moral, and raise them from savage coarseness; to give wisdom or teach science; to "elevate the masses;" to make men regular church-goers or obedient citizens. He came to save; and his gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. He "comes in the name of the Lord to save." Salvation is a wide and big word, as used by God. In man's lips it may and often does mean very little. It means sometimes sacramental grace, or ritualistic drapery, or supercilious churchmanship. But, according to the divine use and interpretation of the word, it means much, very much. It means something whose greatness can only be measured by the greatness of the Person who came; by the greatness of the work which He accomplished; by the greatness of his toil and suffering; by the greatness of the price He paid. It

is something which apostolic succession and baptismal regeneration cannot give,--something far beyond the power of church, or priest, or sacraments, to confer.

V. He came to save the lost. The lost! And who are they? Not simply those whom man describes as lost to shame, lost to decency, lost to all human motives of right, but such as are lost to God; lost to their great Maker and Owner; lost in the sense in which the sheep is lost to the shepherd; the piece of silver to the woman; the son to the father. They are they whom God has lost. The great Father has lost a son; man has lost God, and God has lost man. They are lost in respect of separation from God--distance from God. They are lost in regard to present favor and future hope. They have lost everything; they are lost to everything. Shepherd, and woman, and father, have sustained an awful loss; but what is this to the loss of those who have lost God, and are lost to God. To be lost is to be dead in sin; to be condemned and under wrath; to be banished and shut out; to have unpardoned sin overhanging them, and a deadly disease preying on their whole man. To have the heart empty of God, at war with the Spirit, and in alliance with the evil one; to be reduced to such a state of unholiness that all spiritual life, or relish, or love, is gone;--this is to be lost; lost even now: apart from the woes of that hell that is at hand.

O man, thou art lost; and that word means something unutterably awful; something which only the Spirit of God can reveal to you. But the Son of man has come to seek and save you. He is bent on this. It is his errand, his mission. No matter how lost you are. He is not willing that you should perish. He has no pleasure in your death. He seeks your life. He desires to save.

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