

Sunday March 25, 2012
Friend Day 2012
“An Occasion to Rejoice”
by C Benjamin Dill

Good morning and welcome to Friend Day at Lighthouse Baptist Church!

To all of our friends and guests today we offer a special welcome. We want you to enjoy the day with us as we celebrate some amazing special things the Lord has done here at Lighthouse Baptist Church.

Many of you are here because you have been invited by a friend. If you have a Friend that knows Jesus, you have a priceless treasure. You have someone in your life with access to the very throne room of God; someone who not only can but will go right to the throne of the Lord Himself on your behalf.

We live in a day where it is getting more and more difficult to find a reason to celebrate.

Many are without work; high costs of groceries and fuel and housing are taking what little many seem to have. Gas and groceries are worse of course, but over all what you bought in 2009 for \$20.00 now costs \$21.22 with most of us making less than we did in 2009!

It is tough out there; the only thing disappearing faster than our money seems to

be our freedoms. It seems like every other day there is some more bad news; if not war and conflict or crime, then another unexpected bill or tax or penalty of some kind shows up in the mail.

Well NOT TODAY! We are here today to celebrate! We are here today to rejoice. So just leave your burdens and cares in the parking lot; you can either pick them up on the way out...or you may choose to just leave them with Jesus!

So what's the special occasion, you ask? It's not Christmas or Easter and it's not my birthday:

No, but Easter is in two weeks and you sure want to be here then. (Let me tell you a secret; we don't celebrate Easter here. Easter has nothing to do with Jesus; it just happens to coincide on the calendar with our Lord's resurrection...for us it's Resurrection Sunday and boy do we love to celebrate the resurrection!) Bunnies and eggs are real easy to find, but if you want to celebrate Jesus' resurrection, this is the place you'll want to be!

What is the historic origin of Friend Day? The origin of Friend Day is that we made it up.

Oh, it's not new with us; others have done it; we got the idea from our mother Church up on the North side of Houston.

It is not however without scriptural significance and example, as you will see as we get in to the Word today.

In our text for today we will read about three celebrations where believers called their friends together to celebrate; it is these three occasions to rejoice are the basis of our Friend Day celebration today.

Luke 15:1-7

- 1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. [Jesus]
- 2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. (Aren't you glad that Jesus receives sinners!)
- 3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,
- 4 What man of you, having a 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?
- 5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing.
- 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.
- 7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Ladies and gentlemen:

I. We are here to rejoice over some “found sheep” today.

A. Who are these lost sheep?

1. Sometimes we think of lost sheep as those who are unsaved as Jesus describes in

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

2. This kind of “found sheep” is certainly reason to celebrate.

3. But right now we want praise the Lord for a different type of “found sheep:”

B. Some sheep, even “found sheep,” tend to get lost sometimes.

1. Oh, they don’t lose their sheep-hood, they just sometimes lose their way; or sometimes their way seems to lose them.

2. No one who has ever been saved has ever lost his/her salvation; a lot of folks who were told they were saved or perhaps repeated some prayer but didn’t understand the Gospel have missed Heaven but Jesus keeps His Word!

John 10:27-29

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

3. Most of our members here at Lighthouse were saved here; they became the Lord's sheep through their connection here with this Church.

4. We have been blessed here with a number of hand-selected "other" sheep who didn't get saved here but have been brought here to a new and wonderful home on the shoulders of our Great Shepherd.

5. Some of these lost their way for a while but not any more!

*C. These particular sheep are very special.
I will give you two reasons why:*

1. First of all, Lighthouse is no ordinary Church. God is doing things here and changing lives here like no place I have ever seen and have rarely ever heard of.

2. The Bible teaches that the Lord places His sheep where He wants them to be. Speaking of the Church:

1Corinthians 12:18 says: But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

3. I understand that I am obviously prejudiced; but I believe that Jesus has blessed you by giving you the most wonderful Church home any sheep could hope for!

4. And not only that; since the Lord won't set just any old grumpy lazy sheep in the Body here at Lighthouse; that means you must be pretty special yourself!

5. And you are. You are teachable, you have a genuine desire to serve, when you see truth in the Word that settles it for you; you are learning how to praise, and you are truly growing in the Lord.

6. That...is worth a celebration!

II. We are also here today to rejoice over some found silver.

Luke 15:8-10

8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find *it*?

9 And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

She lost one tenth of her treasure!

A. Here at Lighthouse we have discovered the joy of finding that missing 10%!

1. See these lights burning?
2. Feel that air conditioning?
3. That means that the lights are on because bills are paid!
4. The lights are on and the bills are paid and there is money in the bank because God's people are learning the joy; not only of tithing but of generously giving to the Lord.

B. At Lighthouse we are not shy about teaching Christians to tithe and to give.

1. Every year in December we actually sit down together and decide what % of our income we will give to God; we call it "Heart of Purpose Sunday."
2. Yes, we made that up too! But like Friend Day, it is not without scriptural foundation.
3. Look at the wonderful promise of scripture on this:

2Corinthians 9:6-8

6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

4. As the Bible says, the tithe belongs to the Lord. Tithing was instituted before God gave Moses the law, it was commanded in the law and it is commended by Jesus in the New Testament; it is faithfully bringing God the first tenth of all of which He blesses us financially.

5. At Lighthouse we all tithe; most of us bring it to God and for a few who are still learning, God comes and takes it.

6. We also give to God above the tithe (which the Bible says already belongs to God.)

7. One especially great blessing of this “found silver” is that here you don’t have to listen to a preacher beg for money every week!

And finally and perhaps most of all:

III. We are here today to rejoice over those who are alive from the dead! (pause for slide change)

Luke 15:11-32

- 11 And he said, A certain man had two sons:
12 And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living.
13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.
14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.
15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.
17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,
19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.
20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father

- saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.
- 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.
- 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet:
- 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat, and be merry:
- 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.
- 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.
- 26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.
- 27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.
- 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.
- 29 And he answering said to *his* father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

- 30 But as soon as this thy son was come,
which hath devoured thy living with harlots,
thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.
- 31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever
with me, and all that I have is thine.
- 32 It was meet that we should make merry,
and be glad: for this thy brother was dead,
and is alive again; and was lost, and is
found.

A. (Aside from the first priority of bring glory to God); The number one reason that the Lord placed this Church here is that we make the gospel clear and thus win the lost to Jesus.

1. Is there anybody here who is alive from the dead, who is going to heaven, who is born again as a result of God placing Lighthouse Baptist Church here?
2. Would you be willing to stand up and give God some praise for it today?
3. Would any of you other sheep be willing to stand with them and give God glory for bringing you to Lighthouse?

B. The elder brother in our story of the Prodigal son used to be a member here, but he got mad and left.

1. We hated to see him go, but the fact is that he didn't fit in here very well.

2. He thought he was better than his other brothers and sisters who God rescued out of some pretty vile sin.
3. He didn't like all that attention and priority on new believers and winning souls; he wasn't a very cheerful giver either.
4. He was really righteous and holy looking, but there was just no compassion; if the truth be known, he was probably lost.

Conclusion:

Some of you may be thinking; Wow! These people are a mess; I never saw such a collection of sinners!

You should know two things:

One: you are right; we are a mess!

Two: you are probably much too good for us and likely wouldn't fit in here at all.

However if -

Regardless of how you look on the outside, sin has made a mess of your life; if you would be willing to allow Jesus to make you into a whole new creation; you might fit in here just fine.

You see, Jesus will do just that.

There are so many lies being told about the Lord and about His amazing salvation.

You've got to live it!

You've got to turn from your sin!

You've got to....got to...got to....

The only thing you must do is stop depending on yourself and trust Jesus to save you from your sins.

I understand you cannot trust what you are not sure of. We can help you with that.

I understand you are skeptical; we will give you evidence; real proof that you can see and understand... not our opinion, but in the very provable Word of God Himself, written to us.

Jesus died on the cross for your sins; He was buried and rose from the dead after three days and three nights; He paid your debt and He did not leave you without hope!

We want to be a real friend; just ask any one of us and we will get you the answers you need.