

**Luke 15: 1-7; “The Parable of the Lost Sheep”, Session # 8 – “God’s Joy In Repenting Sinners”, Presented by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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. There is Joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents.**

**Question # 1: Who are those in Heaven who have this joy?**

**Answer:** The phrase, “There is more Joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents”, has reference to the 3 Persons of the Divine Trinity: God the Father, Christ the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit. And it also refers to the holy angels. They all rejoice in heaven when one sinner repents. And, then, it also refers to all the saints in heaven, as well, who rejoice when they hear of the “one sinner” who repents.

**2. The Joy of the Triune God over one sinner who repents.**

**The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rejoice to see true repentance in any sinner because of God’s own declarations in His word concerning repentance.**

**a. He declares that it is not His pleasure to see any sinner die in their sins.**

**Ezekiel 18: 30-32** – “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways,” says the Lord God.” “Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.” “Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.” “For why should you die, O house of Israel?” “For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies, says the Lord God.” “Therefore turn and live!”

**Question # 2** – What does the word “repent” mean here in verse 30? Why was everyone in Israel being exhorted to repent according to these verses?

**Answer:** So that iniquity would not be their ruin.

**Question # 3** – If God is a righteous Judge who hates sin, why would He say that He has no pleasure in the death of the one who dies in his or her sins? Conversely – What brings God Joy in relation to sinners repenting of their sins?

**Answer:** God is a righteous Judge who hates sin, but because He is essentially good and loving in His Being, He pities sinners, and has joy in seeing one sinner truly repent, more than 99 righteous persons (supposedly righteous persons, trusting in their own righteousness) who supposedly need no repentance. God’s joy is in seeing people turn to Christ for salvation, and repent of their sins. It is in seeing them turn from their sins unto Him for forgiveness, and the power to do what is right by the grace of His Son, that He finds joy and delight. The emphasis here in verse 31 is upon God’s joy and delight in seeing the actual

activity of the sinner; to cast away from themselves all their transgressions which they had committed. To cast them away is to turn away from the practices of sin, and to get rid of them as you would throw something detestable to you away. They were to get for themselves a new heart and a new spirit which means that they would have to cry out to God so that they would know that they were obtaining His mercy and His spiritual working in their hearts and minds; these actions which would actually bring them to repentance.

**b. According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism Question # 87 –**

“Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.”

**Question # 4** – What is a “true” sense of your sin, and what does it mean to have an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ?

**Answer:** A true sense of sin is yours when you come to understand how much your sins have dishonored God, and how much harm they have done; not only to yourself, but to other people who you have sinned against. It is not simply a general acknowledgement of your sinfulness, but it is you learning to view sin as God sees it – worthy of his judgment of eternal damnation. And that it is something that He hates, because of your sins keeping Him from blessing you and continually doing you good. You come to see that only faith in His remedy for sin, by repentance and faith in Christ, can you ever be saved, or make the heart of God joyful.

**Question # 5** – Why is it so important to have grief and hatred of your sin?

**Answer:** It is important to turn from your sin with grief and hatred of it because these feelings of sorrow and these thoughts of hatred toward it, will help you by God’s grace, to really turn from it and forsake it.

**Question # 6** – Why is it important for you to turn from your sin with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience?

**Answer:** It is important that you actually strive to enter by the narrow gate into eternal life, through faith in Christ. You realize that it is important for you to be serious about keeping all of God’s commandments and walking upon His path of righteousness.

**c. Genuine repentance has certain characteristics.**

**Psalm 119: 59 & 60** – “I thought about my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies.” “I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments.”

**Question # 7** – What are three things we can conclude about these verses that will give us understanding about true repentance?

**Answer:** That we should think upon our ways, that we should turn our feet to His testimonies in the Bible, and that we should make haste and not delay to keep God’s commandments. This will bring God joy.

**Joel 2: 12-14** – “Now, therefore, says the Lord, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” “So rend your heart and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm.” “Who knows

if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him – A grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord Your God?”

**Question # 8** – What is God looking for, according to these verses, in the way that we repent?

**Answer:** He wants us to turn to Him with all of our heart. When we see the seriousness of our sins, we will sometimes even feel the need to turn to Him with fasting and weeping and mourning over our sins. When we think of how awful our sins have been, we will rend our heart, and not just make an outward show of tearing our garments. If we have drifted away from God we will return to Him, believing that He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness in Christ.

**Question # 9** – What should our attitude be towards God’s favorably hearing our prayers and seeing our tears concerning our repenting of our sins, according to verse 14?

**Answer:** Although it may seem impossible to us for God to forgive us of our sins and restore us to His favor and blessing, our attitude should still be – Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him? Through Christ, all sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven, if we will sincerely repent of them and believe in Jesus Christ.

**Mark 3: 28 and Luke 12: 10**

**Question # 10** – Should we believe according to the verses above that God will, through Jesus Christ, forgive any and all of our sins provided that we have not sinned the sin against the Holy Spirit?