

Luke 15: 1-7; “The Parable of the Lost Sheep”, Session # 7 – “Jesus Says – Rejoice with Me!”, Presented by Pastor Paul Rendall on February 18th, 2024, in the Adult Sunday School.

Luke 15: 1-7 – “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’ “So He spoke this parable to them, saying: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?’ “And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.” “And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”

1. Review and Further Explanation of the 100 sheep –

In our last class, having wanted to speak to you about “More Joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents, than over 99 just persons who need no repentance”. But instead our class ended up interacting over whether the 99 sheep who needed no repentance were really Christians (that is, sheep saved by Jesus), or not. It is my conviction that they were not. It was good interaction. But we must notice the context here. Jesus was speaking to the scribes and the Pharisees. And He was positing the truth to them in this parable that they were the ones who had the 100 sheep. “What man of you, having a hundred sheep does not leave the 99 in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?” So, in this Parable, the 100 sheep belong to the scribes and Pharisees.

But when He spoke the Parable, He also knew that these self-righteous men would not go searching and seeking for sinners to bring them to repentance. They thought that they themselves did not need to repent of anything that they could think of. And they certainly did not think that they need to repent of anything that they thought or said about Jesus. And so this was the real reason that Jesus had to tell them this Parable. For He had come into the world to save sinners. And if these scribes and Pharisees were ever going to be saved from their lost estate, they would have to repent. They would have to come to understand the reason that He came into the world. They would have to better understand His mission.

Luke 5: 27-31 – “After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office.” “And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ “So he left all rose up and followed Him.” “Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house.” “And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them.” “And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, ‘Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’ “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.’ “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Question # 1 – When Jesus says that He did not come to call the righteous, what does He mean? And how does Jesus’ answer have a bearing on our understanding the Parable that we are studying in Luke 15: 1-7?

Answer: Jesus’ not coming to call the righteous means that He did not come to call those who think of themselves as righteous without faith in Christ and His grace. That is, they are not really perfectly righteous according to God’s law. “There is none who is righteous, no not one”, it says in Romans 3: 10. This does have a bearing on the Parable that we are studying in relation to who the 99 just persons are who need no repentance. Because it shows us that these 99 supposed just persons did need to repent. They only thought that they did not need to repent. And so when he mentions the 99 who just persons, He is not speaking of

Christians, or followers of Himself. He was thinking of the scribes and Pharisees, and all who followed them.

Conclusion: I am hoping that you will now see that the 99 sheep in this Parable were neither safe, nor saved. Nor were they really Just persons. They were sheep who did not think that they needed Jesus to save them. They actually thought that they needed no repentance. They thought of themselves as Just when they were not. They were of the scribes and Pharisee's flock. They are said by Jesus to be "in the wilderness" in verse 4. This wilderness that they were in, was the wilderness of sin. It was not a place of spiritual safety. But when Jesus, the Good Shepherd goes seeking the one lost sheep, He goes into this wilderness, He searches for a particular sheep, which He calls "His sheep" in verse 6. And when He finds it, He lays it on His shoulders, rejoicing.

2. The Acts of Jesus in relation to His Success in Finding the Lost Sheep

a. He lays it on His Shoulders, Rejoicing.

Question # 2– What is Jesus rejoicing over, when He lays the sheep on His shoulders?

Answer: He is rejoicing over the successful application of His Redemption to them, and His success in His being able to seek them and to find them and to bring them to Himself. He is rejoicing that they will no longer continually be wandering away from God and Himself, but he will now be in His safe keeping, forever.

1st Peter 2: 25 – "For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

b. He comes home with It.

Verse 6 says – "And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'"

Question # 3 – What is the meaning of Jesus' coming home, or bringing the sheep home with Him?

Answer: When He "comes home", or when He brings the sheep "home", it means that He spiritually brings that person, that lost sheep which He has found, into the spiritual kingdom of heaven.

c. He makes the sheep who has been found joyful, because He (Christ) is rejoicing.

Question # 4 – What do you think would be the reaction of the lost sheep is when they are found and carried on His shoulders to their new spiritual flock and home? And what is their new spiritual flock and home called in the Bible?

d. He calls His friends and neighbors together

When the Lord Jesus brings the sheep home, he calls His friends and neighbors together and says to them – Rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost!

Question # 5– Who do Jesus' friends and neighbors in this Parable represent?

Answer: They are all those who are already in the kingdom of heaven. They are those who are already safe in the fold of Christ's spiritual and eternal kingdom. They are persons who have believed in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation. They are persons who know that they had sins which they needed to repent of, forgiven. They truly understood that they needed to repent of their own self-righteousness, and all of the other sins which they have perceived that they have committed. In other words, all those persons looking on, at Jesus calling a sinner to repentance, will rejoice with Jesus, that that person has come to repentance. They will think of it in relation to themselves. They who have been savingly brought to faith in Christ, and to true and thorough repentance of all sins that they find themselves guilty of, will rejoice.

Question # 6 – What do you think would be the reaction of the lost sheep when he is found and carried on His shoulders to his new spiritual flock and home? And what is his new spiritual flock and home called in the Bible?

Answer: The sheep is glad that the Lord sought for him. He is happy to let the Lord Jesus pick him up, and bring him out of this wilderness of sin and into his new home in the kingdom of God and Christ's Church. He is glad to have Jesus carry him on his shoulders. He is glad that the Lord Jesus rejoices over him so much, that He wants to tell His friends about how He found this lost sheep.

e. He makes the scribes and the Pharisees think about what they need to repent of.

Question # 7 – What do you think the reaction of the scribes and Pharisees would have been to this Parable that Jesus told? What kind of Repentance do you think that Jesus was looking for from them?

Answer: The scribes and the Pharisees, looking on, at Jesus' calling of Zachaeus and Matthew, who were sinners now trusting in Jesus, they would have still thought that they were Just persons. They would have still thought that they were righteous men. But they did not see their need of Jesus, or the kind of repentance that God would be pleased with, which would be to confess that in many ways they were falling short of the glory of God, and that they needed the love of Christ.

f. He wanted to show them their great need of Himself.

Matthew 9: 10-13 – “Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And the Pharisees saw it, they to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ “When Jesus heard that, He said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.’ “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ “For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Notice that there is something added here by the Lord Jesus which is not mentioned in Luke 5. It is God's desiring mercy and not sacrifice from these scribes and Pharisees.

Question # 8– What does this saying mean?

Answer: It means that what God was looking for from these scribes and Pharisees was, first of all, repentance of their self-righteous judgmental thoughts towards sinners around them. He was saying that rather this judgmental hyper-critical attitude towards sinners, that they would learn the importance of being merciful towards them, and try to help them towards repentance, and faith in Himself. And that in respect of their thinking that they were righteous through their keeping of the ceremonial law, that they were to understand that it was not the offering up of the Mosaic sacrifices of the law that would avail them to find favor with God, but faith in God's Son who was standing before them.

