

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture Text: **Luke 15:1-10.**
- B. Parables of the Lost Sheep, Coin, and Sons.
- C. Four ways to be lost:
 - A. ...by being away from the flock.
 - B. ...by the inability and spiritual carelessness.
 - C. ...by overt and willful disobedience.
 - D. ...by pride, selfishness, and self-righteousness.

I. **THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP** (Lk. 15:1-7).

- A. Some analogies of the parable:
 - 1. The man with a hundred sheep = X the Good Shepherd.
 - 2. The sheep which wandered away = those who find themselves in sin.
 - 3. Finding the lost sheep = X saving sinners.
 - 4. Elevating it to his shoulders = uplifting the fallen.
 - 5. The rejoicing of the shepherd = joy in heaven over the saved.
- B. Consider these facts about lost sheep. They are:
 - 1. Absolutely defense-less.
 - 2. Without any sense of direction.
 - 3. Surrounded by dangers.
- C. Look at what the Good Shepherd did:
 - 1. His emotions were aroused with reference to the lost sheep.
 - 2. He went himself; he did not send another.
 - 3. He stayed with the search until it was successful.
- D. This is **evangelism to those outside of the church**. Consider the following:
 - 1. This kind of evangelism is characterized by the saying, "Go, and compel them to come in."
 - 2. This action is in keeping with the great commission (Lk. 19:10; Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15).
 - 3. The great love, concern, and compassion of the shepherd for the lost is desperately needed in the church today.

II. **THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN** (Lk. 15:8-10).

- A. Some analogies in the parable:
 - 1. The woman = the church in all ages.
 - 2. The lost coin = the "dropout" from the church.
 - 3. The lighted lamp = the word of God.
 - 4. The broom = the church's concern for true virtues.
 - 5. The diligent search = the church's diligent activity to save souls.
 - 6. The rejoicing = the joy in heaven over one sinner who is saved.
- B. The lost coin is like a lost sinner:
 - 1. Both are lost through no fault of their own.
 - 2. Both are a-like fallen.
 - 3. Both suffer increasing damage in their lost state.
 - 4. Both become increasingly difficult to recover.
- C. What the woman did to find the lost coin:
 - 1. First, she lighted a lamp.
 - 2. Second, she searched diligently.
 - 3. Third, she used a broom to sweep the whole place.

- D. This is **evangelism to those inside the church**. Consider the following:
 1. Remember the coin had gone anywhere; it was still in the house.
 2. Notice the various problems in the churches mentioned in Rev., chapters 2,3:
 - a. A lack of love for X (Ephesus).
 - b. Allowing false teaching (Pergamum).
 - c. Compromise and toleration (Thyatira).
 - d. Talking but not walking (Sardis).
 - e. Lukewarm spirituality due to materialism (Laodemia).
- E. In many places today, the church needs revival. Those once saved are now lost due to having grown cold, indifferent, and tolerant.

III. THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON (Lk. 15:11-24).

- A. Two main applications; one, the prodigal son represents the Gentiles while the son in the field represents the religious Jewish establishment and two, this *story* shows God's love for men of every generation since.
- B. The two sons had different sins:
 1. The prodigal was a squanderer or waster of life.
He was irresponsible, immature, and unable to cope with the problems of life, as seen by his having to feed pigs and be in lack of daily food.
 2. The elder son was one who just spent his life.
As we later see in the parable he is selfish and jealous over the father's treatment of his brother.
- C. Three great truths we can learn from all of this:
 1. God is willing to forgive prodigals and the self-righteous alike.
 2. It is easier to confess to God than it is to any man.
 3. The great joys of God's kingdom are those of new life in those once dead to sin, and the finding of that which was lost.
- D. Remember that this parable is given to Pharisees and other Jewish religious leaders who were upset with Jesus' treatment of publicans and sinners as objects of heavenly grace.
- E. This is **evangelism to those who have rejected the church**. Consider the following:
 1. The Father kept the home so attractive that the prodigal wanted to come back.
 2. A warm, loving fellowship is one of the best ways to invite those who have left to come back.
 3. Who would want to come back to a church that is unloving and divisive?
 4. May the prodigals of this congregation learn that life in the world is "not all it's cracked up to be."

IV. THE OLDER SON (Lk. 15:25-32).

- A. There were some good things about the older son:
 1. The older son was not a quitter; he had served for many years (15:29a).
 2. The older son was a worker, serving his father (15:29b).
 3. The older son was a commandment keeper (15:29c).
- B. The father had and would continue to abundantly bless this son (15:31).
- C. But this son also had some problems:
 1. Angry (envious) over the Father throwing the party.
 2. Stubborn--would not go into the party.
 3. Complained of the party.
 4. Selfish as to his not receiving such a party.
- D. This is **evangelism to the established church**. Consider the following:
 1. May we never be against change in the church just because it is change.
 2. May we never become so set in our ways that we think everything has to be done our way.
 3. May we never think that "we have arrived" and need to do no more.
 4. Let us not be guilty of the saying, "the lights are on, but nobody's home."

- E. The sad part is, statistically speaking, that those congregations that are more than one generation old (established), are not growing numerically. Too often in attitude and conduct, they are characteristic of the older brother.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Jesus had great compassion for the lost.
- B. We can find lost people all around us:
 - 1. Some are outside the church.
 - 2. Some are inside the church.
 - 3. Some have rejected the church.
 - 4. Some are in the established church.
- C. Luke 15:10, says that Jesus and the angels rejoice over 1 sinner that repents.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.