

SOUTH FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LONDON

Lord's Day Afternoon

Gospel Mission (1)

Date 25th February 2023

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles Ps/Hymns 224, 203, 275 (104), 221

Read: Luke 15:1-7, Text Luke 15:1-7

Title: THE LOST SHEEP FOUND

In Luke chapter 15 the Lord Jesus Christ gives three parables to teach the gospel of saving grace to his hearers.

A **parable** is simply **an earthly story with a spiritual and heavenly meaning**.

The literal meaning of the word **parable** is **to place alongside another**.

Therefore, the parable, comparison or illustration being used is placed alongside, the actual lesson being taught in order to make it clear and simple.

They both go together, the lesson being taught is then illustrated by a parable, a story.

At the beginning of **Luke 15**, **all the publicans and sinners come near for to hear him, that is to hear Him preach**.

The **Publicans** were also known as "**tax collectors**".

The publicans worked for the Roman government and were despised by their fellow Jews because they worked for the enemy, stealing from their own, as they placed on the people more tax than what was required.

The publicans were described as the sinners of sinners.

The word **sinners** means **to miss the mark, to fall short of the standard required**. Sinners have fallen sort of God's perfect standard which is His law. All mankind has missed the target of perfection that God required.

But whether one is classified a sinner or a sinner of sinners, the truth remains, all are equally guilty before God, and are sinners in His sight.

It is all kinds of sinners that Christ came to save, whether they are religious, self-righteous, hard, vile, Jew or Gentile,

Jesus came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

That's why we read in **verse 2** *the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*

The religious establishment viewed themselves better than others.

In comparing themselves with others, they viewed themselves not like the publicans and sinners.

As **verse 7** shows they believed themselves to be just or forgiven without repentance, which is a false religion.

Yet the very people rejected and looked down upon by the religious hypocrites in society Jesus Christ *receiveth*.

The word **receiveth** means **to receive to ones self, to give access to, to come from one place to another.**

When Christ receives sinners, He receives them unto Himself, they become His own possession, He takes them, where they are in sin depravity, and spiritual darkness and brings them into light, and salvation.

He alone gives sinners access to God, and then fellowships with sinner He receives.

The words of the Pharisees and Scribes were meant to mock Christ, yet their words are very true still to this day, *This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*

And to teach this truth, Christ receives sinners, the Lord Jesus gave three parables, of something or someone lost and then found and received.

In **Verses 3-7** the Lost Sheep is found, in **verses 8-10** the Lost Silver is found, in **verses 11-32** the Lost Son is found.

All there were **lost, found and received** by another.

The lost sheep was received by the shepherd,

the lost silver by the woman,

and the lost son by his father.

All three have a message in the gospel, the lost sheep found teaches about Redemption by God the Son.

The lost and Found Silver teaches regeneration by the God the Holy Spirit, and then Lost and found Son, teaches restoration to God the Father.

The point of the parable is to show the religious Pharisees & scribes, that they too were lost in sin and must be found and received by Christ to have eternal life.

One may have religion, but not Christ, and therefore remain lost in sin.

For today I want by the Spirit's help to preach on the Lost Sheep Found.

I FIRST THE DEPARTURE OF THE LOST SHEEP

Verse 4 ***What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?***

Notice the sheep was once in the shepherd's presence but now the sheep has departed it is has departed and now lost.

The sheep is lost as it has gone its own way.

Men and woman here you have illustrated by the departure of the sheep from the shepherd's presence, a comparison of the departure of mankind from God's presence by their fall into sin.

Genesis 2-3, Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden enjoyed the Lord's presence, and voice.

However, when they fell into sin by wilfully disobeying God's command, they departed from Lord's presence, they lost fellowship with God and the Joy of His presence.

Adam and Eve were now lost in sin.

In fact, the prophet Isaiah to teach the Lord's people the departure of men and woman from God, **he also used the illustration of sheep departing.**

Isaiah 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way..."

The sheep departing, straying, from the shepherd, is pictured by the words "**have gone astray**"

The words "**gone astray**" signify **to err**, the literal words mean **to stray to be misled.**

We can read it "**all we like sheep stray, all we like sheep have erred,**"

Isaiah includes himself for he says All we like sheep. I was lost, I was a straying sheep, I have erred.

The psalmist declared **Ps 119:175** "**I have gone astray like a lost sheep.**"

Therefore, the description of sinners departing as illustrated by the departing sheep reveals the sinners total depravity

that is every part of our being, our nature, is effected by sin, our thoughts, words actions, desires, it is what we are by nature.

The sheep acts according to its nature. Sheep go astray.

Therefore, as fallen sinners our practices, pleasures, and pursuits will be in agreement with our fallen nature, as **Ps 58:3** teaches ***“the wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born speaking lies”***

Fallen men and woman do not want God because they love darkness rather than light.

Furthermore, the description of the sinner as compared to sheep reveals the sinners total inability,

the lost sheep cannot make its own way back, and it does not want to return and is unable to, because the sheep loves the fields, the grass, they keep wandering further.

Therefore, in spiritual matters concerning salvation sinners are unable on their own to do spiritual good, and return to Christ on their own accord.

we love our sin, ***“For there is none that seek after God, there is none that doeth good no not one”***.

Sinner today you have departed from His holy standard, offended God's holiness.

See yourself as pictured by the departure of the sheep, you have erred, gone astray.

Just as the sheep is without a shepherd, so sinner you are without Christ the good shepherd, without hope.

Christ said in **John 5:40** *ye will not come to me that ye might have life, verse 42 I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*

You love your sin, and unable to abandon it, only Christ gives power to come to salvation.

II SECOND THE DIRECTION OF THE LOST SHEEP.

It is clear the sheep having departed, is going in another direction from the shepherd.

The sheep is going another way, and another direction, because we read its lost.

That's what we read in Isaiah's illustration **Isaiah 53:6** "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way...*"

As the sheep departs, strays and errs, it does so **wilfully**.

it continues in its lost condition, sheep will not stop, but go further and further away, and will continue in the same direction into various fields.

The fall of all mankind into sin as represented by Adam in the Garden of Eden was an act of wilful departure, it was to go another direction, a direction away from God.

Genesis 2, Adam and Eve were given the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Ch 3 they took of it wilfully, they turned away from God's word.

At that moment, in that one act of disobedience by **one man sin entered into the world, and death** which is the punishment for sin, **and so death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.**

In Adam “**we have turned**”, wilfully from God.

The word **turned** comes from the root verb meaning **face**, it is a word that demands action.

The words literally refer **when you turn you set your face another way, in another direction, to look away**, Therefore, you are turning away from one place, person or position to another with purpose.

(The same word is used in **Ex 7:23** when God sent the plagues to Pharaoh, one of them was turning the water into blood.

As pharaoh looked upon that scene **verse 23** states that **pharaoh turned and went into his own house.**)

Think of the words in **Isaiah 53:3** “**we hid as it were our faces from Him**,” or in **verse 6** “**we turned to our own way**” - **we set our face on our own way** in our own direction.

I want you to see this sinner, because you have wilfully turned your face against God and His commandants, you are going your own way,

you are going deeper into sin, and sin will take you further than you ever thought you'd go, and sin will take from you more than you wanted to part with such as your family, Marriage, work.

Your sin will leave you in the dunghill, your life ruined, leaving you empty.

The direction your on now sinner, is deceptive, sin blinds you into thinking, it's ways are delightful, pleasant, prosperous, and fun, but it leads to destruction, eternal death.

Prov 14:22 “For there is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death.**”**

III THIRD, THE DANGER OF THE LOST SHEEP

The sheep having departed and going in its own direction, is a great danger. Danger of losing its life to wild beast, and particular it's enemy the wolf.

Danger of going into more fields, Danger of falling off a cliff, drowning in a stream.

Danger to dying without the care its needs.

Without the shepherd the sheep is defenceless and in great danger.

The sheep is now lost and will remain lost unless rescued.

The sheep is ignorant of its position.

You see, various animals which stray will eventually seek out home or return to it's home, but not the sheep.

The sheep is unaware its lost, it doesn't know it will perish without the shepherd.

The word **lost** in **verse 4** is the word meaning **to perish, ruined, destroyed, to be lost.**

Having departed from the shepherd the sheep will perish.

As in the case of Adam and Eve having sinned, they were now lost, in danger of eternal death.

In fact this world lost is the same world translated perish in **John 3:15** "***That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, (should not be lost, or destroyed,) but have eternal life.***

In their lost condition sinners are not aware of their dangerous state.

But you must know your soul is in danger of eternal hell.

You are a target to all the dangers which an ungodly world presents, the love, lust and pride of life.

To remain lost, to perish is eternal death. All will die physically, but the soul not saved before physical death will be cast to the torments of hell forever, which is eternal death.

The point made is that left to yourself you will remain lost and perish, unless you are awakened by Christ.

That's why we have this gospel mission because: the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

He is the good shepherd who gave His life for the sheep for sinners He came to save.

IV FOURTH, THE DELIVERANCE OF THE LOST SHEEP

While the sheep never sought the Shepherd, the Shepherd sought the sheep.

The Shepherd himself came continually seeking the lost sheep, to find it, and rescue it to safety.

And when he found the lost sheep, **he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing**. The shepherd lifted up the sheep from the place where it had strayed.

He received the sheep unto himself taking it from one position where it was lost and then raising it up to a new position altogether.

The shepherd bore the full load of the sheep he had found, and he carried it back to the fold.

This is what Christ the good, great and chief shepherd does for lost sinners He came to deliver.

He seeks sinners *given to Him by the Father* as stated by **John 17**. He seeks sinners lost and in danger in order to receive them

unto Himself, because He has *purchased them by His own blood* as **John 10:11 declares.**

Christ searching and saving ministry is successful as **Isaiah 42:4** states, “**He shall not fail nor be discouraged.**” Make no mistake Christ will always find the lost sheep, He seeks for to save.

After Adam and Eve, fell into sin, they never sought the Lord, rather they ran to hide from him,

however it was Christ who searched, found and rescued them by faith in His life, and death as symbolised by the lamb without spot and slain.

They believed the lamb died in their place, and therefore, they understood the lesson taught and trusted Christ as the sacrificial lamb slain for sinners,

What hope this gives you sinner, for without Christ seeking and saving, you remain lost forever. He seeks sinners with a purpose to deliver from eternal danger.

Therefore, when Christ finds and receives lost sinners unto Himself, He lifts them up, from the dung hill out of the miry clay, by bearing all their sin upon His shoulders, as **Isaiah 53:6** *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

The word **laid on Him** means **to fall upon, weight, force.**

Therefore, Christ bore the full load and weight of all His people's sin upon His own body on the tree.

John 10:28 “**I give unto my sheep eternal life and they shall never perish,**” they shall never be lost, all who come to Him He will in no wise cast out.

He redeems and rejoices over lost sinners, He finds, and receives them unto Himself, fully delivering them from the destructive path they were heading.

Just as the sheep was not left to make its own way back to the fold, it was carried by the shepherd teaching that the Christ safely carries His people to glory.

Men and woman lost in sin Christ is seeking to save sinners and receive them unto Himself, giving access and acceptance with God.

Will your testimony be today, I once was lost but now I am found.

Sinner, surrender to Christ just now, and be received into the sheepfold of Christ. He is willing and able to deliver you from eternal danger.

Hymn 221.