

GOD'S JOY

(Sermon Summary)

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Sunday Morning – 27th November 2022

Reading: Luke 15:1-32

Does God experience joy? Luke 15 shows us the Lord's joy in the salvation of lost people. There are in Luke 15 three stories. They were occasioned by the fact that the Lord would eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners. There are 8 or 9 times in Luke when we read that the Lord ate with people. The tax collectors were looked upon as collaborators with the Romans. The 'sinners' were people living openly immoral lives, such as the prostitutes. The Lord welcomed them. But the Pharisees and the Scribes criticized Him for doing this. The Pharisees had been a religious group who emerged some centuries earlier who were concerned for purity in doctrine and life. They had good intentions but did not live up to these intentions. In their opinion, the Lord should not have been rubbing shoulders with these other people.

In Luke 15 we have three stories. These explain why the Lord ate with these people. There are four elements in each of the stories.

1. A losing.

In all three stories something was lost – a sheep, a coin and a son. The Lord shows to us that He is with these people because they are lost and they need Him. The Pharisees did not accept that they themselves were spiritually lost. But we are all born lost. We were conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5). None of us needed to be taught how to sin. We never had to go to 'sin classes' to learn how to do it. We sin in thought and word and deed. We sin in the very desires of our hearts. Sin is not just the things we do but also the things we omit to do. We might say that we do no harm but we must ask 'Do we do any good?'

If we do not see ourselves as lost we will never see any need of Jesus finding and saving us.

2. A searching.

In each of these stories there is also a searching – searching for the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. The father in the last parable we might imagine the father had gone looking for his son. That is why he was able to see him when he was afar off (v20). He found him as he was making his way back from a far-off country. The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. The Lord is still searching for lost people.

3. A finding.

In each of the stories there is also a finding. Were the Pharisees ever found? Did they repent? He had come into the world to save people like them. There is no better place to be than to be here with Jesus. He is searching now for lost sinners like us. Has He found us yet? Have we repented of our sin? Are we trusting in Him?

4. A rejoicing.

The people rejoicing in the parables point to the rejoicing that is in heaven (v7, v10). Whose joy is this? Is it the joy of the angels? The joy is in the presence of the angels. But it is actually the joy of God Himself. God is saying, 'Rejoice with Me.' The religious leaders could not understand how the Lord could eat with 'sinners'. In fact the Lord was never happier than when He was with such people.

Have we given joy to God by repenting of our sin? Do we rejoice with God when we hear of people repenting of their sin? Would we love to give God more joy by seeking to win lost people? We should go after lost sinners who need to hear the good news.

These parables in Luke 15 convey the main message of the Bible.