



## **The Joy of Salvation - Part 1**

### **Rediscovering the Joy of Evangelism**

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Luke 15:1-7

Well this month my wife and I had to re-carpet a couple of the rooms in my house, which of course forced us to move all the things in those rooms out of those rooms, which forced me to realize how much junk we have in our house. Just junk. You ever realize how much junk you have in your house? The LA Times wrote this report that said the average American house has three hundred thousand items in it. And after last week, I believe that for sure. Three hundred, that may be a low number. Three hundred thousand. They also said that the average American with a two-car garage, twenty-five percent of them at least, have no room for any cars in their garage. And thirty-two percent can only squeeze one car in there and they probably can't even get the doors all the way open. That means over half of Americans with a two-car garage use it basically as a big closet. And when the closet garage runs out of space they go off-site and they rent off-site closet space. Yes, 1 in 10 Americans has off-site storage. You know who you are, you have that padlock key for that storage unit. It is actually, it's been the fastest growing real estate industry for the last 4 decades. There's 50 thousand storage facilities in the United States of America, fifty thousand, which is four times more than there are Starbucks in our country. There's a lot of storage facilities. People making a lot of money off you storing your stuff, your junk, off-site. (02:04)

Well, the clutter of life certainly starts young. A British report came out recently that said the average ten-year-old has 238 toys and only plays with 12. Okay? So, he's got a lot of excess junk. You have that at ten, right? Certainly, your ten-year-olds have that. So, it's easy for us to admit that our life is full of clutter. And if you're feeling like, oh no, he's going to attack all the clutter in my life, that's not what I want to preach about this morning. But I do want that to illustrate, not the clutter of all the stuff that we have, but the clutter of all the stuff that we do. (02:39)

Now follow me on this. The clutter of all the stuff that we do. You see at some point we're going to have to look back and look at all the things we did with our lives and recognize a lot of it just needs to be hauled off to the, you know, dumpster of life. And it really amounted to nothing, it was just clutter, we didn't really, it didn't amount to much. As opposed to those activities that we engage in at the end of our lives, and we look back and say we really valued these things. These were important. Now these were the things that mattered, I care, I value, I prize these things. See then if you think about it, we're all moving out. And at some point, you're going to vacate this life and all you're going to do, according to the Bible, is have an opportunity standing before God to separate the things that were valuable and the things that were just clutter. If that sounds familiar that's a biblical analogy. It's given to us in 1 Corinthians chapter 3. That says one day we're going to see our lives, the activities of our lives, we're going to have wood, hay and straw, that's all the stuff that goes in the trash bin of life. But then you're going to have some things that are gold, silver and precious stones. And those will be the things that you value. (03:41)

You see the goal of a wise Christian life is to try to do the best we can to store up more things that at the end of our lives, you're going to say, "These things mattered. these things were important." If you ask yourself the question, well, what are the important things? What are priorities? What should I be spending more time doing, that will make a difference, a thousand years from now? That would be a great question and I'm glad that you've asked it. (04:01)

Jesus has an answer. In Luke chapter 15 as we finally get to the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke in our study of this great book we're going to see Jesus give us three stories that in essence are going to prove to us, in very stark terms what is most important from heaven's perspective. The things that you and I ought to be engaged in. To put it simply the task of us going out to seek and save the lost. Making sure in our lives, starting with the foundational assumption that we've gotten our relationship right with the living God, and if that's true and you sit here this morning at church, at a Bible teaching church saying, I know my relationship with God is settled. Then God says, "Great, from here until the end of your life, here will be something that you will prize. It will not be hauled off to the trash heap of your life. It will be not the clutter but it will be the prized activities of your life." When you go searching and seeking. To try and find those who don't have it right with me, God would say. And you try and get them reconciled with the living God. That could be one of the most important things that you look at in your live and say, "That was the best investment of my time." Now I know it's a scary thing for many people, it's a hard thing for us to think about. Wow, I just want to keep my religious beliefs to myself. I just want to keep this relationship with God to



myself. But the Bible is going to tell us in this passage, nothing could be more important. (05:24)

So, I hope over the next six weeks as we take time to study these three parables in Luke 15, it might do something for us as a church, it might do something for you as a family, it might do something for you as an individual. To kind of rekindle a passion to see in your life, what am I doing to make a difference in other people's lives as it relates to this most important thing called Christianity. Take a look at the first parable with me, we'll get a little of the context as Jesus here has come off this long discussion about what it means to be a follower of Christ. And that meal that we looked at in chapter 14 where many things were said, where he talks about what's important and what's not, he gave us parables about a great banquet and filling up the seats at that banquet and then in chapter 15 it begins this way. Let's look at the first seven verses this morning. Luke 15 verse number 1, follow along as I read it for you. (06:13)

It says now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the Scribes they grumbled saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." They didn't like it. So, in response, he told them this parable, here's the first of three. What man of you having 100 sheep if he has lost one of them does not leave the 99 in the open country and go after the one that is lost until he finds it. And when he's found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing and when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors saying to them, "Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep that was lost." Just so I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance." (07:042)

It's a major adjustment of priorities for those that understand it. Unfortunately, those that he's addressing this parable to, they didn't understand it. The Pharisees and the Scribes of verse 2 are grumbling because Jesus in verse 1 is sitting there talking to the tax collectors and sinners who are hearing him. He has an open, receptive group of people, they just happen to be tax collectors and sinners who want to hear Jesus speak to them about the truth of the kingdom. And in that the Pharisees and the Scribes who assume they have this thing settled in terms of their relationship with God, they don't like it. They're concerned about that. And Jesus says, "You don't understand what I'm engaged in. You don't understand what I'm doing. You don't understand the value of this. You don't understand – to quote verse 7 – that heaven is going to rejoice over the success that I have in a conversation with someone whether it's a sinner or a tax collector, a Pharisee or a Scribe if they repent of their sins, nothing could be more important from heavens perspective." And one day we'll be in heaven and what will matter to us as we look back on our lives is how much we pursued the repentance of sinners that we rub shoulders with every day. (08:17)

Now for us to engage in the thing that Jesus is engaged in is going to take a readjustment of this whole view of talking to people about Christ. So, I just want to start there because many people don't talk to other people about their relationship with Christ because they've had a negative reaction when they're tried to, right? Now we've all experienced that if you've been a Christian very long at all, you've tried to talk to people about what it means in your life to be a follower of Jesus and they don't respond well to that and eventually that shuts most Christians up. They don't want to talk about it anymore. (08:48)

Well, we need to get over that and one of the things that we can do to be encouraged in this passage is just to look at the setting. So, let's just look at the first two verses here and understand what's happening. And you're not going to understand what's happening here unless you think back to where we've been in chapter 14. So, let's get a little context and remember the parable that was told. (09:07)

Look up at verse 21, in the middle of this parable about the banquet and the kingdom invites going out to all these people and everyone giving excuses and saying, "No, I'm not coming." It says here that the master of this banquet is going to send out his servants and say, "Fine then, if the people that I've invited won't respond, we're not going to shut the banquet down. You're going to go to the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame." Now you ought to begin to see the parallel to verse number 1 in chapter 15. Here the Scribes and the Pharisees that really aren't listening to Jesus, they think that they're in with God, but they're not interested. And then you've got the poor, the blind, the crippled, the lame, at least in their minds you've got the lower class of people that are not the people that Jesus ought to be talking to, the sinners and the tax collectors. And they happen to be - look at verse 1 again - drawing near to him, to hear him. See that's the key because as this whole chapter ends as they go to the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame, and in verse 23 to the highways and hedges compelling people to come in because he wants his banquet hall filled. It ends with this statement in verse 35, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. (10:22)



There's going to be people that are going to hear this call to follow Christ, and they're going to respond, they're going to have ears to hear. And then it starts in verse 15 this is a clear setup for what we have. The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. They were hearing him. Now that's important. It wasn't the people that you would expect. And it wasn't the first group Jesus had spoken to, but eventually he got around to people that were receptive and hearing him. And you need to be confident that God, in your circle that you run in, the people that you rub shoulders with in your sphere of influence every week, there are people that are receptive, but you're not going to find them necessarily on the first round of discussions about what it means to be a follower of Christ. But you do need to remain optimistic because that's the way God is providentially set things up even as I quoted earlier in our service in Acts chapter 17 God has set people up in particular places so that they might encounter people like you and me in their everyday lives and hear us speak about Christ and there will be receptive people there. You need to remain optimistic about that. Number 1 on your outline, let's just jot it down that way. Jesus found the receptive and you will too if you're persistent. You need to remain, number 1, optimistic about finding the receptive. (11:31)

### 1. Remain Optimistic About Finding the Receptive

That's a bit of a long point at least by my standards but jot it down, would you? We need to remain optimistic. You need to remain optimistic because I know it's easy to get discouraged when people say, "I don't want to hear about it. Don't shove your religion down my throat. I don't want to have you talking about God with me. Stop with all the Bible stuff." And you are tempted to withdraw but the Bible says. Now keep looking, keep seeking, keep going after those that need to hear this and eventually you're going to run into the receptive. It may be the "tax collectors and sinners" but you'll find some people that will listen. And when you do, you've set yourself up for that opportunity to rejoice with heaven and have heaven rejoice with you that you've done something that you'll look back on a thousand years from now and say that was such an amazing experience to see my words be used by God to see some sinner come to repentance. It changed their eternal destiny and we've got to stay optimistic. (12:25)

It's easy to get discouraged but there are receptive people in your sphere of influence. And one thing that should encourage you in this is that God has promised to put people out there that he has – here's how it's put in the Bible – appointed to eternal life. He's got them, he's hunting them down, he's prepping their hearts, he's getting them ready. It's just, we need an ambassador to show up and talk to them about Christ. Let me show you where that phrase is used in Acts chapter 13. Keep your finger here if you would in Luke 15 and go with me if you would to Acts chapter 13 and I want to show you something that really illustrates a number of principles in this regard as it relates to us seeking out the receptive. Finding them somewhere. Even if it's not the first tier, even if it's not the second tier, even if you have to go to the highways and hedges and find people finally that will sit and hear the message of the gospel. Starting in verse number 45 we get a good example here from Paul and Barnabas who are sharing the gospel but unfortunately in verse 45 they had a negative reaction from a lot of the people. (13:27)

Most importantly in this text the Jewish leaders who didn't like the fact that people were coming and listening to Paul and Barnabas. Look at verse 45 of Acts 13. When the Jews saw the crowds that were gathering around Paul and Barnabas, they were filled with jealousy and they began to contradict what was spoken by Paul and revile him. So, that may have already happened to you. You finally had the courage to speak up in the lunch room or to talk to someone at work about Christ, someone in your extended family, someone in your neighborhood and you've got people that don't like it for whatever reason. And in this case they were filled with jealousy but whatever the reason they're going to contradict what you say and then they even start to disparage you personally for being the Jesus freak or the person that always wants to talk about Jesus. That problem is something every person who is a Christian is going to encounter if they are seeking the lost. So, verse 46, now note this carefully so Paul and Barnabas stopped talking to people about Jesus, underline that if you would. Is that what it says? No. That's the modern version of the Bible. Here's what the Bible actually says. Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly. They've got something to say. And that is this, listen it was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first. (14:46)

Okay, now, you need to understand a little bit about that theologically. In God's plan, it was that starting from Genesis 12 that this message of forgiveness, our problem with God would be solved, as a message comes through the descendants of Abraham and through Abraham's descendants then all the world would be blessed. There was a sequential order to this that God would bring the gospel through Israel and then to all the Barbarians, Scythians, slave, free the rest of the Gentile world. So, the sequence was important to fulfilling the biblical prophecies of the Old Testament. So that's why we see it in the gospels, we see the gospel coming in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,



to the Jewish people, starting with the Jewish leaders and then the second tier of Jewish people like the tax collectors and sinners and then eventually to the Scythians and to the slaves and the Barbarians and to all the Gentile people. To where when Paul writes in Romans chapter 1 about his boldness in the gospels saying, I'm not ashamed of it, it's the power of God's salvation to the Jew first and then also to the Greek. So, there was that sequence. (15:46)

And while that's not relevant for us as Gentiles halfway around the world, two thousand years later, right? We don't have that prophetic sequence anymore, though we're still concerned about Israel, we'd still like to preach the gospel to Israel. We're looking at our everyday life here in America saying, "Well, I've got people in my life that I go to and speak to about Christ first because it makes first logical sense." Let's just make that stretch of application for a minute. You've got people that when you hear the call to talk to people about Christ you immediately identify a first tier of people and it makes sense and in reality, there is a necessity that you speak to God about them. You wouldn't want to get to heaven and have people standing there hearing from God depart from me, you've rejected my Son and then they look at you saying, "I work next to you. I was your partner in business. We were neighbors, right? I was your first cousin, I never heard you talk about Christ." Of course, there's a necessity that we all have, to go to that first tier of people. (16:39)

And so, in that sense I can read that sentence and say that's true for me too. I understand that first logical tier of people I want to share the gospel with. And he says, well, that's important and all of us should I hope get to the end of our lives and say here was a logical group of people that I rub shoulders with every week that I should share the gospel with. But middle of verse 46, since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, well, we're going to keep jamming this down your throat. No, that's not what he says. And that's what they accuse us of but that's not true. It certainly hasn't been my experience. I've never jammed my religion down anybody's throat. Matter of fact when you stiff arm me and say, "I don't want to hear it anymore." I'll say, "Okay". I might say something like this, you know since you don't want to hear this, right, I'll move on. I might even say something as snarky seemingly as he says, since you don't judge yourself worthy of eternal life. I mean if you don't want this gift of God I'll move on to someone else. And so, he does. And for us it means much like it meant in Luke 15, if the Scribes and Pharisees won't hear it, well let's go to the sinners and tax collectors because they were hearing it. Fine we'll move on to the next group. And so, it is for you. (17:46)

And that's why you should be optimistic about the receptive because we're moving through groups of people in our lives and individuals in our lives and we're moving from people that we thought might be receptive, we thought we had a necessity to share this with if they're not receptive, move on, move on, move on, move on. And eventually you're going to find the receptive. You're going to find those that'll give you a hearing. (18:05)

Look at verse 47, for the Lord has commanded us saying, "I made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." Now again that's a prophetic statement about the Old Testament sequence of Jew first and also to the Greek so we have that concept there and in our minds at least I know when I'm called to be a light in this world for Christ I'm going to be that to all men in my circle as well. So, to the ends of my sphere of influence I'm certainly interested at bringing the gospel to them. (18:34)

Verse 48, when the Gentiles heard this, when the second-tier people, when to put it in terms of the parable of Luke 14 when the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame so to speak, preverbally speaking. When those in the highways and the hedges that were on the third tier of people that I would ever speak too about this, when they heard this, man they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord. They were excited because they were hearing the words of life and they were the receptive. And the receptive, look at this, here's my phrase I used earlier, as many as were appointed to eternal life, they believed. They bought it, they embraced it. They became Christians. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. And that's what I love to hear about your neighborhood, your workplace, your extended family. Look people are coming to Christ. That's only going to happen when you and I persistent. And you're not going to be persistent if you're not optimistic. You have to be optimistic. God has receptive people that want to hear the message of life from you. And as scary as that may be for some of you to think about. Doesn't have to be scary if you picture yourself in a conversation with someone who hungry to hear it. Well, I haven't run into too many of those people. Keep looking. Keep speaking. Keep seeking. (19:43)

That's like someone going out to look for a lost sheep. And saying I looked under that bush I didn't see it, I'm giving up. Keep looking. Look under another bush, look in another crevasse, look down another ally, look down

another valley, you're going to find them. Keep seeking. Verse 50, there were people who didn't like it, the Jewish leaders didn't like it. They incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city. And they stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas. And they drove them out of their district. And they've really lost access in this area because of that. There was nothing they could do about it, there were people of high standing, devote women and leading men and they had nothing, they had to move on. So, they did, verse 51. And maybe that some doors close for you, that's the standard for most Christians. Doors are going to close. So, they shook off the dust, verse 51, from their feet, against them and they went on to another place, Iconium. And the disciples really bummed out that doors kept closing for them. Again, I'm reading this so that you might make sure you're reading it. What does it say? The disciples were what? Filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (20:46)

You want to get in step with the Holy Spirit, be committed to keep finding the receptive in your sphere of influence. Keep looking, keep seeking, keep talking. Keep trying to find people that want to hear the words of life. That's a joyful journey, that's a joyful experience especially when you start finding people that want to hear it and they respond to it. Remain optimistic about finding the receptive. (21:07)

Chapter 15 of Luke starts with Jesus talking to people and while the Pharisees could only see tax collectors and sinners, Jesus was seeing people that would hear him. They had ears to hear. They were receptive. The Pharisees didn't like it that's why he tells them the parable. Back to our passage, Luke 15 verse number 3. He tells them this parable. What man of you having 100 sheep if he's lost one of them doesn't leave the 99 in the open country where they're safe and go after the one that's lost until he finds it. To go after the one that's lost until he finds it. There's the persistence of it all. And when he's found it, here's the motivation in this passage. He lays it on his shoulders rejoicing. When he comes home, man, he can't help but share this with other people. He calls together his friends and his neighbors and he says to them, "Rejoice with me for I found my sheep that was lost." (21:56)

Here's the motivation for us reading this 2000 years later. Jesus says, "You know I found receptive people, you're going to find receptive people. It may not be the first tier, second tier, third tier, keep looking, keep seeking, you're going to find people that are receptive and those appointed to eternal live they're going to believe the message and their eternity is going to change because of your conversation with them." And you know what you're going to be then? Super happy, super joyful. That's going to be the best thing, you're going to share that with people in your small group, you're going to talk to people about that. You're going to celebrate that as the greatest thing you've done all week, all month, and perhaps you're going to look back at your life and say that was the most important thing I did my whole life. And I hope for you it's more than one lost sheep, I hope it's more than two lost sheep, I hope you can look back at the end of your life, see people marching through the gates of the kingdom and say, "That one, that one, that one, these are the ones that are here today, humanly speaking because of my courage and persistence in sharing the gospel." We need to get motivated, I'll put it this way, number 2, this story in essence gets us motivated by – I know this is another long-worded point but let's write it down – motivated by the triumph of the next conversion. (23:01)

## 2. Get Motivated by the Triumph of the Next Conversion

I just want you to think about that. How triumphant would it be for you this Wednesday to have someone come to faith in Christ, have their sins blotted out, heaven secured, they become a fellow follower of Jesus Christ because you were courageous enough and persistent enough to share the gospel. If I were to stand us all up, of course I'm not going to do, and move us into two different groups in this building. And say I want to move us into two groups, we're going to sit in two groups. This group over here is going to be the people that have never ever had that experience. And these people over here are going to be the people that have had this experience. I could speak to this group that had that experience of leading someone to faith in Christ and I guarantee you they will reminisce about that. They will say, yeah, I've had that experience last year, seven months ago, maybe for someone of you it's been five years ago, but you've had that experience. I would speak to this crowd in a certain way. I would say can you remember what that was like? Can you remember what that did for your faith, for your just joy, for you getting everything, I mean the birth of a baby gets everything in perspective for a family, right? Changes everything. We celebrated that this morning with our child and family dedications. Spiritual birth does the same thing. All the little aches and pains of church life they all just fade away. All the frustration of your secular life, I mean, it really gets put in perspective when you've been utilized to lead someone to Christ. And if I just spoke to this crowd that have had the experience I would say to you, remember that experience and let's have that again, and could we get back to that. Let's have another experience, can you just get excited about the triumph of finding that next lost lamb. That



would be huge. (24:41)

And then I'd want to take this group and I'd want you to talk to this group, because they've never had the experience. And I wonder what the proportions would be in a room like this. Of those that claim to be followers of Christ. I'm a Christian, I've repented of my sins and put my trust in Christ. The Spirit of God dwells in me, I have heaven secured and hell cancelled. How many of you have not lead anyone ever to faith in Christ? And I'd want this crowd to talk to this crowd and say, "Could you give them a sense of the joy of that?" And then I'd want to tell you guys, can you just imagine what it would be like for you? There might be some things you look back on at the end of your life and say well this is a good thing that was a good thing. But if you've never had that experience, I mean you're going to miss something so profound because nothing will matter more on the day of your demise and the demise of all your coworkers, friends and relatives then whether or not their name is written in the Lambs Book of Life. And for you to be the human agency through which God uses your life, your words, your sentences, your relationship, that lunch meeting, that conversation, that trip to the ball game where ever God gets that done. You're going to say that was amazing. I just want you to envision that. What's that like to lead someone to Christ? You know enough to get saved you know enough to get someone else saved if you're truly a Christian you know enough to get right with the living God you know enough to get someone in your workplace saved, you do. You may not know methods, techniques, you may not know a lot about apologetics but I just want to encourage you, you have what it takes if you just get serious about getting that gospel to more and more people. (26:18)

There was a statement I read for you, I read you the whole context, I think we turned there in 2 Corinthians 4, I won't turn you back there but you might want to jot down verse 14 of 2 Corinthians chapter 4. And you might want to look that up later just to let this passage sink in, I gave you the example that Jesus gave in the context of an ancient war where people went off to war, they won, they had victory and they brought back this parade, this processional. And it was called a triumphal processional and here was the statement as it speaks of our evangelism. It says this, God always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ as we spread the fragrance of Christ everywhere. Now think about that. The concept of us going around and making sure we're vocal about our faith. The Bible says in this passage, 2 Corinthians 2:14, he always leads us in triumphal procession. In other words, if we are persistent in speaking up about Christ, eventually you're going to have triumph of people that you bring back. That you as it's put in Jude, you snatch from the fire, if you want to put it that way. You have an encounter with and they become Christians and hell is cancelled for them. And that experience for you, you need to see in the Bible is a promised experience and to go back to the theology of Acts 13, it is because God has appointed some people in your sphere of influence to eternal life. And that should be something that motivates us to say we've just got to keep at this. (27:50)

Now indulge me with a really stupid illustration. Would you do that? You've done that many times in that past so can you do that now? I've gone out and I've earned trillions of dollars. I'm so rich. Trillions of dollars. And I want to give it away. Not all of it, but most of it. So, I'm going to come to your small group this week and I'm going to start by giving you each in your small group, I'm going to give you each, I don't know, let's start with 10 million dollars. I want you to think about that, would that do anything to change your life? Ten million dollars? So, I'll be at your small group Tuesday night, seven o'clock, we'll get together and I'll come and I'll make the transaction. And we're going to do it all digitally because this is how I've set it up with my accountant. I'm going to come in and we'll sit down and you bring your smart phone because your smart phone is going to be key for this. You bring your smart phone out and you get it out there and it's all going to work through the Apple Pay App, right? You have that? Yeah, we don't all trust it, man, I don't know. Well you're going to have to trust it, so get it out there, now you've got to put in your debit card, you've got to take a picture of it, you've got to get your bank to sign off, so I need that all set up. And then I need to take your phone and together we're going to sit down and I've got a code and a little-known part of that app, up in the right hand corner you click on that, this little window is going to open, and there's going to be this field. And there will be seven digits that you can punch in. And we're all going to sit there, in great anticipation because you know I'm loaded, right? I'm about to give you 10 million dollars, and you're going to punch in this seven-digit code and so you're all there, with your iPhones, and in this that debit card that you've linked to that account, instantly is going to have 10 million dollars in it. Okay, would that excite you materialistic greedy people? It would be so exciting, wouldn't it? Wow, pay off my house, go on vacation, it'll be awesome. Great. So, we all sit around, now picture the people in your small group. And I go, "okay, here it comes." Beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep. Everybody does it. And sure enough, you know they trusted it, they thought, okay, I put in my card, I got my bank to sign off, it's all good, my Apple Pay works now and all of a sudden you put in the code and then [brrrrit], then you go over to the web, you go over to the app, you look at and sure enough you had seven thousand dollars in there and now you've got 10 million and seven thousand dollars. (30:14)

Wow, amazing. And you guys are really happy. You hug me, you thank me. Right? We eat together, it's awesome. And I say, "You know what though? I have so many trillions of dollars. What I would really like to do, and I've chosen you guys and this small group, you're going to be my emissaries. You'll be my representatives. And you know we've got thousands of people on the rolls here at Compass. And I really love the church, now I can't get this money to everyone but I've got certain people through-out the church that this is going to work for as well. Same code, you take that same code I gave you, you wrote it down, right? Yeah, I wrote it down. Great. I want you now, to go to people throughout the church and it's only going to be good for about 6 months. We'll do it for 6 months and then the whole thing will be done. But you go out and you try to get people to pull out their phone, you know the Luddites that don't want to trust the Apple Pay, you get them to get it going, you put their card in it, you get them to do all that. Now they have to trust you on this. And then you hit that little upper icon on the corner that no one knows about, it'll pull up the field and you put in the seven-digits and if they do that and they trust you and they let you do that, well, then they'll get 10 million dollars in their account too. So, I just need you to do that for the next 6 months and then we'll just make your friends rich, okay? (31:32)

Now, you start, it's Tuesday. You start going, you come to church on Thursday night, coming to Compass Night, you see some of your friend working in AWANA with their red vests on out there. You go, "Come on over here. Give me your phone." "No, what do you mean give you my phone, I'm not going to give you my phone." "No, no, no, this will be great. Pastor Mike wants to give you 10 million dollars." "Aww, come on I don't believe that." "No, no, no, he does." "What's the catch?" "There's no catch. I got my 10 million." "No, no, no." "Okay, what do I have to do?" "Pull out your phone, I'll show you. You have to put your credit card in your Apple Pay and set that all..." "No, I don't want to, I don't trust that. No, internet stuff like that, nah, nope. People stealing identity, I don't want to do it." "No, you do, you do, try" So you try, you try, you try, and you have some people that are like, "No way." You don't get anywhere with them, you don't even get to the place where you can hit that icon and put those code numbers in. You know it works, its worked for you. So, you're discouraged. Yup, well, it worked for me but I couldn't even get that guy there on Thursday nights who runs the games. He didn't even want to pull his phone out. He didn't even trust me to open up the app. I mean he wasn't even going to put his credit card in there. So, I know I've got six months left to spread around 10 million dollars to all my friends but, I'm not going to do it. No, I think you'd keep doing it, wouldn't you? Would you not? I mean even for the joy of seeing your friend have the joy that you've had, I think you'd say, I'll push my way through this. And even though I'm rejected, I don't know, seven times out of eight, I'm going to push through because I know what it'll be like to have that person to experience that financial freedom that I just got when Pastor Mike gave me, you know, 10 million dollars of his trillions of dollars. I think you'd do that. (33:08)

Now, it's much better in the Bible then for me to basely kind of appeal to your greedy nature, to talk about the reality what the Bible says. In Ephesians chapter 2 the Bibles says that we are dead in our transgressions and sins. And by nature, just to summarize the high points of that passage. We are by nature children of wrath. We deserve God's rightful punishment. Everything that we've done that violates his holiness, we deserve his punishment. And we are under that threat of punishment, to use Jesus' words in John chapter 3, we are already condemned in this economy of holy God and sinful people. But God has this code, that if we would just plug that code in, that wrath would be removed and all the blessings of that God would be granted. So not only is there this selfish gain that I can get but there's this terrible threat of wrath that can be removed. It would be like you going to a place that was littered with dying people and you could go around and free them from this horrible pain. They're bleeding and it's awful and some big explosion and you can go there if you can just get their phones out and put that number in, they would be completely healed. I mean that's a little bit more I suppose, to try and make it still an illustration, of what we're dealing with in the Bible. This is not going from normal to rich. This is from undergoing a threat of eternal death to being free. That's why I like the phrase having hell cancelled and heaven secured that is an amazing thing. And I think what you would do is say, "How great it'll be the moment we push in that seventh number and that account goes [brrrrpt] man I'm going to keep working toward that. I can get rejected eighty times but see that eighty first time it someone puts that code in and they respond rightly to my instructions, then they'll be saved. (34:59)

You've got to push through the rejection. You have to have at least some kind of imaginative thought if you've never had it. Or you need to recall that triumphal thought of saying, "I want to lead someone to Christ." And in this room, if fear is getting into the way, go back to the passage I quoted, Romans chapter 1 verse 16. Man, listen we shouldn't be ashamed of the gospel. Why? Because it is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes. You've got to have a little bit of that sense of the triumph. God will away lead us in triumphal procession, if, the



passage goes one, if we're spreading the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. And unfortunately, Evangelical Christians are not being so evangelical these days because they're afraid of our threatening culture. And you've got to get over that because the joy of seeing a lost sheep saved, put on your shoulders in the illustration words, coming out, calling your friends, "Hey I had another person respond rightly to the gospel." (35:58)

That's the motivation I want to leave you with, is a positive motivation. I didn't want to flip it over, though I could, and for those of you that need the negative motivation at least jot down the reference, Proverbs 24:11-12. I could put it this way too, that we are called to rescue those who are being taken away to death and hold back those who are stumbling toward the slaughter. And the next verse says, "and if you say, behold, we didn't know, we didn't know." It says does not he who weights the heart perceive it? Does not the one who keeps watch over the soul know it? In other words, if you understand what it is to throw yourself on the mercy of God to save yourself from the punishment you deserve and you've got neighbors, friends, coworkers and extended family members that you are not willing to share this with. If not for the joy of the triumph of the next conversion, you at least need to recognize what's at stake when they don't respond and that ought to be motivation. If I can't be motivated positively at least I've got to be motivated with a sense of how tragic would it be to have those people say, "They never talked to me about this." And if you try to say before God, well I didn't know, then what are you doing throwing yourself on the mercy of God. You know what a big deal it is for you to throw yourself on the mercy of God for forgiveness, your friends your neighbors your coworkers need this. Be motivated by the win, let's stay with that today. (37:24)

We have guaranteed success there is triumph because in your sphere of influence there are receptive people that have yet to be uncovered. There are people that not only need it but people that are ready to want it. We've just got to keep at it. You will have success and I can't say that about any other area of life. Now think about that. I couldn't say jump in the pool, swim a few laps, you'll be an Olympic gold medalist. Just pick up the basketball, get out here, shoot a few baskets, you'll be the MVP in the NBA, I can't say that. But I can say this, you just keep spreading the fragrance of Christ everywhere and you're going to have success, because God has put you in a place and arranged people around you that are receptive to the gospel, you've just got to find them. Get motivated by the triumph of the next conversion. (38:13)

It ends this way, verse number 7, Luke 15, I tell you there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance. Now, that's an amazing statement. Jesus is now bringing this in for a landing. In the first parable, you know what's it like looking for a lost sheep and how exciting it would be to recover that lamb that was in peril, but now you've got heaven throwing a party because of that. Here is something in our lives, in everyday language you're spending time talking to someone at the lunch table of your work about Christ, if they come to repentance, here's a promise from Jesus himself. Heaven is going to break out with joy. That's an amazing thought, that something I do this week could cause heaven to rejoice. You need to see your partnership with heaven in this. They're looking over the rails of heaven to see what happens in terms of, at the top of the priority list, who comes to repentance this week in South Orange County. Number 3 let's put it that way. You need to perceive or sense your partnership with heaven. (39:15)

### 3. Sense Your Partnership with Heaven

This is their priority, this is the gold, silver and precious stones of God and the angels. And all the saints who look over the rails of heaven and care what's going on in this planet, the thing they care about the most, is who's going to come to repentance this week. And you can be an agent of that. It's amazing how the things we do can make a difference to an omniscient, omnipotent, holy God. (39:39)

And again, I'd like to keep it positive but I can't help but think of people that were called to speak to people they didn't want to speak to, people they were afraid to speak to and have them balk at it. And how that effected the God of the Bible. Let me pick someone for instance that God dearly loved, I mean I think about Moses. Moses is hailed in the Bible as someone who God had a very special tight intimate relationship with. But in Exodus chapter 3 when he said, "I want you to go talk to Pharaoh." He said, "Oh, I don't want to do that. I don't want to do that, that's scary to me." Listen to how he responds. Verse number 11 of Exodus 3, Moses says to God, "I don't want to do it. Who am I to do this." Verse 12, "Go, I will be with you." Talk about a partnership with heaven. I'll be with you. And this will be a sign to you that I've sent you, when you've brought the people back out of Egypt, you'll serve God on this mountain. Now that's an amazing thing. Follow the logic of that for a second. Go, I'm with you. We get that part. Here's the sign, here's the proof. The proof is, you'll have success. You'll go, you'll talk to Pharaoh, he'll let the





people go, the people will come out and you'll worship right here on this mountain. No, I want a sign right now. No, the sign is a promise. The sign is the promise and the promise is that if you go, I'll give you success. (40:59)

Same thing here and that's what I've been preaching all morning to you. You share the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ in your sphere of influence, eventually you're going to hit, you're going to have people responding. You're going to have the receptive, it may not be the Pharisees and the Scribes but maybe the Tax Collectors and sinners in your life are going to hear the gospel and respond. And he says, that's the sign that I'm with you. That's the sign that I've called you. Keep at it until you have success, that'll be the proof. (41:24)

So, Moses goes, "Okay, then I'll go." No, you don't know the story. I don't want to go. It's scary, I don't want to go. I'm not good at this. He argues for an entire chapter and a half. Look in chapter 4 verse 10, Moses says, "Now, listen I can't go, I'm not eloquent, either in the past, I haven't spoken eloquently, I'm slow of speech, I'm slow of tongue, I'm not a talker, I'm not the guy." God's response, "Well, okay then I'll send..." No, he says, "No, I'm going to be with you. And by the way, who made man's mouth. Who makes him mute or deaf or seeing or blind, is it not I the Lord? Now go, I'll be with your mouth, I'll teach you what to say." Now, if you want to picture the partnership of heaven, heaven is trying to get people saved in South Orange County. I'm sitting here talking to a group of ambassadors, you're here commissioned with the message of reconciliation. God says, "I promise I will be with you and the sign that I've sent you is that I'll give you success." And when you say to God, I'm not good at that, I'm not like the pastor, I'm not a missionary, I'm not good at apologetics, I don't know what to say. And I've already told you if you know enough to get saved, you know enough to save someone else. So, you've got all the tools. (42:32)

It may not be pretty, but you can share the gospel. And now if you want to say to God, no, no, no, I'm no good at this. Here's the passage in the one verse in that whole section that gets me every time and I pause every time I read through the scripture and I read this line. Verse 13 of chapter 4, O Lord please send someone else. Verse 14 then says, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses. There's a couple times God got mad at Moses and this is one of them. When he says I do not like what you're telling me right now. To think right now that I could in my life listen to a sermon like this and say, I'm not going to do it. The Bible says I am going to make heaven mad. Or I can say, okay, I'll take you at your promise that if I keep at it, I'm going to lead someone to Christ. Although I don't feel prepped you've told me I'll be with you, I'll be with your mouth, I'll help you. The partnership of heaven is I'm going to do this and then when you have success heaven is going to cheer. And you're going to stand back and say how joyful this is. You're going to call your friends and say, hey, the lost sheep was found in my life. (43:38)

I'd much rather see heaven's participation in verse 7 of Luke 15 than in Exodus chapter 4 verse 14. I don't want God to be angry. I'd like the trigger of the rejoicing of heaven to be my obedience that I'll trust him even when I don't feel up for it. It is a work of God. As 2 Corinthians 5 says, He makes Christians. He is the one who makes old people new. New creations in Christ. All of this is from God, but in the passage, it says God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. That is in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself. He wasn't counting their trespasses against them, he was forgiving these people. And he's entrusted to us that same message. The message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are his ambassadors. You're either a good one or a bad one. And listen to this partnership, God making his appeal through us. (44:35)

God is so willing to engage in what we do this week. If what we do this week is what's important to him. And you know what's important to him is you and I seeking and saving that which was lost. Four chapters later we're going to learn about Jesus going out there to win a man to Christ named Zacchaeus. Has a lunch with him, has a meal with him, leads him to Christ and at the end of that he reflects and he says, "That's why the Son of Man has come, to seek and save the lost." (45:00)

I know I'm in league with Christ, I'm in step with the Spirit. God will be in my mouth if I'm just willing to spread the fragrance and knowledge of Christ everywhere in my sphere of influence. And though it would open up a whole another sermon I'd be remiss if I didn't say if heaven wants to partner with me on this I ought to be aware of that. And the best way to be aware of that is to call on God to be a part of it. Colossians chapter 4 verse number 3, someone poured that we pray for those open doors. And every time I talk about evangelism from this platform don't I call you to this verse and say. I just dare you to pray this verse. Pray it. Pray that God would open a door for the word that you can declare the mystery of Christ. And the next verse says that you can declare it clearly as you ought to. Just pray that prayer this week and see what happens. (45:50)



You may not know that I played basketball for Sanford. Did you know that? I was a second stringer I wasn't very good but I did, I played for the Stanford team. Stanford Junior High, Long Beach Unified School District. But I did, I played on the team. And I was second string I wasn't very good. And I was petrified really that I would be called to go into the game, because I knew in practice everyone was better than me it seemed. But there I sat on the Stanford bench and sure enough one day the coach comes up to me and he says, "Your turn. Fabarez, you're in the game," Now I felt a lot like Moses at that point. Knowing I am terrible at this. Have you not seen me Coach at practice? I guess we had enough of a cushion or something and he felt bad for me. So off I go to play basketball. (46:42)

Now this is real life there's no promise or guarantee of success but could you imagine if all I needed at that moment when the coach pointed at me and said, "go, you're in the game.", is a confidence in the promise if I just get out there on the floor and throw the ball it's going to go in. This is the promise of God, he always leads us in triumphal procession. You have to understand if you stick with it, God will, he will give you success. This is the kind of spiritual prosperity God wants to give you. It's not what they're preaching from pulpits in a lot of places in America today, that God wants you rich and wealthy and fat and all the rest when it comes to your prosperity. He wants you spiritually rich, he wants you to store up treasure in heaven. There's nothing more valuable in terms of treasure than you seeing people in your sphere of influence come to faith in Christ because of your boldness and persistence to share the gospel. If not with the people you expect than the next set of people, and the next set of people until you find the receptive. The real issue right now is a sermon that feels like the coach putting his finger in your chest saying, "Okay, get off the bench, get in the game." And this is the sermon. At the beginning of a whole series of sermons about the joy of salvation and getting us excited about seeing that in other people's lives. It starts with a message that is in essence deciding what you're going to do when you're sitting there and it's time for you to get in the game. You've heard this many times. You've been scared, I understand that. Moses was scared. Jerimiah was scared. Elijah was scared. Peter was scared. But you've got to get in the game because God has guaranteed success. At the end of your life nothing will be more important than whether or not you were faithful in responding to the call to be the ambassador of Christ in this world. (48:30)

And by the way, if you happen to have snuck into Compass Bible Church and you never responded to the gospel of Christ, see then I guess we've got to start at a whole new place, right? We've got to get out your phone you've got to trust God enough to lay your life before him. We've got to have the message of the gospel change who you are. And I can't assume in a group this size that everyone is saved and so let me just take a moment to talk to you. If God has prepped you then this kind of message, I mean, it's easy at this point because all I've got to remind you is that you're a sinner, that Christ, he's sent his son to live in your place, to die for your sin, he's risen from the dead to prove that it was acceptable before the Father. And you need to repent of your sin and put your trust in Christ. If you haven't done that, right now is the time. There's no prayer to pray, there's no aisle to walk, there's no hand to raise, there's no rigmarole that I can walk you through other than a heart that's making a sincere pledge to God this morning. I'm yours, I'm a sinner, I agree, I'm ready to follow you. Whatever words you put it in, your heart's response to a God that has called you to repentance, do that. And then, much like the Apostles understand that the calling to follow him is a calling to become a fisher of men. And then you can take this sermon and rewind it and listen to it again and recognize your call is like my call to share the gospel of Christ with the people around you. I hope this encourages us to get it in the game, feel the finger in your chest and it's time to get off the bench. Let's pray. (49:57)

God, help us who celebrate new babies in our service today. I think about what a celebration it will be not just to welcome temporal life into this world, which is super important and sacred. But when those people with temporal life inherit eternal life, nothing is more eternally significant than that. Nothing gets everything in perspective more than that. Nothing can change our perspective on the world more than us having a part in delivering a new life into the kingdom. Which means that we've got to continue to be sensitive and to have eyes for the harvest. Looking around all the time, asking simple questions to people about how they view life and death and eternity. And to lead them to the answers that we have in the word of God. The reliability of scripture, the truthfulness of the resurrection, the voracity of all these things that we put our faith in and now God we need to call our friends, our neighbors, our coworkers, our relatives to put their faith in Christ. God, it can start just as simply as us having a conversation that leads us to talk about what it means to be a Christian. I pray those conversations would take place. And when we're stiff armed, when people say shut up, I don't want to hear it, help us to recognize that that's not the end of our discussion. It maybe with that person but we're going to move on. We're going to continue to find people that eventually are there because they've been appointed to eternal life. To listen to the message of the truth of the



gospel. And we want to anticipate that triumph. So, God get our hearts ready for that experience. Give us the boldness and the courage even today to think about names and faces of conversations we need to have. Empower us just in terms of courage and boldness to like Moses admit that you've made the mouth, you've given us a message. We just need to be faithful ambassadors of that message. So, God may that be the end result that people in this room have that experience, the joy of seeing someone saved, as their faith will be representative of the gospel. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. (52:04)