

## The Parables of Christ no. 34

*The Lost Sheep*

*Sunday, May 1, 2004*

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Prayer...

**LUKE 15:1 ¶** *Then drew near unto him all the publicans* (Those are the tax farmers or what we call tax collectors) *and sinners for to hear him.* (Notice that right off the bat we are told that the people who were not considered much in society came to hear Jesus. They came with one purpose, and that is to hear the words of Jesus. Then in verse 2 we hear of another group of people that were in the crowd.)

**2 And the Pharisees** (these are the separatists, those who have separated themselves from others to live strictly religious lives. These are the legalist who studied the Law to find ways of making life more difficult to live. These are they who because of their own choice to live out every jot and tittle of the law, felt within themselves that they were much better than others. You remember the parable Jesus tells about the Pharisee and the publican who went into the synagogue to pray. We spoke of it in Parables number 29. And we examined humility and how important it is in the Christian life. We found this parable in Luke 18.

**LUKE 18:9 ¶** *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men [are], extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as [his] eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified [rather] than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

So we see the Pharisees showed up and were in this crowd of people, and there was another group which we read *and the scribes* (Now, the scribes were a professional class of people, like the town clerk, or people in important positions because of their training to read and write, and perhaps were good with math, and those kind of things. They were a professional; people who like the Pharisees trusted in their own selves, and their own abilities to get them ahead.

Now, I want you to remember from our study of these kind of people in Parables 29, that the attitude is what is important here. And so we are now viewing another scene where we have two completely different types of people gathering into one crowd. Those that trusted in themselves. That is the religious, (the legalist) and then those that were educated people. These are people that trust in their education, their ability to read and write, and their ability to know more than the next man. These consider themselves to be a better class of people than the others.

And I want you to notice the motive between the two classes of people who had assembled here. The sinner came to hear the Words of Jesus, and the educated and religious separatists came to murmur. **2 And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured,** (now before we examine what they had to say while murmuring, I just want to point out that the intentions of these two different groups of people were very different. The one group, the sinners and tax collectors, came to hear what Jesus had to tell them. They came because they were interested. In fact the very evidence that they were interested is that they came to hear. But these others came also, but we are told they did not come to hear. They came to murmur. And spread discord throughout the crowd of people. ) *saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* Now, I think it is interesting here to note that there were two classes of people that are mentioned here. The Sinner is one group, and the Religious and educated people are lumped together in another group. I believe that is because these are those people who trust in their own abilities, rather than in God. And notice the attitude of the sinner. He came to hear Jesus while the educated and religious came to mock and murmur. Now the word murmur means to complain throughout a crowd. So it is apparent that their motive was not to come and listen, but to come and try to dissuade others from hearing. They came with one intention and that is to cast aspiration against Jesus. In other words, they came to sow discord, and that is the only reason they were there.

**3 And he (Jesus) spake this parable unto them, saying, 4 What man of you, having an 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.**

Now, it is very apparent that Jesus is speaking to the sinner giving him hope, all the while aiming his words at the educated and religious snobs who look down on the sinner.

So we see this parable has two objectives. The first is to give hope to the sinner, and to let him know that he is of great value though he be lost. And the second objective is to chastise the hardened attitude of the religious and educated who look out only for their own selves, and do not look on others with the respect that a man would look out for mere dumb sheep.

He is telling them in essence that they have more respect and love for one of their sheep than they have for these poor sinners that have lost their way. That is the attitude that Christ is desiring in each of us in this end-time. We can go all around this world meeting people of every race and ethnic background, and yet we still find these two classes of people even right here in this message.

Those that are know it alls, and are dependant upon their ability to read the message for themselves. And then those that are struggling to come to grips with who they are what they are here for. Those are the people that want to listen and want to know, and yet because they have been treated so miserably by the religious and educated among us, they feel less than worthy, and thus rejected.

Brother Branham said in his sermon called **THE TOKEN 63-0901M 32-3** *Don't just come this far, say, "I believe the message." You obey the message. Come into Christ. You say, "Oh, I believe every word you said, Brother Branham." That's good. but that is just being able to read. Take the Message; take it into your heart, that you must have the Token, the very Life that was in Christ, be in you. "When I see that, I will pass over you."*

And again in the sermon he called **THE CHURCH AND ITS CONDITION 56-0805 19** *We can read it; we who are able to read can read it; but only God can bring the context out. The text can be read, 'cause It is His Word; but then the context has to be given by God.*

So you see, it is not whether you can read it for yourself, or whether you have the entire message available to you. But it is the condition of your heart for that message. And it saddens me to see men that claim to believe this message have become so hardened against everyone that does not believe it the way they see it. And I am not speaking of just taking a stand for what you believe because we must take a stand for what we believe. But we are not called to look down on others who do not understand. And that is what I believe this parable is all about.

Jesus is telling the lost that there is hope for them, and at the same time he is telling the religious that they treat their animals better than they treat the lost children of God.

My heart pains me when I hear stories of how poorly people have been treated by others who claim to believe this message. Look, it is one thing for you to be treated by the denominations for standing firm on your belief, but to take a stand in this message, among the many who believe the message differently than you believe is where the real rub comes.

I was in Jeffersonville a few weeks ago and met some believers from a certain city. One of the brothers mentioned that they were looking for another church and felt all alone, because the church they attended castigated them, and made them to feel they were not even born again because they did not see the message the way the pastor was teaching it.

In fact one of the brothers said that his little girl had gotten very sick and had to go to the hospital and so he asked his boss if he could take some time off from work to go to the hospital to see his daughter, and the boss told him "**No you can't**"!!! and so the man said to his boss, "**she is very sick, what if she dies?**" and the boss said, "**I don't care if she dies, in fact I don't care if you and your whole family die**"!!! Now, you might say, that boss was a real hardened character, probably an atheist, or some kind of unbeliever, and yet that boss of his was the deacon in his church.

**JESUS OF NAZARETH PASSETH BY 58-0524 E-8** I believe that we have went and educated people (which is fine, nothing against it), and build churches, denominations, organizations. And in there we've drawn a line as a certain brotherhood, like the Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Pentecostal, all like that. And drew little separating lines that separated us. If we would have forgot about that and just went in the power of the Spirit of God, with a **brotherly love for all people**. "This will all men know you're My disciples, when you have love one for the other." Now, believing this to be God's Word, I'd just like to take a little text, as I explained last night. Before we do that, let's talk to the Author just a minute again with our heads bowed. Lord God, I am so grateful to Thee for this grand privilege of being able to read Thy Word, and to speak, and to humble our hearts before Thee for the working of the Holy Spirit. Now, grant to us, Lord, Thy Word. Speak something that would encourage believers to believe. For we ask it in Jesus Christ's Name. Amen.

Now, with these thoughts in mind of how hard and callous we can become towards God's Children, let's look at this parable from the Gospel of Matthew. Because here we see that those that Jesus told this parable too were his own disciples, and they had just been debating who should be the greatest among them.

**MATTHEW 18:1 ¶** *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*

Now, what kind of a question is that to ask? If these men really understood sovereignty and the solitary God they would not have even asked that question. But that is man, and I believe that is why it was recorded in the Scriptures. So we could see how carnal man can get. Just like those people who could stand there and watch miracle after miracle take place in Moses ministry, how one man with a stick could speak to the Sea and it would part, and destroy the most powerful military force on earth at that time. And then a few days later they were ready to stone that same man.

**EXODUS 17:1 ¶** *And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and [there was] no water for the people to drink. 2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? 3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore [is] this [that] thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? 4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. 5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?*

So we see here the apostles themselves were carnal and vied with one another to see who should be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. And before Jesus tells them this parable, he talks to them about humility.

*2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,* (now, notice how Jesus calls this little child. Probably no special little child to the apostles, but that child was special to its mother and father. But to make an illustration, he calls for this little child and then says to them, "You all think you are something, but let me tell you something, if you do not become like this little child, you will not even have a place with m in the Kingdom of My Father. Notice his words, *3 And said, Verily I say unto you,*(now the word verily means surely, or truly, or of a truth, I say unto you...) *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Now, those are pretty strong words coming from Jesus to these men who had given up house and lands and peoples and family to follow him. And yet He did not say these things just to make a point. He said them because He meant them. And He is the same yesterday, today and forever. And Heaven and earth will pass away but not one jot or tittle of His word will fail.

Notice He said, *Except ye be converted* and that word converted means: to turn one's self from one's course of conduct, or to change one's mind. So in other words, He was not happy with what was going on in their ranks. And He let them know that unless they stop thinking like they were and humble down and become like this child, they would in no way enter into the Kingdom of God.

Now, I ask you, isn't it time that the people in this message begin to come to this place where they can be kind to one another, and treat one another with respect. Is it really necessary for the people in the churches to place a fence around their ministers to protect them from others getting too close? Is that the Christian way? Or is that the way of man, to put up fences to keep others out.

What ever happened to what brother Branham taught us to make the circle bigger? What ever happened to Christian Love and charity? What ever happened to giving your second coat to the stranger in need? What ever happened to feeding the poor, and helping the fatherless.

I don't say that we need to start a works program, but we need to humble down and begin to show respect and appreciation for all the things God has given to us.

In verse 4, Jesus says, *4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

The way up is down, my brother and my sister! **PRAYER.LINE 53-1121 E-23** *And then those people looked to that old fisherman, and you know what they did? If he'd have had some great degree to go by, he'd have had something to glory in, but God took nothing and made something out of it. That's the way God does: just takes the nothing to make something.*

*And when you can become nothing in your own sight, you're becoming something in God's sight then. And always remember this, friends, the way up is down. "He that exalts himself shall be abased, but he that humbled himself shall be exalted." So just love Him with all your heart and forget all you ever knowed about all other things but Jesus Christ. Just go ahead and love Him and work for Him; serve Him. If He wants you to be the doormat, well, you just be the doormat and that... It's whatever He wants you to do, you do it. God bless you now.*

Now, what do you suppose went through the minds of those apostles when Jesus called for that little child to come forth? And what about those educated and religious separatists? But when He began to speak He let them know that they had a wrong attitude and this child had the right attitude.

**ANGEL OF THE COVENANT 54-0301 E-18** *Don't expect to know God by education or theology; you know God by being borned again, new birth. The Holy Spirit wrote the Word of God. And He so entangled it in there; He said, "I've hid it from the eyes of the wise and prudent and will reveal it to babes such as will learn." So if you want to know anything, get to be a baby. Don't be too smart. The way up is down. "He that humbles himself shall be exalted. He that exalts himself shall be brought abase." And I think of writing the Scripture, how the Holy Spirit hid those mysteries in there. And all the Bible schools and seminaries will never be able to pull it out. God knows it alone and will reveal it to who He will. Is that right?*

*5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.* Do you realize what he is saying here? We should be of such a nature that it means just as much to us to speak to the children as it means to speak to the adult. We should try just as hard to teach the child as we try to teach the adult. God hides in simplicity, and he does not manifest himself in great welling words, but God has chosen the simple things whereby to express himself to us.

**I CORINTHIANS 1:25** *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, [yea], and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.*



Now, in getting back to our parable, let's pick up in verse **6** *But whoso shall offend (that means to put a stumbling stone in their way, to entice them into sin) whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

Then how ought we to conduct ourselves with respect to each other and reverence towards God?

**7 ¶** *Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! 8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. 9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. 10 Take heed that ye **despise not** one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.*

And remember, Jesus was despised and rejected of man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And so he warns us to never despise any of the least of the Father's children.

Now, the word despise means: To regard with contempt or scorn: **2.** To dislike intensely; to loathe: **3.** To regard as unworthy of one's interest or concern: and so by your lack of interest in one another you are despising one another. And we must be careful to never assume that attitude. For our whole purpose of being is to look out on one another with interest to save, and to heal and the help. For Jesus tells us ...

**11** *For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.* He did not come to save those who don't need saving. He did not come to find those that were not lost. But He came for the sole purpose of saving the lost, and healing the sick, and opening the eyes of the blind, and setting those in prison free.

**ISAIAH 42:5 ¶** *Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: 6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. 8 I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. 9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.*

**PSALMS 146:5 ¶** *Happy [is he] that [hath] the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope [is] in the LORD his God: 6 Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein [is]: which keepeth truth for ever: 7 Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners: 8 The LORD openeth [the eyes of] the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous: 9 The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down. 10 The LORD shall reign for ever, [even] thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.*

And now after all this build up concerning humility and having the proper respect towards one another, Jesus speaks the parable to them...**12** *How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? 13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. 14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*

Let's just bow our hearts and our heads in a word of prayer.