

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 48

Luke 15

INTRODUCTION: We must understand that penitent sinners are the ones that Jesus receives. He did not receive the most accepted religious sinners who remained impenitent. To Nicodemus, Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.” (John 3:7) Yet Jesus did and does gladly receive penitent sinners. He received the sinful woman who, in the Pharisee’s house, wept at His feet and washed His feet with tears and anointed Him. (Luke 7:36-50) He received Mary Magdalene, out of whom were cast devils. (Luke 8:1, 2)

Jesus did not ever condone sin. He said in John 5:14, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” Yet He did spend His time receiving sinners who were penitent. In John 8:11 He said to a sinner, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

- I. SAVING SINNERS WAS THE NEAREST THING TO JESUS’ HEART. I Timothy 1:15 says, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” It was a faithful proverb no doubt widely spread in Paul’s day that the one thing Jesus came to do was to save sinners.

When Matthew was converted in Luke 5:27, he made a great supper. The Bible says, “There was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.” (Luke 5:29) There was a stir among the scribes and Pharisees. They asked, “Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?” Jesus answered and said unto them, “They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (Luke 5:30-32)

In Matthew 9:13, Jesus made this statement: “Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” That same statement is repeated in Mark 2:17. Yes, Jesus came to seek sinners.

In Matthew 18:11, Jesus said, “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.”

In Luke 9:56, He said, “For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”

In Luke 19:10, when Zacchaeus was converted and came down from the tree, Jesus went home with him and said, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

The very meat of the Great Commission, as given in Matthew 28:18, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46-49; John 20:19-23; and Acts 1:8, leads us to believe that Jesus came to seek and to save sinners. That was the purpose of it all.

- II. JESUS SHOWED THIS IN THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP. Read Luke 15:3-7. One thing rings throughout this entire parable—that the shepherd would give more attention to bringing in one sheep that was lost than for caring for 99 others who were in the wilderness but safe. Christian workers should spend more time on one lost soul than on looking after 99 church people.

There is a song that says, “There were ninety and nine that safely lay in the shelter of the fold.” This Scripture does not say there were ninety and nine safely in the shelter of the fold. It says that ninety and nine were in the wilderness, and yet the shepherd went after the one which was lost. He went until he found him. It was his one consuming passion to get the lost sheep.

There is nothing as helpless as a sheep. A sheep cannot find its way back. A sheep cannot care for itself. A sheep cannot nurture itself. A sheep is helpless and hopeless without a shepherd. The shepherd continued until he found the lost sheep. Here is a picture of God's persistent and urgent efforts to win the lost.

When the shepherd found the sheep, the Bible says he "layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me." As the winning of souls was the one main purpose in Christ's life and death, even so the winning of souls should be the main purpose in our lives.

- III. JESUS TAUGHT THIS IN THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN. Read Luke 15:8-10. A woman who had 16 pieces of silver lost one of them. A piece of silver might be called a "drachma" or "denarius" or a "penny." It is worth perhaps 8 pence in English money. By the gold standard, it would be worth probably 15 cents in American money, but its value was far greater in that day. It was the wage for a full day's work, as seen in Matthew 20:2 and Revelation 6:6. Some think that this money may have been dowry money which was greatly treasured and may have been strung like beads on a cord and worn as a necklace on the forehead. It may have been that the woman laboriously earned the small sum and saved it at the cost of many sacrifices for some urgent necessity. At any rate, this woman valued highly this coin. Thirty of these were worth the price of a slave. (Zechariah 11:12) Thirty pieces of silver were paid to the traitor, Judas, and that money was sufficient to buy the potter's field. So the coin was very precious.

Notice, she lit a candle, swept the house and sought diligently until she found it. She lit a candle because in stone houses there were no windows: only the door provided light. She swept the house because perhaps in a corner or in a crack between the stone she might find the coin. The house here no doubt is a type of the church. We are to sweep the house and keep it clean. We are to have the Light of the world in the house so we might win folks to Christ. The entire parable here is teaching the wonderful truth that Jesus is interested in sinners.

- IV. JESUS TAUGHT IT IN THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON. When the prodigal came home, the father said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." Here is a picture of the happiness of the father in clothing the son with a robe. This robe pictures salvation.

Then the father said, "Put a ring on his hand." A ring in the Bible is a symbol of assurance. The father was so pleased to have the son home. He wanted his son to have the assurance and security of his love.

The father said that shoes were to be put on the son's feet. This is a symbol of the changed walk the father wanted the son to have and the changed walk that we should have.

Then the father said, "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found.

- V. JESUS TAUGHT IT IN TELLING OF THE OLDER SON WHO DID NOT WANT TO FORGIVE HIS BROTHER. Bear in mind, the Pharisees had said in Luke 15:2, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." The older son represents these same Pharisees. He spoke as the scribes and Pharisees would speak. He said, "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." Jesus is showing His disdain for this kind of spirit, and He is showing the Pharisees that His life was wrapped up, not in helping the righteous, but in the saving of sinners!