

Sermon Text: Luke 15 The Joy of Heaven in the Salvation of the Lost

Because God rejoices over the repentance of sinners, we should seek their salvation and rejoice in their return.

1) God mercifully pities rebellious sinners.

- a. The prodigal son illustrates the despicable nature of human rebellion against God (15:12-16, 19, 32).
 - i. Dishonoring (15:12)
 - ii. Selfishly reckless (15:13)
 - iii. Debased (15:14-16, 19)
 - iv. Dead to God (15:32)
- b. Yet, Jesus pities sinners as lost (15:4, 6, 8, 9, 25, 32).
 - i. 7X “lose/lost” (8X if include v. 17 “perish”—same Gk. root)
 - ii. He does not disown or despise them (15:4, 8, 11).
 - iii. He owns them as His elect, given to Him by the Father.

2) God sovereignly seeks the lost.

- a. 8X “find/found”
- b. The lost sheep and coin emphasize God’s initiative in man’s salvation (15:4-5, 8).
- c. The sheep and coin emphasize the sinner’s helplessness.
 - i. A lost sheep is helpless on its own.
 - ii. A lost coin is inert.
 - iii. “One” lost is most diligently sought “until he finds it.” Relentless grace.

3) God graciously welcomes the repentant.

- a. The prodigal son returns and is received with open arms (15:17-20).
 - i. Received as a son, not a slave (15:21-24).
 - ii. Shame is removed (15:22).
 - iii. Honor is bestowed (15:23).
- b. The sinner is received with joy.
 - i. Joy in heaven (15:6-7).
 - ii. Joy among angels (15:9-10).
 - iii. Joy among God’s people (15:23-24).

4) God calls the Church to share His mission and His joy (15:1-2, 25-32).

- a. The Great Shepherd is God.
- b. Leaders of the Church are under-shepherds who have stewardship of God’s flock.
- c. Pharisees and scribes are evil examples (15:2).
 - i. Grumbling against God’s mercy.
 - ii. Ironic description: “righteous persons who need no repentance” (15:7).
- d. As the Father reaches out to the elder brother, Jesus reaches out to the Pharisees and scribes to bring them into the celebration of the Kingdom of God and the salvation of sinners (15:25-32).
- e. **Application:**
 - i. Rejoice in God’s mercy to you. There is no one who needs no repentance.
 - ii. Repent of self-righteousness.
 - iii. Pity the despicable and the respectable lost.
 - iv. Seek the lost with compassion.
 - v. Rejoice in God’s mercy toward others.

Doxology: “Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God!’ Behold, the Sovereign LORD comes with might, and His arm rules for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him. He will tend His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs in His arms; He will carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.” (Isaiah 40:9-11)