

Jesus Came to Seek and Save the Lost, Part 3

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." In one sentence, Jesus has summarized the mission of the Christ. He's boiled down the mission of the Messiah down to its bare essence. His whole life, his entire life's work, everything he has said and done, every miracle he has performed, every demon he's cast out, every sickness and disease that he has healed, every truth that he taught, proclaimed, preached, it all comes down to this: Jesus came to earth on a search and rescue operation. He came to seek lost sinners. He came to save them from the gravest danger known to man.

That is the fate that hovers over every single man, every single woman, every, every boy, every girl, which is death. And not just physical death, the dying of the body, but a spiritual

death, an eternal death, suffering the just wrath of a holy God for sins in hell, a due punishment for sinning against a holy and perfect God.

Why does he come to seek and save? Let's go back over to Luke 19:10, because the answer is right there in the text in what Jesus said. It's subtle, but it's clearly there. "The Son of man came." "The Son of man came," and then we see, in order "to seek and to save the lost." Those two infinitives showing purpose, to seek and to save. They tell us, yes, why Christ came. That's the purpose of his coming. We've summarized that briefly already, but it's that title, the Son of man, followed by the main verb in the sentence, he came, the Son of man came.

We find here a greater and an ultimate purpose at work. I can only summarize this briefly, but that title, Son of man, it points to the various roles of the Messiah prophesied all throughout the Old Testament, most particularly in places like Ezekiel and Daniel. But the title of the Son of man points to the various roles of the Messiah, the Christ, the, the one whom God ordained from before the foundation of the world to seek and save these people.

In an ultimate sense, Jesus came to seek and save because he is being obedient to an eternal calling. He is executing

God's decree of salvation; he is carrying out his perfect will. This is way bigger than any individual one of us. This is eternal. This is an infinite mind at work. He is executing an eternal decree. As the Son of man, Jesus is the ideal man. He is the perfection of humanity. As the Son of man, he's the one who represents man to God and God to man. As the Son of man, he is the mediator in perfect, righteous sympathy to the concerns of God and man alike, and bringing them into perfect unity and harmony. And as the Son of man, he is the one who wields absolute power and all divine authority. It says in Daniel 7:14, "The ancient of days gave the Son of man Dominion and glory and an everlasting indestructible Kingdom."

The entire world, every human being without exception, belongs to him and will serve him. So he has come, as we read here in the Gospels, he has come first in mercy, offering salvation. When he comes again, he will come in recompense. He will come to dispense justice. Maybe we could just look at one text. Well might be a couple, but go back to Luke chapter 4, Luke chapter 4 and just mention this, this one here in Luke, when we see here in Luke 4:16 and following, Jesus's revealing himself as Messiah, the Christ, the prophesied Son of man, and when he did that, he did so first of all to the people of his hometown, a place where he grew up in Nazareth.

And it says in Luke 4, starting in verse 16, that "he came to Nazareth where he'd been brought up, and as it was his custom, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day he stood up to read. The scroll of Prophet Isaiah was given to him, and he unrolled the scroll, found the place where it was written. 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'" And it says, "He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant. And sat down."

Sitting down in those days was the teaching position. "The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" Remarkable. The words that he read from that scroll on that day, from Isaiah 61, described his mission to seek and to save. Described his rescue mission, described his mission of mercy. And what is so interesting about that, is that he, in reading Isaiah 61: 1 and 2, he stopped short and did not read the entire passage. In fact, where he stops, it's an abrupt stop.

He reads all of Isaiah 61:1 and starts into verse 2 and then he cuts off reading abruptly right in the middle of the verse. Had he kept on reading, here's what that would say. Isaiah 61:1 and 2. He says, "He's anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God." He didn't read that part. Why not? Why did Jesus stop mid-verse? Why didn't he read the rest of the verse and tell everybody about the day of vengeance of our God? Because at his first coming, he came for salvation. And we now are still living in this gospel age. It's the same time.

Now is the appointed time, the day of salvation. And it is the mission of Christ's Church that he's reigning on high. Building his church, he does it through us evangelizing, us preaching the gospel. It is the mission, Matthew 28, for us to "make disciples," to teach this gospel, to spread it around the earth and make disciples by amplifying God's love and mercy in the gospel. But that doesn't abrogate the rest of the verse. That's coming, too. When Christ returns to earth, at his second coming, he will come for retribution.

Jesus taught about it, as did the apostles. There are many texts we could go to, but I'll just give you one in 2 Thessalonians 1:6. You can just write that down. But 2 Thessalonians 1:6 and following, Paul writes this that "God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you." He's talking to believers here. "And to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus."

You think they're gonna, the sinners of this world, whether they're in places of power or in places without power, you think they're getting away with anything with their sin? Think again. Paul says, "They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might when he comes on that day, to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed."

The day of the vengeance of our God, that's coming. So the time is now to take advantage of the opportunity to repent and believe. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the appointed time. Don't waste another minute. We're still living in the first part of the Messiah's mission, which Jesus proclaimed in

that Nazareth Synagogue 2000 years ago. Good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, and liberty or freedom for all who are oppressed. The poor, captives, blind and oppressed, those are the lost that Jesus came to seek and to save, and everyone who sees himself in those terms, in that lost condition, which is, they'll only see themselves that way by God's mercy, by God giving grace to them to open their eyes to it. But by God's grace in Jesus Christ and through faith in him, he will find them and he will save them. Why? Because Jesus loves his lost sheep.

It's a mission of love right now. This is a, a time of love, and mercy, and compassion, of salvation, don't neglect it, don't spurn the opportunity. Paul put this in personal terms in Galatians 2:20. He talks about the Son of God who "loved me," who "gave himself for me." He extends that same thinking to all believers in Ephesians 5:2 saying, "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us." Later on in that same chapter, verse 25, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for the church."

This is a time of love, and mercy, and compassion, and kindness. It's the mission of Jesus Christ to show love of God to lost sinners, to seek and to save those whom the father has given to them, or given to him. So he comes to us, demonstrates

the father's love by dying in our place, offering his own life up as a sacrifice for our sins. He brings us the father's love by saving us from our sins, so that when he comes, 2 Thessalonians 2:16, he will be marveled at by us. Second Thessalonians 2:16 says, "God our Father loved us and he gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace."

Why does Jesus come to seek and to save? It's to fulfill stage one in his mission, the rescue mission. This is the time to bring divine love and salvation to everyone who believes. The means by which Jesus saves him, his people, from their sins is by dying for their sins. He loved us. He gave himself for us. He died as a substitutionary sacrifice, that means he took our place. He did so to satisfy the just wrath of a holy God, the wrath that's due because of our sins against God.

What has God done for us? He's given us every good thing. He's given us every opportunity. He's given us breath to breathe. He's given us a heartbeat. He's given us bodies. He's given us eyes to see. He's given us families. He's given us all good things to enjoy. And what have we done? Have we honored God as God? By obeying him and doing his will? No. Have we given him thanks? No, we've been ungrateful, complaining, grumbling. We've sinned against God. So Jesus came to die for our sins.



If you back up from Luke 19 and go to Luke 18:33, or 32 and 33, Jesus points to this substitutionary cross work that he will fulfill. He tells his disciples here, and this is again a, a week or so before the cross, so it's, it's on the horizon for him. "The Son of man will be delivered over to the Gentiles. He'll be mocked, shamefully treated, and spit upon." Can you imagine something more unfitting than that? To show that kind of an insult to the precious savior, the son of God? "After flogging him, they will kill him." And then this, "On the third day he will rise." Why would the sinless son of man be mocked, treated with contempt, spat upon, flogged, killed. Did he deserve it? No. Hebrews 4:15, "He is without sin." He is completely without sin, Hebrews 4:15. And so he is the only innocent victim, whoever has been. He didn't deserve to die. He didn't deserve any of this. We did, though.

So Christ suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, because he chose to offer himself as a subst, a substitute sacrifice for our sins. He died the death that we deserved so that God could give us the reward of life that Jesus earned and merited for us. The suffering of the Messiah for sins is detailed in the Old Testament. You can read like Psalm 22, Isaiah 53. Magnificent texts that are fulfilled completely and only in Jesus Christ, his death on the cross.

But we can summarize that in the passage that Paul wrote, 2 Corinthians 5:21, that "God made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." So here's what that means, God placed on Jesus the sins of all lost sinners whom Christ came to save, punished him instead of us, poured out all of his wrath on Jesus when he was on the cross and then God took the righteousness of God in Christ, a perfect righteousness, a righteousness that fulfilled all righteousness, placed that righteousness on us, like covering us with a garment, pure, spotless white.

All those and only those who believe receive it. That's how it happened. That's the how question. It's how he did it; an act of pure mercy, perfect justice coming together in the cross. Jesus satisfied both the mercy and the justice of God. Not one sin is ignored, dismissed, let go, overlooked. He finds them all, grabs them all, places them on Jesus Christ. So divine justice has been fully satisfied. He is just, but he's also merciful. He is the justifier of the one who puts faith in Jesus Christ. There's not one ounce of saving mercy that's wasted. All the mercy that he poured out on his people is effectual to save all those that he came looking for. Not one ounce of wasted mercy.

Today, Jesus is still seeking and still saving his people. And the one distinguishing characteristic trait of every lost sinner who is found and saved by the Lord is this, they believe this message. Those who don't believe, who reject it, who turn away, or those who say they believe but then just go on living like they've never been changed, that's the rest of the world. That's unbelief. It's only those who believe this message, believe this truth, they believe, and therefore they show, they prove evidence, show forth, they belong to him. Believing is seeing.

Believing is truly seeing things that are only perceived spiritually. Paul says it this way in saying in 2 Corinthians 4:18, that "we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient," temporal, passing away, "but the things that are unseen, they're eternal." The things that are unseen, principled, those things last forever. Only faith that God grants, gives us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to receive, believe, and understand, and only those with eyes to see and faith to believe will see the Lord resurrected, risen in his salvation glory.

Remember what we read earlier in the service in John 20, who was the first one to see the resurrected Jesus? Mary Magdalene, wasn't it? Luke 8:2 says that she was rescued from a very severe case of demonic possession herself. Jesus cast seven demons out of this woman. She was one of the lost sheep that Jesus came to seek and save. And though Mary was once lost, supernaturally lost, which means it affected her physically, cast her out socially. She was affected morally, unclean ceremonially and richly in all other ways. Now she's the first one to see the resurrected Lord. What an honor, what a privilege. She's found. She's rescued. She's saved from her sins. Though she was once blind, she now sees. In fact, she's first disciple to see the Lord Jesus Christ before any of the apostles. She's the one reporting to the apostles, "I have seen the Lord."

So whom does Jesus seek and save? Sinners like Mary Magdalene, broken, decrepit, morally corrupt and defiled, blind and proud, supernaturally bound, enslaved by sin, oppressed by the devil, sinners just like me and just like you. What does it mean for Jesus to seek and to save? It means that he comes for us. By the Holy Spirit, he opens our eyes to our sinful condition. He shows us our need for salvation, that we're nothing more than spiritually poor captors of sin, blind to the

truth, and possessed and oppressed by sin and Satan. Then the Spirit draws us to Christ our Savior, takes us up in his arms as a loving shepherd carries his sheep.

When and where does Jesus seek and save? Good news, whatever and wherever you are, he'll come get you. In whatever condition you're in, he's there, then and there to go and find you. He found all his people during his physical presence on earth. Not one of them was let go. He found every single one, hunted them down, all through Galilee and all through Judea, even into Perea, into the Decapolis. He found his people while he was on earth.

And now he finds them by his omniscient, omnipresent Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit whom he has deployed, given to his people, and all of his people go out sharing the gospel, spreading the gospel, preaching the truth to lost sinners who belong to Christ and you know what they do? All of them respond, all of his people respond in faith. "My sheep hear my voice."

Why does Jesus seek and save? For the sake of God's glory, in obedience to the divine mission that God gave him from before the foundation of the world, to love the people that the father gave him, to save them from their sins, and bring them into the freedom of eternal life.

Finally, how does he do that? How does Christ seek and save? He died on the cross for all of us who believe, to pay the just penalty do our sins, to deliver us from the wrath of God and God showed his approval, his acceptance of that perfect sacrifice, by raising this Jesus from the dead, which is what we're celebrating today.

Lost sinner, if you're here and you realize that you're lost, if any of this is kind of affecting you, striking you, man, listen, don't turn away. If he's calling you, don't, don't ignore that call. Will you come to him today? For your sake, he said this in John 20:29, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed." That could be you. If you'll believe in him who you cannot see right now, but believe in him, hearing the message, reading it on the pages of Scripture, you will one day rejoice with inexpressible, glorious joy. Even now as you obtained the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your soul.

All you saints, you who once were lost and now have been found, you who once were blind and now see, when he returns, one day, you know what? We're going to see him as he is. He will be glorified in us, in his saints on that day. He will be marveled at, as we look at him and rejoice, we see him in whom we have believed, as we share eternally in his resurrection life. Amen.

Let's pray. Our Father, we thank you so much for this glorious gospel. And we thank you for a day such as this to remember, as we do once a year on Easter and this Resurrection Sunday, to remember that Christ triumphed over the grave. We see the death of death and the death of Christ. We see the conquering of love, the triumph of your grace. We see your power over sin and corruption and death. And we are so grateful that you have been gracious to us.

For those who are here, who may still be in a lost condition, not yet found, we pray that you would show saving mercy and grace to them as well. For the sake of your glory, for the sake of your gospel, in the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.