

Jesus Came to Seek and Save the Lost, Part 2

Luke 19:10

Well, as we come to God's word this morning and consider the significance of the resurrection for us today, I want to direct your attention to a single verse in Luke's Gospel, which is Luke 19:10. Luke 19:10. You can turn there in your Bibles. And Luke 19:10 says, "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost." What does it mean for Jesus to seek and to save? What does it mean for Jesus to seek and to save? And to answer this question, I'd like to turn over to Luke 15 and just spend a few minutes there.

Luke 15, a chapter that begins once again with a controversy. A controversy over Jesus spending time, compassionately, mercifully spending time with the lost. In Luke 15:1 to 2, we read this, "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees in the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'" Familiar complaint once again, Jesus is here offending all propriety among the religious elites. Because as a

famous rabbi, he ought to be acting differently. Shouldn't be spending time with these people. He shouldn't be engaging in table fellowship with these lost people, these deplorables.

So he's hearing these complaints, this grumbling, this typical Israelite grumbling, complaining against God, complaining against, against God in his ways, God and his compassion. And so it says in verse 3 that "Jesus told them this parable." We actually see in, in Luke 15, he tells three parables, but they're really all one and the same, and that's why it's in the singular. He tells them, this parable, he tells them about a shepherd who seeks and saves his lost sheep. He tells about a woman who seeks and finds her lost coin, and he tells about a father who seeks and saves his lost son.

The three are one and the same. They're telling the same story. They're making the same point to say this is God's way, don't get on the wrong side of God's compassion. So what does Jesus mean in Luke 19:10 when he says that this is his mission, "to seek and to save them the lost"? What Luke has already prepared us for the answer in chapter 19 by telling us these stories in chapter 15.

Let's read a couple of them, starting in verse 4. "What man of you," Jesus asked. He's starting into the parable. "What man

of you having a hundred sheep, if he's lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the one that is lost until he finds it. When he's found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he comes home he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I've found my sheep that was lost.' Just so I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it. When she's found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I'd lost.' Just so I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

In the case of the lost sheep, listen, that sheep is wolf bait, if the shepherd does not go searching for it, doesn't go find it, doesn't carry it home on his shoulders. And in the same way the lost sinner is ravaged by sin and subdued by Satan and by other sinful abusers and victimizers in this cruel and wretched world. That's a picture of a lost sinner, like a

helpless sheep lost in the wilderness, prey to every predator at the mercy of eating from a bad food source or drinking from a bad water source, subject to every pitfall, every ditch, falling off every Cliff, victimized by every disease, every parasite latching on to it take away its life.

In the same way, every lost sinner falls prey to sin, is controlled by degrading lusts, controlled, enslaved by desires and covetousness and greed. And only Christ, when he comes seeking is able to save that lost sheep. Only he is able to find them, wherever they are, in whatever gully or alley or ditch they've fallen into, and reach down, lift them up, put them on his shoulders, clean them off, take `em home and heal them.

In the case of a lost coin, you think about a small, dirty little coin, perhaps tarnished silver. It's not going to be easy to see in the dim light of a home, like especially a first century home only lit, lit by a lamp. As a small coin, easy to forget, its value is negligible, its loss may have little impact in some homes, so if it falls between the floorboards or gets buried in the dirt floor of the home, that coin is gone, it's forgotten forever.

Just like that inanimate object, a dirty, tarnished silver coin lost in the dust of a dirty floor, sinners, too, are like

that; covered in mire and filth of a fallen world, ignorant of their true condition, oblivious about the wretchedness, the hopelessness of their hearts and their condition, their situation. And unless Christ notices that lost coin, unless he comes searching for it, like this woman who comes and looks for her small, insignificant little coin of little value, but to her of great value, there that lost sinner is going to sit until Judgment Day, abandoned to a dreadful and inescapable fate.

But no coin of Christ's is without value. No possession of his is insignificant, each and every one is remembered by him, known by him. He always comes looking, always comes seeking, actively searching, diligently and whatever he seeks, he is sure to find, eager to reclaim as his own. Oh, I know others may count it of little value, but he will polish it up, make it shine with resplendent beauty, and he will affix that little coin into the crown of his victory and display that coin forever, of his saving glory.

Safe in the arms of the shepherd, we're like a coin held in his loving hands. This is what it means to be sought, found, and saved by Jesus Christ. Charles Spurgeon says that in his incarnation, "Jesus came after the lost sheep. In his life he continued to seek it; in his death he laid it upon his

shoulders; in his resurrection he bore it on its way, and in his ascension, he brought it home rejoicing. Our Lord's career," says Spurgeon, "is a course of soul winning, a life laid out for his people, and in it you may trace the whole process of salvation." End Quote.

So born upon Jesus' shoulders, Christ's sheep are under divine protection, held fast by strong loving arms. John 10:27 Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, they hear me, I speak, and there are a lot of people who hear but don't hear. But my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." That is what it means to seek and to save the lost, to be eternally saved, forever saved, held fast by his power.

We're in Luke 15. We can't leave Luke 15 without reading the next parable, right. So let's read, in starting in verse 11, about the parable, the prodigal son. "He said, 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger then said to his father, "Father, give me the share of property that's coming to me.'" Basically, just to help you understand the significance of that in that

day, this is basically saying, Father, I, I wish you were dead so that I could get my inheritance. Now can we just pretend that that's the case, that you're dead, gone out of my life so I can have your money? Basically what he's saying.

Look at the father, "divided his property between them." He did it. It's not a really a parable about parenting, by the way. It's a parable about the father's love for this guy. But look how wretched he is. "The father divided his property between them." Had to hurt. "Not many days later, the younger son gathered all that he had took a journey to into a far country and there he squandered his property and reckless living." It's his character. It's predictable. A son who dishonors his father like that cares nothing for his father is going to do exactly this. It's totally predictable, inevitable. Verse 14, "When he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country and he began to be in need. And so he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields," fields, "to feed pigs." Oh, that's a low spot to fall for a Jewish boy. "He was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything."

Heartless, ruthless, cruel world, isn't it? "When he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants

have more than enough bread? But I perish here with hunger. I'll rise and go to my father, and I'll say to him, 'Father, I've sinned against heaven, and before you, I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" By the way, this is not repentance. This is yet another scheme for him to find a way to get what he wants. He's not thinking of himself as a son. He's still not thinking about a relationship with his father. He just wants to eat.

"So he arose," verse 20, "came to his father. But," look at this, "while he's still a long way off, his father saw him," felt compassion. Why, when he's still a long way off? Why, because the father has been searching for him, seeking him, looking for him. His father saw him while still a long way off, saw him, felt compassion, and did what no Jewish, dignified man would ever do, he ran in public, embraced his son, and kissed him.

The son coming back into town, he would be on, in danger of being publicly disgraced and banished from the community for the dishonor he showed his father. And so the father prevents that, he takes a preemptive act of love and compassion to run and get there, before the rest of the townspeople can get there and drive this kid away, to give him what he deserves; he runs,



embraces him, kisses him. This kid dirty, filthy, unclean, having spent all this time with the pigs, the father brings him close.

The son said to him, here's his prepared speech, "Father, I've sinned against heaven, and before you, I'm no longer worthy to be called your son." The father cuts him off right there, said to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, put it on him," bring a, "bring a ring, put a ring on his hand and the shoes on his feet. Bring out the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this, my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. They began to celebrate."

It's a picture there of sovereign initiative, the father's sovereign initiative, running after his lost son. And it says there "He was dead and is alive." So what has he done with his son? He's caused him to be, it's a picture of being born again. He's brought back into the family. He's adopted as a son. He's a true heir. He's wearing his father's ring. He's wearing his father's cloak, his robe. He's prepared by wearing shoes on his feet, ready to do the father's work and the father's business.

Listen, when Jesus says, "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost," he's talking about a grave condition, a mortal danger, and he is portraying a situation truly of

resurrection. Resurrection is what's required. Resurrection power to take the dead person, the dead lost person, and raise him to life, to give him new life, eternal life, real life, fruit-producing life. That's what he means when he says, "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost." Jesus came to conduct a rescue operation; to search, find, rescue, save, deliver.

He came for the purpose of seeking and he's going to continue seeking until he finds. The search is not over until the lost thing he's looking for is found. And get this, the means that he employs, namely that of seeking the lost, it's sufficient to the end for which he purposed it, namely that of saving the lost. So what he seeks, he finds; what he finds he saves; what he saves, he saves fully, he saves finally; he saves deeply, profoundly; he saves eternally so that the lost escape the grave. The mortal danger that threatened them of being lost and gone forever, Jesus says, "That's gone. Think of it no more. I give them eternal life. They'll never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." Like a loving shepherd, he seeks the lost sheep all over the countryside, over hill and dale until he finds it. Like a woman in her home, she lights a lamp, sweeps her house, diligently searches, and so, in the same way

Christ searches for his own. However long it takes, wherever it takes him.

We see in Luke's Gospel that Jesus sought and found Simon Peter, also his brother Andrew, two sons of Zebedee, James and John. We know from John's Gospel that he found them first while they were with John the Baptist, but near the Jordan River while John was baptizing. But then, later on, we see in Luke's Gospel, we see them back in Galilee and they're fishing. They're conducting their fishing business. And so Jesus seeks and finds them there on a fishing trip. He saved them. He saved them called them to lifelong discipleship and he called them to apostleship.

Jesus, as we already saw, he sought and found Levi. Where was he? He was sitting in a tax booth in the city. Saved him, called him to discipleship, then turned him into an apostle. As I said, this Levi is known to us as Matthew. He wrote a Gospel you may have heard of.

We read about the sinful woman, came into Simon's house. He sought and found her too, while having lunch in the home of Simon the Pharisee. The last place that you would ever expect to find someone like that, and there she is. She comes into a midst of a hostile crowd, tractor beamed in, finding her savior

because he's drawing her to himself. All those there, I mean, there's no one more hostile isn't there, than, than those who are religiously minded, attentive, church going scribes and Pharisees, ready to condemn, ready to judge, ready to banish. Jesus brings her in, seeks or finds her, saves her.

Many of the lost that Jesus sought and found. Kind of ironically, they were in synagogues, places of worship, attending worship services. That's kind of worth keeping in mind, right, every time we go to church. That's a good place to find lost people. And why wouldn't, why wouldn't it be that way? It's here where the truth is preached and proclaimed. This is the only place that lost people can find truth, to understand it, to see how the sin problem is dealt with. You should expect that every time you come to church, every, every time you come to church, you're looking for the lost people that Jesus may be drawing.

But we see, all through Luke's Gospel, it's in the most unlikely of places, and times. At the most unlikely and inconvenient of times, in the most like, unlikely of circumstances that Jesus seeks, finds, saves his lost people. Story after story throughout the Gospels, Jesus seeks the lost. He seeks them whenever they are, wherever they may be, in

whatever condition they might be in. It does not matter. He goes and gets his own. He's got 100% record of getting who he's after.

When we get into Luke's second volume, the Book of Acts, even though Christ has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, even from heaven, that doesn't stop him from seeking and finding his own. Christ is doing the same thing he's seeking and saving the lost. We see the young zealot Saul, who travels from Jerusalem. In fact, if you want to turn to Acts chapter 9. We'll come back to Luke in a second, but in Acts chapter 9 we see the young zealot Saul, who we know then later as Paul.

He's traveling from Jerusalem and he's not yet saved. He's not converted to this point, but he's on the Damascus Road, going to Damascus. And Luke tells us in Acts chapter 9 verse 1 that Saul "still breathing out threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord." Interesting picture, isn't it? Him breathing. He's breathing in and out threats and murder. That's what, that's what fills his lungs, that's what gives him life, is to threaten and murder.

"He went to the high priest, asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way," the way is the early Christians, men or women, "he might

bring them bound to Jerusalem. And now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?'

"He said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise, enter the city, you'll be told what you're to do.'" There's nothing can stop the Lord. Saul, knock off this nonsense. Stop this foolishness. You're persecuting me. You're mine. I'm redeploying you; got a new mission. From that moment, on that road, as he was on his way to engage in religious persecution, the jailing and the executing of the followers of Jesus Christ, Saul is radically saved. The world has never been the same.

He starts preaching the faith that he once tried to destroy, and he's aggressive about it. He preaches the risen Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah, the Lord of all. What explains that? How does that make sense? Only because of the power of Christ, the mission of Christ to seek and to save. It's fueled by resurrection power, miraculous divine power.

Even from heaven, we know Christ seeks and saves the lost. We can see all through Acts this is the case. He deploys his Holy Spirit and by the Spirit working in and through the members

of his church preaching his saving Gospel, he keeps doing the same thing. He sends Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch, a high court official traveling by chariot. He sends Philip to seek and save him. He sends Peter to Caesarea, to the house of Cornelius, to a Roman centurion, to preach the Gospel. Cornelius is saved. His entire household is saved.

He sends Paul and Barnabas, then Paul and Silas, to seek and save the lost, those whom the father is given to the son, those who for whom Christ died all over the Roman Empire, all over in Asia Minor and into Europe, to the ends of the earth. He sends Paul and Silas to a Philippian jail. Puts them in jail for a time. Why? Because there's an evangelistic prospect there. A Philippian jailer, he's about to kill himself. No need to live anymore after the earthquake happens, all the prisoners have escaped. He knows his life is over, so he's about to kill himself. And on the brink of his own destruction, he's saved. Jesus finds his own. He saves them, rescues them. In the case of this Philippian jailer, he saved his whole household too. We can go on story after story.

In the historical records of the Gospels, in the historical record of the Book of Acts, throughout the history of the Christian Church, down to this very day, Christ is seeking the

lost; wherever they are, whenever they are, to the uttermost parts of the earth and in whatever condition they may be; it does not matter. Christ is the risen Savior. He's been resurrected by divine power. He has all power, all authority in heaven on Earth at his disposal. He's conquered sin and death and demons and every foe. Nothing prevents him from seeking and saving his own. Never forget that.