

“The Love & Loss of God!”

1. **Intro:**

- 1.1. **Theme:** is the **Grace** of God from beginning to end.
- 1.2. **The celebration of something lost being found.**
 - 1.2.1. **Example:** My **sun glasses** mailed to me this week; my **dogs** a few weeks back; joy when you find the **cars keys**.
 - 1.2.2. **How do these ever compare to a soul plucked from the fire?**
- 1.3. Here we have one of the **greatest chapters** in the bible.
 - 1.3.1. **What light, color, & glory shines on God’s matchless beauty here!**
 - 1.3.2. The 3 parables (lost: sheep, coin, son) seem to form a triptych (3-fold) as they are linked to each other.
 - 1.3.3. The early church Fathers declared this was not 3 parables, but 1 parable in **3 movements!**
 - 1.3.4. **Note progression:** 1st was one of a 100 (1%); the 2nd was one of 10 (10%); the 3rd was one of 2 (50%).

2. **LOST SHEEP – THE LOVE OF GOD! (1-7)**

- 2.1. **TWO GROUPS!** (1-3)
- 2.2. Here we have Christ’s defense for His ministry to sinners.
 - 2.2.1. This “unwashed promiscuous crowd”.
 - 2.2.2. He even **ate** with them...He might *contract their defilement!* ☹
 - 2.2.3. But just the opposite was true, Jesus was afraid of others contracting the Pharisees “**Religiously Transmitted Disease**”. (actually a book title)
- 2.3. (2) **This Man receives sinners** –
 - 2.3.1. **Uttered in condemnation...Yet, hits the mark beautifully!**
 - 2.3.2. Here is the Gospel in a grumble! [Griffith Thomas]
- 2.4. **This Man**, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, **this** Man receives sinners. [He did! He does!]
- 2.5. **This Man**, who is no other than the eternal God, before whom angels veil their faces, **this** Man receives sinners.
 - 2.5.1. The offended God, against whom the sin has been committed, should take upon himself the form of a servant, and bear the sin of many, and should then be willing to receive the vilest of the vile, this is marvelous.
- 2.6. **This Man receives sinners** - not for them to **remain** sinners, but He receives them in order to **pardon** their sins, **justify** their persons, **cleanse** their hearts, **preserve** their souls by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and enable them to **serve** him, to **show forth His praise**, and to **have communion with Him**.

- 2.6.1. He receives sinners, & **plucks them** as brands from the burning, & **preserves them** as costly monuments of his mercy.
- 2.6.2. So, He expresses His heart toward this **unwashed crowd**; & explains why He was **not polluted** by His contact with them.
- 2.7. Jesus' theme is **Grace**; & thus **Grace** is what the rulers were criticizing; & yet **Grace** was what the crowd precisely needed.
- 2.7.1. The rulers wondered, "how He could bring a **common salvation**, by a **common faith**, to the **common people**?"
- 2.7.1.1. But the very genius of the gospel lies in this.
- 2.8. **LOSING!** (4a) [**The Wanderer**]
- 2.9. He saw them as **sheep** that had gone astray, & needed a Shepherd to bring them home.
- 2.10. **SEEKING!** (4b)
- 2.11. He saw what they **could be**. The sheep could be brought back to the flock & bring joy to the Shepherd.
- 2.12. **Love** was shown in His **Perseverance** "until he finds it".
- 2.12.1. His search was **spontaneous & persistent & unwearying**.
- 2.12.2. The Good Shepherd sought for **33 years!**
- 2.13. **How far would He travel to find the lost?** How about as far as heaven is to earth!
- 2.14. What was the Lord's journey to find the lost? [**Poem**]
- 2.15. *But none of the ransomed ever knew, how deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through, Ere He found his sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert He heard its cry – Sick & helpless, & ready to die.
Lord, whence are those blood drops all the way That mark out the mountain's track?
They were shed for one who had gone astray, Ere the Shepherd could bring him back.
Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent & torn? They're pierced tonight by many a thorn.¹*
- 2.16. God in His Son, suffering, the journey rough & rugged & steep.
- 2.16.1. **Q: How far did He travel for you?**
- 2.17. **FINDING!** (5a)
- 2.18. **Love** was shown in His **Care** "in his shoulders". [what tenderness]
- 2.19. **On his shoulders** - He didn't ask a servant to carry it, but **love** and **joy** made the labor sweet to Himself.
- 2.19.1. The "**Good Shepherd**" is a favorite subject in early Christian art.
- 2.19.2. The **catacombs** are full of carvings of it. It's in the collection of **ancient Christian monuments**. We know from Tertullian that it was often designed upon **chalices**. We find it ourselves **painted in fresco** upon the roofs and walls of the **sepulchral chambers**; rudely

¹ G. Campbell Morgan; Luke; pg.182

scratched upon **gravestones**, or more carefully sculptured on **sarcophagi**; traced in gold upon **glass**, molded on **lamps**, engraved on **rings**; & represented on every type of Christian monument that has come down to us.²

- 2.19.3. It was selected because it expressed the whole **sum** and **substance** of genuine **Christianity!**
- 2.20. **REJOICING!** (5b-7)
- 2.21. **Rejoice with me – Celebrate** with me!
- 2.22. **Love** was shown in His **Joy** “rejoice w/me for I have found...”.
- 2.23. So we have the Shepherd’s **concern** over *one lost sheep*; His **diligence** in seeking it; & His **joy** in finding it.
- 2.23.1. **Jesus** says this is my **attitude & affections** toward sinners!
- 2.23.2. And thus it was **for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame**, the **Joy** of finding that lost sheep!
- 2.24. **Joy over just one!** – **What must have happened on Pentecost?** (or, times of revival)
- 2.25. (7) Jesus was not saying the other 99 sheep were not important.
- 2.25.1. He was emphasizing that the **1 sheep not in the fold** corresponded with the sinners with whom Jesus was eating.
- 2.25.2. The **99 righteous persons** refer to the Pharisees who **thought** themselves righteous, and therefore in no need to repent.³
- 2.26. **Prodigals and Those Who Love Them, Ruth Bell Graham** - For all who knew the shelter of The fold, its warmth and safety and The Shepherd’s care, and bolted; choosing instead to fare out into the cold, the night; revolted by guardianship, by Light; lured by the unknown; eager to be out and on their own; freed to water where they may, feed where they can, live as they will; till they are cured, let them be cold, ill; let them know terror; feed them with thistle, weed, and thorn; who chose the company of wolves, let them taste the companionship wolves give to helpless strays; **but, oh! let them live - wiser, though torn!** And wherever, however, far away they roam, follow and watch and keep Your stupid, wayward, stubborn sheep and someday bring them Home!

3. LOST COIN – THE LOSS OF GOD! (8-10)

- 3.1. **LOSING!** (8a) [A Lost Value]
- 3.2. He saw them as **lost coins** stamped with the image of God, needing to get back in circulation.

²Vincent, M. R. (2002). *Word studies in the New Testament* (1:383). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

³Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B; *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:244).

- 3.2.1. And no matter how much **the coin** has been defaced, it still bears the image & superscription! [Show - old coins.]
- 3.2.2. Though **man** is damaged by sin, he still is “*made in the image of God!*”
- 3.3. Some see these 3 parables representing the Trinity. The 1st the **Son**, this one the **H.S.**, & the last of course the **Father**.
- 3.3.1. Here then in this picture the woman would represent the H.S. pointing to the “*Motherhood of God*”.
- 3.3.2. The 1st mention of the H.S. in Gen.1:2 “**And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**” {fluttering, brooding(to cover young birds for warmth)}
- 3.4. This missing coin was probably from **her headdress** – explain 1 we saw in Jordan.
- 3.4.1. One coin missing would be an awkward gap. (Like a hole in your jacket)
- 3.4.2. One coin missing often represented her Dowry.
- 3.5. Man is Valuable to God!**
- 3.6. Though it’s lost, it is made of **silver**, something of **value**.
- 3.7. And it still has the superscription of the King & the mintage, **but** it is lost.
- 3.7.1. It has no purchasing power. It is of no current value.
- 3.8. This makes me think of **eBAY!** **Why?** Because *what one man considers junk, is another mans treasure!* [Ex: Dean’s \$400 Pot; or Mikes airplane gauges]
- 3.8.1. Thus, whom the religious leaders considered unsalvageable, the Savior of Sinners says, “priceless”!
- 3.8.2. Only **God’s love** knows **true worth** of a human soul.
- 3.9. **I have found the piece which I lost**(9) - Through her own carelessness.
- 3.9.1. Of the **sheep**, Jesus says “**was lost**”(6).
- 3.9.2. **A sheep** strays of itself; but **a piece of money** could only be lost by certain negligence on the part of such as should have kept it. (Trench)
- 3.9.3. **With the lost sheep** - the attention is fastened on **the condition of the thing lost**.
- 3.9.4. **Here, with the lost coin** - the attention is upon **the sorrow** of the one who has lost.⁴
- 3.10. **SEEKING!** (8b)
- 3.11. He saw that the coin **could be found**.
- 3.12. **Love** was shown again in her **Persevering search** – by **lighting** a lamp, **sweeping** the house, & “**searching carefully until she found it**”.
- 3.12.1. Amy Carmichael in expressing her desire to become like the Lord Jesus, said this:

⁴Vincent, M. R. (2002). *Word studies in the New Testament* (1:384). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

- 3.12.2. **If** in dealing with one who does not respond, I weary of the strain, and slip from under the burden, **then I know nothing of Calvary Love.**
- 3.12.3. **If** I have not the patience of my Savior with souls who grow slowly; **If** I know little of travail till Christ be fully formed in them, **then I know nothing of Calvary Love.**
- 3.12.4. **If** I avoid being 'ploughed under' with all that such ploughing entails of rough handling, isolation, uncongenial situations, strange test, **then I know nothing of Calvary Love."**
- 3.13. God's loss was **so great** because of **sin** that he gave the highest price "*to seek & save*"
- 3.14. **FINDING!** (9a)
- 3.15. Again *until she finds it!*
- 3.16. **REJOICING!** (9b-10)
- 3.17. Over one sinner who repents – see the issue is **moral not intellectual.**
- 3.18. (10) In the presence of the angels of God – That's to say, **the joy of God himself.** The angels are in a sense the neighbors of God.⁵
- 3.18.1. It is a *circumlocution* for "God" (*indirect way of saying something*) (See 12:8)
- 3.18.2. The angels see **the joy of God** when sinners repent. **What's better than that?**
- 3.18.3. Jesus **wept** over these sinners, **but now He rejoices** over them.
- 3.19. **Q:** Does it ring the bells in **your heart** when one person gets saved?
- 3.19.1. Early in WWII, when Paris fell, Hitler ordered all the **flags** to fly throughout Germany for 7 days, & all the **church bells** to be rung non-stop for 3 days.⁶
- 3.19.2. May the **flags wave** & the **bells ring** in our heart when sinners are saved!
- 3.20. **End:** This Man receives sinners – Yes, isn't that so attractive?
- 3.20.1. **This Man**, who is no other than the **eternal God**, *before whom angels veil their faces*, **this Man** receives sinners!
- 3.20.2. **This is what makes our Jesus so attractive!**
- 3.20.3. **Q:** Have you been **lost & found?**
- 3.20.4. **Q:** if so, then are you trying to **reach other** valuable souls, till you find them for God?
- 3.21. **Prayer:** May the **thermometer** of our heart **immediately rise** when souls are won to you Lord God.
- 3.22. **Challenge:** Let's go look for **lost sheep & missing coins** in our Valley, & **celebrate finding what was lost!**

⁵Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol.V c1932, Vol.VI c1933 (Lk 15:10).

⁶J. Sidlow Baxter; *Awake my heart*; pg.30