

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

The Parables

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

The Lost Son

Introduction

We live in a **World of the Lost**: a world in which millions - yea billions - of people haven't the faintest idea **why they were born** and **where they will go when they die**. The human race has lost its way. Moral standards, held sacred a few decades ago, are being jettisoned with frightening abandon. Millions are **'living for the moment'** with little or no regard to the consequences. Greed, violence, sexual license and a **'sow to the wind'** mentality is sweeping mankind. As a result we are **'reaping the whirlwind'** in misery, poverty, homelessness, war, famine, disease and death. **The private lives of millions lie in ruins**. Families are falling apart and **faith in God** is rare, very rare. Yes, there is no doubt but that we live in a lost world.

Is there any hope for mankind: any message from God's Word to which we can turn too, for comfort? Are there any answers to earth's myriad problems? I am happy to report this Sabbath that there are answers: and they come from the lips of the greatest man who ever walked this earth: **Jesus Christ, (Yahshua the Messiah)** the Saviour of the World. His message of hope is found in the Holy Bible. This Sabbath I will read part of that message from (Luke chapter 15). I'll read the whole chapter and then concentrate on a few **key points**, which - **if acted upon** - will most certainly bring **hope to the hopeless** and **life to the dead**. In that chapter we read the parable of the **lost sheep**, the **lost coin** and the **lost son**. All three parables tell of **Yahweh's** infinite love for lost sinners: and that there is **great joy in heaven** when even **one** sinner repents and accepts salvation. **You may even recognize yourself in one of the stories**. Indeed, they were recorded for people like you and me. I read:

Luke 15: *1: "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.*

*2: And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, **This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.***

3: And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

4: What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5: And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

*6: And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, **Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.***

*7: **I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.***

8: Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

*9: And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, **Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.***

*10: **Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one***

sinner that repenteth.

11: And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13: And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14: And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15: And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16: And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

17: And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18: I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19: And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20: And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21: And the son said unto him, **Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.**

22: But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24: **For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.**

25: Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26: And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27: And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28: And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29: And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31: And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32: **It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."**

1. The Yearning for Freedom

Freedom and human rights are big issues these days. Seldom a week passes but the news carries a story about someone's violated human rights. Travel to any country, talk to any group of people and sooner or later it will become evident that there is growing hunger for **self rule**, for **freedom**, for **human rights**. This is world-wide phenomena. From the darkest jungles of India to the sophisticated provinces of Europe, Canada and the USA, people are demanding **freedom** and **human rights**. They are tired of being ordered about: tired of bureaucracy: tired of being told what is good or bad for them. The youth of today are in the forefront of this fight for freedom. The young man in our story is just such a lad. He was tired of being told what to do and how to do it. He objected to his father's authority, his father's commandments. **He wanted to be free**, to live life his way. His father was a wealthy man. The boy also wanted his share of the family wealth and he wanted it **now**: not in the distant future when his father was dead - but **now**! He also wanted to get as far away from home as possible, to live his life as he pleased. So he said:

Luke 15: 12: "...Father, give the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13: And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a **far country**."

2. Unrestrained Licence

No one knows the potential for evil that exists in the human heart, your heart, my heart. Even the best people deceive themselves - regularly! Concerning human nature the Bible say this:

Jeremiah 17: 9: ***“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”***

Very often when freedom is gained and distance separates, the true character of a person manifests itself. They will do things that would horrify close family and friend. It was like that with this young man.

Luke 15: 13: ***“...he took his journey into a far country and there wasted his substance with riotous living.”***

It is not difficult to imagine the high-flying, decadent life-style this young man adopted when he got away from his father's influence. He had plenty of money to spend and money always attracts dubious friends. In that **‘far away country’** he plunged into the whirlpool of decadence. He **‘devoured his living with harlots’** The Bible doesn't go into more detail; but we can imagine what happened.

That story is being repeated in millions of lives - **today**. Sin is fashionable. Sin is exciting. Sin is fun, especially if there is plenty of money on hand to spend. **Freedom from restraint** coupled with **wealth** is a deadly cocktail that usually results in trouble. Nevertheless, sin is very popular in the affluent areas of the world. That is the main reason why we have so many social problems: because **sin reigns in the lives of millions**. Every one knows what wealth is; but what about **sin**? Do you know what sin is? The Bible says:

1 John 3: 4: ***“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”***

And there you have it. Sin is disobedience. **Sin is breaking the Almighty's law**. Sin is doing what our heavenly Father has commanded us not to do.

The world does not know, and probably doesn't even care to know, what sin is. **The very word ‘sin’ is taboo these days - even in religious circles** - because people love to sin. Besides, every society has its own ideas about right and wrong. What is considered correct in one country is abhorred in another. Actions looked upon as **‘evil’** by one generation are practised with impunity by the next. **The world is totally divided on moral issues and therefore incapable of legislating against sin, even if there was a will to do so**. The fact is **Yahweh the Creator** is the only one who has the authority to legislate on moral behaviour, on righteousness and sin - because He made us. The prodigal son broke virtually every rule his father (Yahweh in the parable) had taught him. He plunged into sin and, as the story goes: ***“...wasted his substance with riotous living.”***

3. Limited Resources / Famine

The results of sin are catastrophic: for God is never mocked. Those who violate His laws pay a heavy price. Regardless of what psychologists may say, regardless of what popular opinion may suggest, **sin always produces a harvest of pain, sickness, sorrow and death!** The Bible says:

Isaiah 57: 20: ***“...the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”***

Proverbs 13: 15: ***“...Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.”***

In our story this young man's pleasure binge soon came to an end. It didn't take long for him to spend all his money. It was then that his decadent **‘friends’** all vanished. He was now alone in a foreign land without friends and without funds. The Bible says:

Luke 15: 14: ***“And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.”***

How true this is of so many people. They venture forth on, what they think, is the **‘road to freedom,’** the **‘highway of happiness.’** But all too often things go wrong and they **‘begin to be in want.’** They experience a **‘famine of the soul’** an emptiness within that the world cannot fill. They thrash around desperately looking,

searching, seeking fulfilment in this and that pleasure, but to no avail. Failure greets them at every turn. It is a common sight in this sin-sick world, Yes “**he began to be in want.**”

4. No Man Gave Unto Him

Sad to say it is when we most need help that none is available. We are desperate for food, for somewhere to live, for a job or for friendship: we are prepared to do almost anything to survive: **and no one comes to our rescue.** Is not this the situation many find themselves in? The Bible continues:

Verses: 15: “*And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to **feed swine.***”

16: *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and **no man gave unto him.***”

This story, my dear friends is not old. It is happening in our day. It is the **on-line story of mankind.** It's taking place in your home town this very day. It may well be that it is the **story of your life!** Lost souls are enslaved by Satan in every country of the world: and they are living on ‘**swine's food.**’ The Bible tells us that: ‘**Man was created in the image of God.**’ This means that we were moulded by the Creator to be ‘**like Him!**’ Can you begin to appreciate the awesome potential for good that divine specification is spelling out? Yes, you and I were created to be ‘**like God!**’ And so was that young man. But he joined himself to **Satan** who sent him out to ‘**feed his pigs!**’ Satan has done just that to the whole human race. He and the evil angels who sided with him are symbolically referred to in the Scriptures as unclean beasts - **a herd of swine!** This young man was employed to **feed swine:** a job which reflects the current activities of the human race. Yes, the vast majority of mankind is currently **feeding swine and eating swine's food:** all have sinned and have engaged in activities which delight and nourish **Satan** and his evil angels. In varying degrees the whole human race is guilty of sin. **We have all sinned.** The Bible says:

Romans 3: 23: “***For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.***”

5. He Came To Himself

I am happy to report that this young man had second thoughts. He took a close look at himself and analyzed his terrible condition. He thought about his father and mother and the servants who had gladly served him. He then looked at himself in the pigsty. Oh what a mess he was in! What a terrible mistake he had made! Guilt overwhelmed him. He thought about those **fickle friends** who had helped him squander his money. He thought about the **parties**, the **pleasure**, the **prostitutes**. What a waste of time and money they had all been. Now he knew how shallow the life of sin is. More than this, he decided to do something about his condition. **He came to himself!** The Bible says:

Verses: 17: “*And when **he came to himself**, he said, **How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!***”

18: ***I will arise and go to my father**, and will say unto him, **Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.***”

Note his words:

- ***I will arise and go to my father ...***
- ***I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,***
- ***I am no more worthy to be called thy son ...***

He recognized that he had sinned against his father and against God. That is the first step towards reconciliation. In Bible terminology it is called **repentance**. The Saviour's aim was to call sinners to repentance. The degree of sin matters little: it is the repentance, the sorrow at committing that sin that is vital. The Saviour said:

Luke 5: 32: “***I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.***”

This young man **repented of his sins** and set off home to his father. He was even willing to be a servant. Anything to get away from that stinking pig's sty.

6. Yahweh's Love / Reconciliation

What awaited him when he met his father is impossible to describe. This young man knew precious little about his father's true character. He had completely misjudged the reception he would receive.

- He had expected stern, parental rebuke. Instead he was greeted with **overflowing compassion**.
- He had expected a servant's garb. Instead he was given the **best robe** in the house.
- He had expected a mocking reception: a **'I warned you this would happen'** taunt. Instead he received a **joyous banquet**.

It is the same with our heavenly Father? Many people incorrectly believe that **Yahweh** is a stern, merciless spoilsport, who delights in dealing out punishment. The very opposite is true. He delights in **mercy, grace** and **peace**. Our heavenly Father is the most loving, kind and merciful Being in the entire universe. That is a fact very few sinners know. This wayward lad was soon to learn many things about his father.

Luke 15: 20: *"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and **had compassion**, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."*

How great is Yahweh's love for the human race, for **you**, for **me**? Not one of us really knows: but I can tell you this: that Yahweh loves you with immeasurable love: love so great that He sacrificed His only begotten Son Jesus to rescue us from eternal death.

John 3: 16: ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."***

17: *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

18: ***He that believeth on him is not condemned:** but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*

The Prodigal's Brother

Sad to say the human race is totally unlike our merciful Father in heaven. Even so-called '**saved members of the church**' are incapable of recognizing the immeasurable worth of the human soul. They do not rejoice when, from the pigsty of sin, some wayward person returns to God. They look down their noses at repentant sinners: all the while forgetting that their '**holier than thou**' attitude is repulsive to God and far worse than the sins of the souls they disdain. The church, every church, has its Pharisees! In our story the elder brother was the Pharisee. He somehow couldn't rejoice at his brother's conversion. He was furious at his father's gracious treatment of him. Like a spoiled child he stayed away from the party and sulked.

Verses: 25: *"Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing."*

26: *And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.*

27: *And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.*

28: *And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.*

29: *And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:*

30: *But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."*

The Pharisee

Can you recognize the Pharisaic attitude in him, in yourself? To be sure you can. How often have I caught myself behaving like this older brother. *"I am better than this or that person. I keep the commandments: or think I do. I fast. I pay tithes. I study the Bible. I go to church. I pray twice a day. I'm a good boy."* May Yahweh deliver us from that mentality - the nauseating mentality of the **Pharisee**.

Luke 18:

10: *"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a **Pharisee**, and the other a **publican**."*

11: The Pharisee stood and **prayed thus with himself**, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.
 12: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
 13: And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, **God be merciful to me a sinner.**
 14: I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: **for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**"

Notice how the Pharisee **prayed - with himself**. You can be certain that his prayer was a futile waste of time: it accomplished nothing. Yahweh wouldn't even listen to him and he went home - as he had come - unjustified. But the repentant sinner, the publican, he went home justified. Remember that parable.

7. Salvation

What is salvation? Salvation is being rescued from sin and its terrifying consequences - **eternal death!** Salvation is accepting mercy and life from God. Salvation is being found by God. Salvation is being saved for all time from annihilation. Salvation is being born into the Kingdom of Heaven. Salvation is your heritage, your God-given destiny. **Salvation is free!** When a person accepts salvation there is **great joy in heaven**; for yet another soul is saved from hell.

Verse: 32: **"It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."**

Multiplied billions of Christian tracts have been written about salvation. Perhaps you have read some of them. But have you personally accepted salvation? Have you said: **I will arise and go to my Father and say unto him, Father I have sinned against you and against heaven!**

Have I Accepted Salvation?

This is the most important question you will ever have to answer. There simply isn't another issue as important as the **salvation of your own soul**. I ask again: **Have you accepted salvation?** Neglecting salvation is the greatest mistake a person can make. **Yahshua the Messiah (Jesus) died for your sins.** Accept his offer of salvation before it is too late. The Bible says:

Hebrews 2: 3: **"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."**

How does a person accept salvation? By repenting of past sins and telling the Almighty that you want forgiveness and mercy. A simple prayer similar to this will settle the matter:

*"Dear heavenly Father I now accept your offer of salvation through your **Son Jesus (Yeshua)**. I am very sorry for the many sins I have committed: for ***** (list your sins here) ******. Please forgive me these sins and grant me your Holy Spirit to stay away from sin in the future. Enter my name in the **Book of Life** because I want to live for ever. When I study your word help me to understand your will: and give me the power to **obey your commandments**. Keep me faithful to you all my life and never let me go. Amen"*

This is a sample prayer. You may change the wording if you wish; but the theme should be the same. Tell Yahweh that you accept His free offer of salvation through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ (**Yeshua the Messiah**). Confess and forsake your sins. Then begin a study of His Word (the Bible) in order to learn His will. Ask for His Holy Spirit to enable you to do His will, to keep His commandments. **Study and pray on a daily basis.** Attend church if possible and get to know other believers. Never give up your faith no matter what happens: and remember that from henceforth you are a **son or daughter of Yahweh the Almighty God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel.**

1 John 3: 1: **"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.**
 2: **Beloved, now are we the sons of God,** and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

The simplicity of this procedure may amaze you: but it is true and it works. So do not delay. Accept salvation today. Remember, **you were born to live forever!** Accepting salvation will ensure that you do. My prayer is that the **Spirit of Yahweh** and His Son **Yeshua**, will be with you for all time, for His name's sake.

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.

Elder: *Max W. Mader*

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