

The Divine Joy of God over one sinner saved

- 1. Luke 15 may be the most loved chapter in all the Bible**
 - a. touching more hearts and reaching more souls than any other chapter in Bible
 - b. It has been called ‘the gospel within the gospel’
 - c. As if it is the most concentrated essence of ‘the good news’ Jesus preached
 - 2. Luke 15 is a series of parables: The Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son**
 - a. each expressing the true nature and heart of God in a way that is shocking to us...
showing the Divine Joy of God when 1 who is lost is saved
- Jesus shows 4 Ways we can become Lost & 4 ways God’s Love Seeks to Save the Lost**
-

I. 4 WAYS TO BECOME LOST

(1) WANDERING (v.4–5)

- 1. PARABLE: of the Lost Sheep—Sheep are innocent, but are prone to stray**
Because ‘The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence’
 - a) A shepherd once explained how sheep get lost. They nibble their way into lostness.
 - b) They move from one tuft of green grass to the next.
 - c) Moving along from tuft to tuft, sometimes right through a hole in the fence.
 - d) When they’re done nibbling they can’t find the hole and they’re lost.¹
- 2. WANDERING: Israel was delivered by God from Egyptian bondage...**
 - a) But the ‘Grass was always greener’ w/ the other nations...
 - b) They lost their faith and didn’t trust God & wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.
- 3. APPLICATION: Like sheep we are prone to wander for greener pastures**
 - a) thinking the world is having more fun than the church
 - b) We get distracted and wander away from the Shepherd
 - c) EX: Have you ever had your child w/ you and you turn around and their gone?!

(2) CARELESSNESS (v.8–10)

- 1. PARABLE: of the Lost Coin—The Greek word *drachma*, is a valuable coin often worn in a ten-piece garland by married women**
 - a) A necklace of ten coins was a headband that signified that a woman was married.
 - b) To lose one of the coins would be to ruin the necklace and embarrass the woman.
 - c) Like losing a valuable wedding ring
- 2. CARELESSNESS: Sometimes it is carelessness that causes us to lose our faith, by indifference or negligence.**
 - a) The Bible uses word: Drifting – a nautical term of being pulled away by the current

Hebrews 2:1,3 *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away... how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation*

¹ The Preacher’s Commentary, Luke

b) This is one of the easiest ways to loose your faith... because you don't have to do anything—it just happens slowly over time

c) Like a slow leak on a tire—it just slowly goes flat until your stuck w/ a flat

d) We get busy and forget to work on our faith...

e) The Armor of God get's put in the closet—and our sword get's rusty

3. APPLICATION: Have you ever misplaced your phone? or wallet?

a) You head to town or to work and then realize you don't have your wallet or phone...

b) You feel vulnerable—cut off from contact / or having no money in an emergency

c) Imagine leaving with our your Faith—how vulnerable do you feel?

EX: Family vacation to a cabin in the Sierra Mtns...

we packed everything but the kitchen sink—and left the Key to the Cabin at the house!

We drove 2 hrs before I realized—then 2 hours back, then had to drive the 3 hours again!

Some people can get so busy and distracted w/ life that they MISPLACE their faith—

and then when they need it in the critical hour—can't be found

(3) WILLFULNESS (v.11–24)

1. PARABLE: Prodigal Son was not careless—his Rebellion was intentional

a) He wanted his share of the inheritance and he wanted out

b) He wanted to do what he wanted to do—regardless of the consequences

c) AND HE DID—even though it was an insult to the Father

d) asking for the inheritance early was an insult in eastern culture

e) It was saying—'I care more for my Father's Money than I do for my Father himself'

2. BUT IT WAS HIS STUBBORN WILLFULNESS Led to His Downfall

a) He partied his inheritance away w/ Wine and Women

and when the famine hit — he was destitute

b) He Lost EVERYTHING—when the \$ was gone His Fair Weather Friends were gone!

c) He Wasn't WANDERING—He Was WILLFUL!

d) I don't want my fathers rules... But I'll Spend His Money! / I'll Take His Blessings!

e) But I'm going to do what I Want to Do

3. APPLICATION: A Willful Heart Has to Hit Rock Bottom to See the Light

It is Not Until We Realize We Are Broken—that we finally go back to God

“Brokenness isn't necessarily a bad thing. A farmer doesn't plant his crop in cement; rather, he chooses good soil, breaks it up, and then sows the seed. A butterfly could never flutter in the spring air without breaking its cocoon and neither could an eaglet emerge without breaking its shell.

Jesus could not feed the four thousand until he broke the bread (Mark 8:1–8). The sinful woman could not pour the costly perfume on the feet of Jesus until she broke the alabaster box (Luke 7:37). God could not reconcile Himself to sinful man until he broke down the wall that separated Him from us (Ephesians 2:14). We could never know salvation without Jesus' broken body (1 Corinthians 11:24). (Jim Wilson, Brokenness, Fresh Illustrations)

In many ways, we are not useful until we are broken. (Psalm 51:17) “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise.”

(4) RESENTMENT (v.25–32)

1. **PARABLE: Sometimes we forget there Were Two Sons in this parable.**
 - a) The Rebellious Younger Son Who Hit Rock Bottom and Repented...
 - b) The ANGRY Older Son Who RESENTED His Brother for What He Did
 - c) And Resented His Father For Taking Him Back and Celebrating it!
2. **RESENTMENT: He was in the field when he heard the music and laughing**
 - a) He was angry and He REFUSED to rejoice in his brothers repentance...
 - b) When his father tried to reason w/ him, he said—
 - c) All these years I have been serving you—and I never disobeyed your orders...
and You Never Gave Me a Party for me and My Friends!
 - d) But This Son of Yours wastes your inheritance and parties all your money away
 - e) Drags your name through the mud, and brings shame and reproach on our family
But You want to Celebrate with Him?
3. **APPLICATION: And We Get Angry Too...**

When we think were not getting the praise we deserve...

 - a) Year after year we try to do all the right things... say all the right things,
be all the right things... and no one thanks us, no one encourages us, no one cares...
 - b) but then they want to criticize us for not doing enough.

What a Dark Picture of Resentment—

He is invited in to celebrate > but he would rather stay out in the dark & cold

***We have all wandered from God, we have all been careless with our faith,
even willful and angry at times with resentment...***

II. 4 ASPECTS OF GOD'S LOVE TO SAVE THE LOST

(1) SEEKING (v.4-7)

1. **GOD CARES FOR US INDIVIDUALLY!**
 - a) Sheep all look the same—so how would a shepherd know if 1 was missing?
 - b) But the Good Shepherd Knows His Sheep—and they know Him!
 - c) He knows us individually (**John 10:14–15**) – by name! (**Jn 10:3**)
–**Jesus is the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11) Who Lays Down His Life for the Sheep!**
2. **GOD UNDERSTANDS OUR WEAKNESSES...**
 - a) Sheep are prone to wander — and they are also defenseless
 - b) Predators have the ability to see and hunt in the dark
 - c) A stray sheep will not last long in the Dark or in the Wild
–**God knows we are weak and defenseless w/o Him! (Ps 103:14)**
3. **GOD SEEKS US WHEN WE STRAY!**
 - a) The image of a shepherd watching over his sheep was precious to Israel...
 - b) An OT scholar who travelled extensively Israel, wrote of the shepherd:

‘On some high moor across which at night the hyaenas howl, when you meet him, sleepless, far-sighted, weather-beaten, armed, leaning on his staff and looking out over his scattered sheep, every one of them on his heart, you understand why the shepherd of Judaea sprang to the front in his people’s history; why they gave his name to the king and made him the symbol of providence; why Christ took him as the type of self-sacrifice.’ (George Adam Smith)²

(2) WAITING (v.17-20)

1. In this parable we see the **PATIENCE** of our Father—**WAITING** and **HOPING** that something would reach our heart and open our eyes!
2. The Father didn’t even let the son finish his apology!
3. He was so willing to forgive, that He ran to him and embraced him!
4. He was Dead and now he is Alive, Lost and now Found!
5. is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:8–9 NIV)
—SOMETIMES IT TAKES THE STORMS OF LIFE TO REACH OUR HEART

(3) PLEADING (v.28-32)

1. The Older Son Was Angry w/ His Brother and Angry w/ His Father
2. The Father pleaded w/ him to understand & accept his brothers repentance
3. Sometimes it takes the storms of life to reach our heart...
4. Sometimes it take the pleading of our Heavenly Father to Reach our Hearts
5. And Sometimes **NOTHING** Will Reach our hearts—not even Grace!
—*God is pleading with us—(2 Corinthians 6:1–2)*

(4) CELEBRATING (v.5–7; v.9–10, v.22-24)

1. Each parable showed the Joy & Celebration over 1 lost soul saved!
The **Friends Rejoiced** / The **Angels Rejoiced** / The **Father Rejoiced!**
 - a) Many Jews Thought God would Rejoice Over 1 Sinner Destroyed—not 1 saved!
But God takes no pleasure in the death of the Wicked (**Ezekiel 33:11**)
 - b) The Greeks Didn’t Think God Could Have Emotions—else He could be manipulated
2. **But Jesus is showing us the True Nature and Heart of God—**
He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked...
But He rejoices even over 1 sinner who repents & returns to Him!

CONCLUSION:

1. Repentance brings divine joy to the heart of God! (**Lk 15:10**)
 - He **CARES** for us individually...
 - He **SEEKS** us when we stray...
 - He **REJOICES** When We Repent from the Heart & Return to Him

² George Adam Smith, cited by William Barclay, Luke