

December 21, 2025

“Christ the Savior”
Lesson 3

Luke 15:3-7, Rom. 5:6-10

Intro

The first of today’s passages is from Luke 15, where Jesus speaks three “lost and found” parables. What is common to all three parables is the joy that is present when the lost thing has been found. The second passage is from Romans, one of Paul’s deepest letters. It presents many issues of doctrine, especially that of grace through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ. He begins by presenting the idea of the universal sinfulness of mankind in chapters 1-3, and at the end of chapter 3 speaks of the righteousness of God that comes through that faith in Jesus.

Read Luke 15:3-7

1. vs. 3: Jesus is telling this parable to the Pharisees and religious leaders who “muttered” against Him
They “muttered” against Jesus in 15:2 for welcoming sinners and eating with them
The crowd of tax collectors and sinners from 15:1 are also hearing Him joyfully
2. vs. 4: The idea of a shepherd leaving 99 sheep to go after 1 is surprising, even startling
It raises several questions that aren’t addressed in the parable:
Were there others there available to watch the sheep?
How long would the shepherd search before giving up?
The answers to these questions aren’t what the parable is all about
The emphasis here is on God’s intense concern for the lost, something the Pharisees lack
This parable should also serve as a reminder to the religiously educated
There are shepherd-sheep images in Ps. 23, 119, Jer. 31:10, and Ezek. 34:11-16)
3. vs. 5: The lamb gets found by the shepherd, who “joyfully” carries it back to the flock
This lamb represents the tax collectors and sinners of 15:1
These are the lost, the ones that need God the most
Jesus said He came to “seek and to save the lost” in Luke 19:10
This is His mission being fulfilled as He speaks—something the Pharisees disapprove of
4. vs. 6: There is rejoicing on the part of the shepherd here
When he gets home, he has a celebration party with his friends and neighbors
He wants them also to be happy with him and for him that he has found his lost sheep
Luke here stresses the call to rejoice
The contrast between this rejoicing and the attitude of the Pharisees is strikingly obvious
They don’t want to celebrate the return of the lost
Sinners are to be marginalized, shunned, avoided and condemned; *not sought out*
5. vs. 7: Jesus here presents the application of this parable to both groups of listeners
Heaven rejoices when even one lost sinner repents
Heaven rejoices more for this one than for 99 who don’t need to repent

That creates a problem: who hasn't sinned? Who doesn't need to repent?
We are all sinners who need to repent
But the Pharisees don't think of themselves this way
They have followed the Law, so they are righteous in their own eyes
This is a veiled reminder that they need to see themselves as needing to repent also
Jesus is reminding them that God loves the repentant sinner
Those who have repented and are right with God shouldn't have an attitude of superiority
Instead, their compassion should increase for those still lost and in need

Read Romans 5:6-10

Paul begins Romans 5:1 with "therefore", connecting new ideas he's about to develop to what he has said previously. In Romans 4, Paul noted that Abraham was credited with righteousness because of his faith. Paul is building a bridge between Abraham and the followers of Jesus, with will be credited with the same righteousness as Abraham because of their faith in Jesus. In 5:2, Paul says that we have "gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand." This next passage will develop the idea of God's grace by contrasting our position before God prior to Jesus' death with where we now stand because of His death.

6. vs. 6: Here is one of the foundational scriptures of the gospel message

Christ died for the ungodly

The ungodly are those who live lives apart from God-honoring practices/beliefs

That means all of humanity, as Rom. 3:23: "All have sinned..."

We were powerless

This is referring to our spiritual condition, not our physical condition

We were unable to make up for our lostness because of our sin

At just the right time

God determined when Jesus needed to come to the earth and live and die

That time was perfect in terms of God's plans

Even when humanity was an enemy to Him, God planned a way to save humanity

7. vs. 7: There is disagreement about the meaning of "righteous person" and "good person"

Are they basically saying the same thing in two different ways?

Or is a "righteous person" like a "holier-than-thou" Pharisee, while a "good person" is someone who would be willing to die for another?

The key point of this verse is that people in general aren't likely to die for another

Even for the best of human beings, we aren't likely to die in their place

8. vs. 8: This verse helps us see the distinction between the groups noted in vs. 6 and 7

If barely anyone (if anyone at all) would die for a good/righteous person, who would die for an "ungodly" person (vs. 6)?

No one would be willing to die for the ungodly, the person who is the worst of the worst

Here we see the love of God

Jesus died for *all* humanity, every single person, of whom all have sinned

We were all dead in our sins; we needed a Savior

9. vs. 9: Paul says two important things here

First, we are “justified by his blood”

To be justified means pardoned from our sins and counted as righteous before God

We are in this state because Jesus died for us, not from something we did

Second, we escape God’s wrath because of Jesus’ sacrifice

We all have sinned, and therefore were deserving of punishment

When God sees us, He sees the blood of Christ over us / on us

This is similar to God seeing the blood on the doorway at the time of exodus

He said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”

This is what happens to us in God’s sight because of the blood of Jesus

10. vs. 10: Paul finishes this section with another comparison / connection

God reconciled us to Himself when we were still His enemies

That says that now that we are reconciled, we will be saved by the death of Jesus

Paul mentioned God’s wrath in vs. 9

To be considered an enemy of God should be terrifying to all

Scripture shows the wrath He took on the enemies of His people Israel

But God took the initiative to break down the sin barrier between us and Him

That means we are reconciled to God, and no longer need to fear His wrath

Application: Coming home is a major part of many people’s Christmas celebrations. Family members come back to the family home from where they are now living to celebrate with those they don’t see often. And that’s the message of both this Christmas season and the passages we looked at today, spiritually speaking. Our heavenly Father has provided a way for every person to “come home” to Him. He provided this for us through the death of His son, Jesus Christ. Everyone in rebellion against God is a lost sheep; but Christ specializes in finding lost sheep! And we have a part in being His hands and feet and voice in helping to find and guide those lost sheep back to God.

Prayer: Father God, thank You that at this time of year, we are reminded of Your great love to us. We were Your enemies, but You sent Your Son to bear our sins so we could be reconciled to You. Thank You that Jesus died for us, so we can be with You eternally. In Jesus’ name we thank You. Amen.

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