

## Lost and Found

- I can remember one year as a kid getting a gold, ballpoint pen from my grandmother. Anything that came from her instantly became precious to me. I took that pen everywhere I went and one day lost it in the woods behind a cub scout leader's home. We searched seemingly every nook and cranny of that property but to no avail. Years later when visiting that same property I mentioned the pen I had lost and to my surprise the owner had recently found it and kept it in a junk drawer. It was the very same pen my grandmother gave me years before but at that time was rusty, covered in dirt and no longer functional. But I still loved that pen because of where it came from. **Jesus** told several parables concerning items that were lost and then found. Why? What point was **He** trying to make when **He** told such visual stories?

Luk 15:1 Then drew near unto **Him** all the publicans and sinners for to hear **Him**. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

- Through these parables **Jesus** was able to get **His** point across to those who understood. But there were those who thought so highly of themselves that, in **their** thinking, **He couldn't** have been talking about them. One such parable had to do with sheep and another with a piece of silver.

Luk 15:3 And He 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.

- In this parable **Jesus** was trying to make the point that no soul is without value, no matter how unpopular and that we are all to have the same mindset this shepherd had when it comes to the lost. And just as something lost in this life can bring so much joy when found, so it goes in **Heaven** when one soul is saved. It also gives us an inkling of our status in the eyes of the angels in **Heaven** and their present participation in the affairs of mankind. Oh how they rejoice when one lost soul is found.

Luk 15:8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver (*Gk.1406- a drachma or [silver] coin*), if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find *it*? 9 And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends and *her* neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

*“The drachma was about the value of fifteen cents, and consequently the whole sum was about a dollar and a half, or six shillings. The sum was small, but it was all she had. The loss of one piece, therefore, was severely felt.”*  
Albert Barnes

- No matter how we might perceive one soul's worth, every one of us has value in the sight of God. Including those who live lives oblivious to the truth. Even Paul, “who was before a blasphemer” had “obtained mercy, because [he] did it ignorantly in unbelief” (*1 Tim 1:13*). He was “a chosen vessel unto Me (*Christ*)” (*Act 9:15*) because deep down inside,

although “as touching the law, a Pharisee” (*Php 3:5*), Christ knew he was humble enough to admit his lot in life.

**1Ti 1:15** This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; **of whom I am chief.**

- Every soul is precious in God’s sight and not one, no matter how physically healthy or how ill, how prosperous or how poor, whether apolitical or politically correct, not one is beyond His love to receive His grace through obedience in Christ Jesus.

### Grace

- It is true that we are saved by God’s grace because without His unmerited favor we would all be lost. But, as we saw last week in James where “faith without works is dead” (*2:17*), grace alone will not save either. God did His part to save mankind in sending His Son to die in our stead. The more sinful the person the more God’s grace would cover with the blood of Christ since...

**Rom 5:20** ... where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: **21** That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

- And since God did His part, we then have to do our part through obedience to His will. There is a teaching known as the “doctrine of eternal security” which claims that once a person is saved by God’s grace they never have to be concerned with losing their soul from that point forward. Every sin committed, big or small, will be covered no matter what. But how did the apostle feel, even after leading so many to Christ, about his own security when he wrote to the church at Corinth in *1 Cor 9:27*?

**1Co 9:27** But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: **lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.**

- Therefore we can conclude that if Paul, as an inspired apostle of Christ, felt there was a strong possibility that he could lose his eternal soul, then such a doctrine is false to the core that teaches otherwise. Even as Moses who had looked forward to entering into the promised land, after not obeying God’s specific instructions concerning the rock (*Num 20*), was kept from going in because of one infraction, who are we to think we are any better than they?

**Rom 6:1** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? **2** God forbid (*let it never be*). How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

- We are all “slaves” to something. That something is whatever has our devotion, whether it be a certain organization, club, goal in life or even religion. And being a slave to whatever doesn’t necessarily mean we don’t have a choice in the matter. Like under the law of Moses. If a Hebrew was indebted to his neighbor and served him until the seventh year he could remain under his authority, if he wished because of the treatment he received, for the rest of his life.

**Deu 15:16** And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; **17** Then thou shalt take an

awl, and thrust *it* through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant forever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.

- This is where the idea of having a ring in the ear came from. It is a token of servitude. We have all had figurative rings in our ears once we understood the concept of sin and decided to be slaves to it. But we can all exchange those figurative rings for new, better ones if we so choose. Remember, it is a choice to either be slaves to sin or servants of righteousness.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

### Free Through Slavery

Rom 6:13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments (*Gk.3696- implement [literally or figuratively, especially offensive for war]*) of righteousness unto God.

- We are in a spiritual war for the lost souls of mankind. That war was won when Jesus resurrected from the grave “that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (*Heb 2:14*). But many battles remain to be fought. Having the knowledge to be on the winning side, shouldn’t we all decide to be instruments of spiritual warfare in the army of the Conqueror and not on the losing side in service to Satan? If we haven’t submitted to Christ we are in submission to Satan and every time we sin our spiritual weaponry is in service to the devil. Sin then has power over us.

Rom 6:14 For sin shall **not** have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid (*let it never be*). 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye **were** the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form (*Gk.5179- Thayer: the teaching which embodies the sum and substance of religion and represents it to the mind*) of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made **free** from sin, ye became the **servants** of righteousness.

“...they had yielded a cheerful and hearty obedience to what had been communicated to them...”  
Albert Barnes

- That form of doctrine represents the gospel which “is the power of God unto (*Gk.1519-purpose*) salvation” (*Rom 1:16*). The word “unto” here is the same word in the Greek found in *Acts 2:38*. Not only are we saved by grace and the gospel, we are saved through our obedience in baptism.

Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for** (*Gk.1519-purpose*) the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

- How sad it is that so many try to make the word “for” (*Gk.1519 ‘eis’*) into another Greek word (*Gk.1223- ‘dia’*) that means “because of” or “after”. They translate this plain teaching as being baptized **because** or **after** their sins were **already** remitted. If we

want to be on the Lord's side in this battle we will always interpret passages in their context according to what the inspired writers wrote and not according to some man-made, uninspired teaching. Those who interpret scripture by whatever denominational doctrine are what Jesus termed "blind leaders of the blind" (*Mat 15:14*). Notice how the Greek word for 'because' is used to represent what happened 'before' the Samaritans heard Jesus for themselves. They believed He was the Christ only after they heard Him.

**Joh 4:41** And many more believed **because** (*Gk.1223*) **of His own** word;

- That is, they didn't take the Samaritan woman's word for what she said about Jesus being the Messiah, believing her **before** they heard Him in person. They believed **because**, or after, they heard Him in person. On the other hand, those who submitted to Peter's teaching on Pentecost weren't saved 'before' they were immersed because baptism is "for (*looking forward to*) the remission of sins" (*Act 2:38*). Those present to hear Peter's sermon were finally able to see the err of their ways and were converted according to his teaching.

#### Once Blind Now See

**Joh 9:39** And Jesus said, **For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.**

- This is where Jesus was able to separate the unbeliever from the believer "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (*Mat 25:32*). Many paid close enough attention to understand He was actually referring to them, but not close enough to be converted.

**Joh 9:40** And *some* of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also? **41** Jesus said unto them, **If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.**

- Sadly, even today, there are so many who feel they understand and have the answers but not according to truth. Even John the immerser was so concerned that he may have put so much stock in believing Jesus was the Christ. Which is why he sent two men to Jesus to ask Him if He was the One or if they should "look for another".

**Luk 7:21** And in that same hour He cured many of *their* infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many *that were* blind He gave sight. **22** Then Jesus answering said unto them, **Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. 23** And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.

- Not only was Jesus healing those who had physical maladies, but "to the poor the gospel is preached". These were the "poor in spirit" (*Mat 5:3*) who were so blessed as to not have the cares of this life to burden them to the point of not being focused to hear His message of the gospel. Opposite of poor is rich. When His disciples were perplexed because of what He said concerning "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God" (*Lk 18:24*) it was because of their lack of being able to pay attention to anything but their worldly possessions. Which is why He spoke in parables to the multitudes, from every walk, the rich, the poor and even the middle class. Aside from the spiritually poor that Jesus spoke about, we can all be so caught up in possessions and

man-made wisdom that it's possible to misplace our priorities when it comes to where our focus **should** be. The humble would understand thus exposing those who weren't.

Mat 13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart (*Gk.2588- mind*) is waxed gross (*Gk.3975-thick*), and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

- People can be so thick headed, according to what Jesus said here. The person who is most blind is the one whose physical vision may well be 20/20. Their heart is blinded most when they refuse to see (*i.e., perceive*) the truth. The question Jesus asked then is one that many need to answer truthfully today.

Joh 8:43 Why do ye not understand My speech (*Gk.2981- saying*)? *even* because ye cannot hear My word.

*“The reason why sinners do not understand the Bible and its doctrines is because they cannot bear them. They hate them, ... Hence, they embrace every form of false doctrine, and choose error rather than truth, and darkness rather than light. A disposition to believe God is one of the best helps for understanding the Bible.”* Albert Barnes

Pro 15:32 He that refuses instruction despises his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding. 33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

*“We may rest assured that the providence of God will never elevate a proud man...”* Adam Clarke

- Before anyone will ever understand the words of Jesus they must have a humble heart in order to perceive what He has said. Otherwise it would be akin to hating their own soul with the desire to spend eternity “in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (*Rev 21:8*). Obviously nobody has actually ever wanted to end up in such a place of torment. But most, if not all, who will end up there were not of a humble enough disposition to seek or understand to obey the truth in the first place. It's so much easier to let someone else do the groundwork **for** them and just follow whatever it is that they teach before going to the source and figuring it out for themselves.

Pro 16:18 Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty (*Heb.1363- arrogant*) spirit before a fall.

- Some might say “Well I believe you're talking about me!” As the saying goes “if the shoe fits, wear it”. If we can't have a humble enough heart to understand that **every one of us** needs to do a little soul searching from time to time, then the saying goes without apology. How often do we see where the Pharisees of Jesus' day were so out of touch with reality, were so pompous and spiritually arrogant? And yet there are so many that see that but refuse to admit that they themselves could be considered “Pharisaical” and are the very ones today with that same attitude that Jesus spoke against back then.

Pro 1:7 The fear (*Heb.3374- moral reverence*) of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise (*Heb.936- disrespect*) wisdom and instruction (*Heb.4148- reproof: -correction*).

- Again, sometimes a little soul-searching can be in order. I have to ask myself “am I following the truth, am I willing to set aside all bias and preconceived ideas when it comes to my eternal soul’s salvation?”

Jas 1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway (*Gk.2112- at once: -immediately*) forgets what manner of man he was.

- Every time we look into a mirror we can see our own personal flaws (*some having to look a little closer than others*) but it seems the moment we turn away we forget about those imperfections.

Jas 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

- Note the contrast between the physical appearance and how much closer we are to pay attention to where we stand spiritually. The “perfect law of liberty” is the “**new commandment**” Jesus gave “**that ye love one another; as I have loved you**” (*Jn 13:34*), to love God and love your neighbor. If we love God then we’ll love Jesus and as He said in *Jn 14:15* “**if you love Me, keep My commandments**”. But we can forget those commandments if we aren’t constantly looking into the perfect law of liberty contained in God’s word.

Jas 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

- We can talk a good talk, even to the point of believing a lie as though it is the truth, but if we aren’t walking the walk we can’t possibly understand what it means to continue in keeping His commandments. Jesus was so concerned about His disciples not walking the walk that He used the example of the status children had under the law. And notice, it had nothing to do with their innocence, per say.

Luk 18:17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

- Under Jewish teaching at that time, children “had absolutely no status, no ‘rights’ beyond what the adults in their lives extended to them” so Jesus taught His “disciples that they must become devoid of the desire for status and power” (*That We May Share His Holiness, by Tommy South- pg.48*). But such can be so difficult because of the very powerful influence of a person’s pride.

#### Pride

- Pride is a destructive force that will keep many from entering the kingdom of Heaven. And many that have it are so under its influence that they are unable to realize its control over them. Their “conscience [is] seared with a hot iron” (*1 Tim 4:2*), as though their

brain tissue is cauterized and has no feeling. They lack the humility to look within to perceive it.

Jas 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.

- Like the story of the pen from my grandmother and how precious it was to me, your soul is even more precious to God. So precious that He gave what was most valuable to Him to save you. All He asks in return is your loyalty to Him by obeying His word to “save yourselves from this untoward (*Gk.4646- warped; figuratively perverse*) generation” (*Acts 2:40*). How is that done?

1Co 14:33 For God is not *the Author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

- God made simple what man seems bent on making difficult. By taking things out of context or adding teachings that were never meant, so many have corrupted the simple meaning of God’s word. But, as John wrote in the Revelation...

Rev 22:18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall **add** unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall **take away** from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

- Friends, have you been led to take **from** or **add to** any teaching that God has given to the inspired writers who wrote all 66 books of the Bible? Maybe you’re not sure. You can be by taking a closer look into your own heart. Are you humble enough to admit you may have been led astray by the teachings of mere men? You need to be saved by humbly submitting to God through His word.

#### #1.Have you heard?

Eph 1:13 In **Whom** ye also *trusted*, **after that ye heard** the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in **Whom** also **after that ye believed**, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

#### #2.Do you believe?

Rom 10:14 How then shall they call on **Him in Whom they have not believed?** and how shall they believe in **Him of Whom they have not heard?** and how shall they hear without a preacher?

#### #3.Have you repented?

Luk 15:7 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.

#### #4.Have you confessed Jesus as the Christ?

Mat 10:32 **Whoever** therefore shall **confess Me before men**, him will I confess also before My Father Who is in Heaven. 33 **But** whoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father Who is in Heaven.

#5. Have your sins been washed away?

Mar 16:16 He that believeth **and** is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

1Pe 3:20 ... when once the longsuffering of **God** waited in the days of **Noah**, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were **saved by water.**<sup>21</sup> The **like figure** whereunto *even* **baptism** doth also now **save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the **answer of a good conscience** toward **God**,) by the **resurrection** of **Jesus Christ**:

#6. If you've done all these things, have you remained faithful?

Joh 15:10 If ye **keep** My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

#7. Are you growing?

2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our **Lord** and **Saviour Jesus Christ**. To Him *be* glory both now and forever. Amen.

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