

Luke 15 (Notes of Readings)

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the profound themes of God's grace and the joy of salvation as illustrated in the parables of Luke 15.

Scripture: Luke 15:4

Topics: "Grace", "Salvation"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the profound grace of God as illustrated in the parables of Luke 15, highlighting the contrast between human pride and divine love. He explains that while humanity often falls short of loving others, God's love is unwavering, as demonstrated by the shepherd, the woman, and the father in the parables. The sermon underscores that true conversion involves recognizing our sinfulness and God's goodness, culminating in the father's unconditional acceptance of the prodigal son. Darby stresses that salvation is not merely about conversion but about being clothed in Christ's righteousness, which allows us to enter into the joy of the Father. Ultimately, he calls believers to understand the fullness of God's love and grace that is available to them now.

Transcript

32 We sometimes think we ought to be this, or we ought to be that. This is the pride of man's heart.

There is sovereign grace for the vilest. It is all true we have sinned, we know that we do not love our neighbour as ourselves. The law was no sooner given, than the golden calf was made, and it was broken.

You may talk of politics, of anything, everything, in any kind of society, but bring in Christ - "there is no beauty that we should desire him." Man shewed the climax of his wickedness when he crucified Christ. God has shewn His love where we shewed our hatred. I say, "My sins brought Him there." Here I get righteousness against sin, and love to man. I find Man in all His perfectness on the cross.

The third parable is most important to unite them all. The first two, God seeking sinners; in the last, the grace that receives them - love and goodness triumphant over all. Who is the happy person in the first? "The shepherd." And who in the second? "The woman;" and in the third, "the father." We do not get the value of the third parable without the first two.

The shepherd shews love and care for the sheep; he puts it on his shoulders. I have no doubt the shepherd is a type of Christ; the second parable, of the work of the Holy Ghost; the third, "reception" by

the Father. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. We find the Lord constantly labouring to persuade the disciples of it. Do we believe the Father loves us as He loves Jesus?

33 The first two parables are the grace and love that sought. But, beloved, who put it into God's heart? There is not a joy in heaven that we have not got now. I know I have got Christ, and that I have the Holy Spirit. We have been washed from our sins. Everything a poor feeble thing wants, we have got - the Father's love, the Son's love. "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

There is nothing in heaven that is not the portion of the believer now - nothing that the heart of God can give, but what we have. Nothing can go beyond "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus."

Whenever God is pleased to reveal Himself, we get two things - light and love. Man loved darkness rather than light. When God reveals Himself in Christ, it awakens the conscience, and there is a sense of His goodness - it was so with Peter when he got a net full of fishes, and he prostrates himself before Christ. The prodigal starts off, but there is as yet no real revelation of God; he is going to say, "make me one of thy hired servants." He is right so far, but he does not know God. When he does come, he confesses his sins: "I have sinned," etc., but the very first thing before he is received in the house, the father is on his neck, kissing him, and he has not even confessed the father yet. Now he says, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." The father answers, "Bring forth the best robe." That is salvation; I have got an absolute proof of God's love to me. "God commendeth his love towards us." He has given His blessed Son, a token of His infinite love. Is the Person that bore my sins still on the cross? No; He is at the right hand of God. The work that saves me was done outside me; I find I had no part in it. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

34 He finished the question of salvation the first time He came. The more we think of the cross, the more we shall find that there is nothing like it through all eternity.

Everything in good and evil was brought to an issue there.

In the first two parables, there is the grace that seeks; and in the third, the grace that receives.

It is a very different thing to be converted, and to be saved. Conversion is the conscience awakened, but not purged. The prodigal was converted when he thought of going to his father, but he was still in the far country, starving; even when the father met him, he was in his rags. When the best robe was put on him, he was saved; he was not fit for the house till then, could not have gone in till he had the best robe - Christ.

35 Conversion is, that I see goodness in God, and sin in myself; I see that He is good, but that I am not fit for Him. Like Peter, when he says, "Depart from me."

The prodigal son was converted when in famine. He said, "I will arise," but he has not an idea of the love that was in his father's heart till he met him. Then we hear no more about the prodigal son, except what was done for him.

There is not a joy in heaven that we have not got now, except the glorified body. We hear no more of the prodigal's thoughts or feelings, once he gets to the father. After that, all we get is the expression of the father's love, and his joy. Of course, the prodigal had joy too, but we do not hear about it.

The eldest son, the self-righteous man, has no part in the joy, he would not go in, although the father entreated him; thoroughly selfish, he had not a thought about his brother. It is the Jew, the one who had the promise. In that sense all was his, but he only wanted to make merry with his friends - no heart to enter into the father's joy over the restored one.

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