



The Joy Of Salvation - Part 2

Rejoicing in a God Who Saves

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Luke 15:8-10

Well I must admit that we've been watching a little baseball at our house recently. That's true. But I have to tell you that watching baseball with my wife and my daughter, it's a little different experience than it used to be watching baseball with my two boys, who are now both away at college. I mean my wife and my daughter they understand the basics of the game, they can appreciate the game, but my boys understand the game on a whole different level. You know what I mean? They appreciate the greatness of the game of baseball because they understand much of the intricacies as to how the game works. Some things are just that way. The more that you understand them the more you come to appreciate them. And that certainly ought to be how it is for us as Christians when we consider our salvation. That's the way it ought to be. (01:18)

Now some Christians will say, "Well, I can just look at the scoreboard and see that we win, so really that's all that really matters. I get to go to heaven when I die and so that's all I need to know." Right? Well, I suppose if it were a game that would be fine, but it's not a game when it comes to our salvation. This is something of matters so profound, matters of life and death, matters of heaven and hell, of pardon and punishment, of reconciliation and redemption, of an exacting and very costly atonement and an eternal inheritance. These are matters where the details really are important. And we can't afford just to be familiar with the concept of what we have in Christ. We ought to seek to understand the intricacies of all that means. And the more that we do understand that, the more we come to appreciate it. We really can't afford to go through our Christian life thinking that this is just something simple and common when in fact it's something so profound and so valuable. We dare not yawn our way to heaven. (02:24)

I think the passage that we've come to in Luke will help us with this. It will help us avoid this very offensive mistake that some Christians make as we look at verses 8 through 10 in Luke chapter 15. And if you have your Bibles please call this passage up, it's the second parable, a very short parable in a series of three where Jesus is trying to talk about what salvation means. Particularly in response to the Pharisees and the Scribes that were raising an eyebrow at Jesus being so passionate about his mission to seek and save the lost that he's there with people that will actually give him a hearing, the sinners and Tax Collectors, and so they weren't approving of that. So, Jesus says you don't understand how important this thing is called salvation. You don't understand and he speaks in terms of a lost sheep in a herd of one hundred. We looked at that last time we're together. Now he says, think about this, where it's like a woman, verse 8 says, who has ten silver coins and if she loses one, doesn't she light a lamp and sweep the house and seek it diligently until she finds it? Verse 9, and when she's found it, she calls together her friends and her neighbors saying, "Rejoice with me for I have found the coin that I had lost." Just so I tell you there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (03:38)

Now to appreciate our salvation the way ought to really begins by understanding something of the two parties that are involved here that are illustrated here in the second parable by a woman and a coin. Now if you think through the sequence of these three parables, the third being the most famous, it begins with one where you've got one lost sheep out of one hundred. One in one hundredth loss and here goes the Shephard to find that lost sheep. Now we get to a loss of a woman who has ten coins and she loses one so one tenth of what she has is lost and she goes after that coin. And then of course you know the third parable that we'll get to next time where we've got two sons. Two sons from one father and he seeks that son that was lost. That is very important for us to catch and stand back and recognize that when he employs the illustration of money he should get our attention when it comes to that matter of value and when you go from one one-hundredth of what you've lost to one-tenth of what you've lost, I mean, certainly it really drives our focus to the fact that when God seeks the lost he considers those lost people valuable. And that would be a good place for us to start. As he says if a woman has ten silver coins and loses one coin, if we are illustrated in this passage as people that are a coin we've got to at least stop and say that's an amazing thought that the God of the universe would consider us valuable. Let's just jot that down for our notes this morning. Number 1 let's just stop and be amazed for a moment as we ponder this biblical idea that God values us. And let's make it more personal. You need to be amazed that God values you. (05:17)

1. Be Amazed God Values You



God values you. You stand here today as a Christian and you think about the reality of your life. It began with a God who before he even brought you to a place of repentance and faith sat in his throne and said you are valuable to me. That's a big deal. And you should be amazed at that. And I suppose there has been some situations in your life where you have been amazed at some people that have taken an interest in you and have valued you. I think back to high school when I met the one who would become my wife one day and I was way out of my league just to even think that I could get a date with this girl. But I worked hard at it, for a long time, to get her attention. And she was in a whole other stratosphere of social standing in high school. But I wore her down. I like to say when our eyes met but it took a long time for her to ever look at me, I was staring her down for some time. But finally, she paid some attention to me and just exceeding all my expectations when I finally had the gumption to ask her out. She said yes. I was amazed. I remember thinking about what a huge thing it was that this girl, this stunning girl would pay any attention to me and say yes to go to the pizza parlor to play Asteroids with me. That was huge. I was amazed. (06:35)

By the way me and my wife have a cricket problem at our house right now. They are infesting our garage and of course our garage has a door that leads to the house and a hallway there. They seem to be creeping up on the hallway and they're really getting bold. You know these pesky little jumpy, little jittery. I mean they're not cockroaches, okay but, we don't care for them. And so, I went into the garage this week and got out the spray, and I don't know, I don't stalk this stuff. I took what I had and I sprayed it and it nothing. They're multiplying. Now imagine one of those average crickets gets the attention of one of those stunning crickets. And does what he can to get the attention of this beautiful cricket and the cricket actually responds and these two crickets go out on a date. That's heartwarming. But it's not out of the realm of possibility. I mean you say well you're trying get sappy here Pastor Mike, but I mean come on, it's not crazy that your wife would go out with you. Well, yeah, it was a stretch, I was amazed but I mean it's not crazy. And so, it would be I suppose if a very beautiful cricket decides to go out with an average cricket in my garage. That would, I don't know, that's within the realm of possibility. But if I come home and find my beautiful teenaged daughter enamored with an average cricket, taken with the cricket, admiring the cricket, writing letters to the cricket, taking pictures of the cricket. I'm going to say, "Aim higher honey." Right? I mean you can do better. Let's try and get a boy to pay attention, I mean that's not even, it's not even comprehensible that my daughter would fall in love with a cricket. That makes no sense. (08:25)

So, for me to say I'm sure some of you have been amazed at someone taking an interest in you and valuing you and you think back to my illustration, of course you've had those experiences, but no one has had the experience of being an average cricket having a beautiful human teenaged daughter fall in love with you. That doesn't make any sense. And you don't think that the Seraphim and the Cherubim and Gabriel and Michael the Archangel, you don't think that somewhere in the back of their mind as they watch the beautiful, transcendent. Holy, omnipotent, omniscient God take an interest in you. That I mean, at least in an unguarded moment don't think come on God aim higher, this is these people? Why would you take an interest in them? This should be an amazing thought for us to recognize that a God who has every reason to pull out the pesticide and spray this thing called planet earth and say, "I'm done with these guys". And yet he says, "No, I'm not going to destroy them. Matter of fact I'm going to go down there and save a bunch of them. I'm going to take an interest in them. I'm going to value them. As a matter of fact, the value I place on them is going to be commensurate with the price that I'm going to pay to redeem them. I am going to do that even though they don't deserve it. And the only thing they bring to this relationship is their sin and their transgression and their iniquity and their rebellion, but I'm going to place my love on them." If you really are honest about who you are, and you're really inciteful about something of who God is, you should be amazed that God would take any interest in you. You need to let that thought resonate in your mind. (10:10)

You add to that the layer of our sin and it is just mind blowing. I mean it's not even really present in Psalm 8 but it is a Psalm that I assume that you know. It starts out O Lord how majestic is your name in all the earth. And here's David pondering the greatness of God. And then he must be thinking back of those days laying out under the unlit cities of the ancient world, maybe out in the desert somewhere looking up at the Milky Way and the stars and the moon and he says, "I think of the heaven, the moon and the stars and the handy work of all that you've made." And verse 4 says I consider what is man that you'd take thought of him. The son of man a child of Adam that you would care for him. I mean we don't even have that strata in his Psalm in his mind there of the fact that we are sinners rebelling against that God. He just thinks amazing that God would create us and then he would take an interest in us. And the next line, he makes us a little lower than the angels. He values us at the top of this creative heap of giving us domain of all the creatures of this planet and it's like we are just a little under Gabriel and Michael and the Seraphim



and Cherubim. Look at how he's exulted us. (11:22)

And of course, in the New Testament clarifies, once the price tag or the redemption for us is clarified, it's not angels that he helps. When angels rebel, he does pull out the pesticide and say you guys are done, outer darkness and that's where they're headed. He doesn't give help to fallen angels. He gives help as he says in that passage to those children of Abraham. Those men and women of faith and he says I'll care for you, I'll seek you. This is an amazing thought that God would place such a value on us. There are things that you value, right? Just picture this woman who has ten silver coins and I should clarify for some of you, if you understand something of the monetary units that we find in the Bible. You're often familiar with the word denarius, the denarii the plural form of that. That's just a transliteration of the Greek term which is a Roman monetary unit, well this is underneath this, which is hidden from our English translation, coins here silver coins, is the Greek monetary unit the drachma, maybe you've heard that if you've been through Sunday School. The Greek drachma and though that one is harder to quantify in the ancient world, there's not as much on that, we recognize it's probably an equivalent in the Greek monetary unit to the Roman monetary unit of the denarius so it's probably one day's wage. And so, I don't know, let's just round it off, maybe a hundred bucks. Now I'll get on my knees for a quarter if I drop it in the garage. And if I ever get one of those dollar coins, I mean I'll move furniture to get that thing back. But if I have a hundred-dollar coin, I'm certainly going to clear the house and sweep the place and I'm going to find that hundred-dollar coin. (12:58)

Not to mention if you put this in perspective, this woman only has ten silver coins so in her bank accounts and checking accounts so to speak, she's only got a thousand dollars in her balance. And out of the thousand dollars she loses a hundred dollars, one tenth, you think she values that? Absolutely. If you richy-rich people, let me get it in perspective. Think of all your money, all your cash, all your liquid assets, all your stocks and your bonds and your investments, put that in your mind, all your banks and all that. Now take one tenth of that and put it into one little coin and then let that slip between the cushions of the couch. You're going to work to find that? Oh, you bet. One tenth of my worth, yes. I need that back, I want that. We've gone from one one-hundredth of a flock to one tenth of someone's money and here is God saying I value the sinner. I'm going to seek and save the lost. Value. (13:53)

You've heard the old line, your house is on fire, what are you going to go in and retrieve if you've just got two minutes to go in and get something. What are you going to get? Well you're going to get the thing that's most valuable to you. And you know here is this world that God has judged and one day he will according to 2 Peter 3 it's going to burn with an intense heat. He has rushed into this burning building and he's taken things of value. And they're not things, they're people. They're not inanimate objects that rolled under the dishwasher, they're you and me. And if you stand here today with a testimony and I could call you up on the platform, you could stand behind this podium and give us your testimony and tell us about you being saved, you need to know you're in this passage. It ends with this, the sinner who repents. Is that you? If that's you, you need to know it starts with this. God valued you, like a woman who lost one tenth of all of her money in this scenario, a hundred-dollar silver coin. And she went to find it because she needed that, she wanted that, she valued that. It's a good word for us, God valued you. (14:54)

Now I got to be careful with sermons like this, if I preach these kinds of sermons to you every week, your head would get really big, I couldn't fit you through the doors of the church. You might start thinking you're God's gift to God. We can't have this diet every week because we have to get ourselves in perspective I understand. But we do need to stop every now and then and recognize that even though we are sinners and there should be a contrition and a humility to us when it comes down to thinking about who we are in God's mind it is a humbling thought but it is an empowering thought. It is a significant boost, it is something that makes me think wow, really God valued me? I valued you like a woman seeking one tenth of her whole wealth. That's a big deal. God valued you. (15:38)

Even though you're a sinner, even though you are a sinner. If you think of that and you think about even in that conversation with Job and his three friends, there was a lot of discussion about the fact now if you think about the absolute holiness of God and you think about us as sinners, it's amazing that God would have any thought of us at all. And you add that concept of sin, Job 4:17 for instance. Can any mortal man even ever be right before God and his thinking? Can a man be pure before his maker? I mean it's impossible. At least on our own merit. Eleven chapters later in Job 15:14 the conversation goes this way. What is man that he can be pure? How can he that is born of woman be righteous? Behold God puts no trust in his holy ones the heavens are not even pure in his sight, how much less one who is abominable, corrupt, a man who drinks injustice like water. All you have to do is put the mirror of God's word up against your face and say, "Listen, if I'm honest about my sin. I'm going to say who are we that we would ever even have anything of an interest in God's mind? Why would we end up on the radar of God of



any interest? Why would he go to any length to help us?" (16:50)

Well maybe this will help, because you were made in the image of God. Nothing else was made in the image of God. Nothing. You, I don't care how much you love your pets, your animals or you're a horse lover, nothing was made in the image of God, except for us and the angelic class. We have intellect like God. We can think we can reason we have emotion sentient reaction at least in our physical bodies that reflect the emotion reactions that we have in our own hearts. And the ability to choose and to make and create and be volitional in our life. Those are reflections of God. See your animals are not writing books and discussing philosophy, those are things that human beings do and created in that image we are valuable to God. And when we fell and when we sinned and when we did all that we've done in compounding Adam's problem. God still looks at humanity and in particular you, and he values you. You don't feel very valuable, I understand that, I don't either, particularly when I think about my sin and I think about my life and I think about all the things if God valued me I wouldn't feel this way, I wouldn't suffer this way, I wouldn't hurt this way, I wouldn't have disappointments like this. I realize that, but in God's judicial response to sin in Genesis 3 he put this cloud if you will over all of creation, it's called the curse. And he's made us experience those things, there is suffering, there is pain, there is difficulty, there is disappointment. But if you think those things constitute the whole of how God feels toward us, you've forgotten the fact that we're made in the image of God. And he looks from heaven at you and finds value in you. (18:26)

Reminds me of my little problem with my wallet. I found a wallet that I like, it's the kind that I like. It's got the right number of slots for my stuff and I just like the wallet and I can never find one that's really nice. I always find the cheap ones like at the swap meet that work for me. So, I've gone to the place now where I realize the problem of them lasting only 12 to 15 months in my back pocket is because they're cheap. So, I've learned to buy them in bulk at this point. Not in bulk, but I buy more than one when I find them. And so, I'll throw an extra one in my dresser and it wears out in 15 months and the seams come apart and things are falling out the slots the cards drop all the way to the bottom I can't find them, so whatever. I just get use to the fact they only cost 10 bucks for me, they're cheap. Last time one wore out I thought it's time for a new one, the thing was falling apart the stitching was coming out, I went into my dresser I go that's alright I got a new one. And so, I took that out laid it out on my desk, took all the stuff in it, the credit cards, you know the skinny stack of cash and I transferred it all over to my new wallet. And then I took that other wallet and I thought about how weird that was because to me I valued that wallet. I mean five minutes before I transferred that stuff that piece of leather was super important to me. I wouldn't go to a restaurant and leave it, I wouldn't turn my back on it at the mall, I would have it in my hand in my pocket. I would carry it with me, it would be with me because it's my wallet and it's important to me. And then it was empty and it was like now it's a really gross looking piece of leather. And I walked it over like it was now contaminated to the trash can and threw it away. (20:00)

So here was something I valued and I protected and I kept an eye on and I treasured. But it was a beat up old piece of leather but I didn't value it for what it looked like, I valued it for what it contained. And what it contained was something that was precious to me. And then I had that nice new wallet and that was a lot better. And I thought great that's the one my eye is on. Now the reality is you and I suffer and we struggle and we look at our lives, we go, how can God value us, I don't feel very valued by God. But he values you. He's put us in a situation where our lives are going to deteriorate there's going to be pain, there's going to be suffering, there's going to be disappointment. All of that's going to be true until he redeems our flesh. And when that takes place, we won't have this problem anymore. And for some of you, you'll look at that illustrations, don't take it too literally like he's going to take your body throw it away and give you a new. I know we talk in short hand that way in Christianity but that's not how it works, do you understand that? He didn't throw the body away of Christ who is our archetypal prototype of what is for us to be physically resurrected one day. The body that went into the grave is what was brought out of the grave, reconstituted, remanufactured and he had a remade body. It was a glorious body. That's why it's important as to how we deal with the body when we die. So, my point is this, he doesn't take our fallen flesh and throw it away. He transforms it by the exercise of his power Philippians says and he makes us like himself. Not just in our spirit but in our flesh. And so it's important for us to recognize one day the external will match the internal for what God values in our spirit is going to be remade even in our flesh. And that's going to be the complete package, literally. And we will be in a place valued in a way that we'll know it with every feeling that we have in our new glorified bodies. But for now we suffer with the paradox of looking at ourselves, looking at our world, feeling the things that we feel and thinking we don't feel valued. Well don't mistake it, it may be a rotten looking leather, you know, deteriorating wallet on the outside, thanks for the compliment Pastor Mike, but on the inside God looks from heaven and values you. His eye is on you, he values you. (22:17)



You should be amazed at that. Who are we that God would think about us. Well he does, he illustrates our lives in this scenario as a lost coin. What happens in the scenario? Well verse number 8 it says in the middle of the verse, this woman who lost this hundred-dollar coin to update it into our terms, she lights a lamp, she sweeps the house and here's the phrase, she seeks diligently until she finds it. A diligent seeker, as you would be. I mean you'd search for a hundred-dollar coin in your house all day, I would think that would be important. Diligently seeks it. Now it's one thing for you to stand back and say God valued me but really the measure of that value as I've said is really the cost that it takes to really redeem it. And in this case, I'm looking at the reality that God not only valued me but he sought me, he pursued me. Which involves so many things in the redemptive plan but let's just start with that. If you should be amazed that he would value you, let's put it this way, number 2 you should be astonished that he sought you. (23:19)

2. Be Astonished God Sought You

And again, I'm speaking to those of you who could come up on this platform, stand behind this podium and tell us your testimony. You are a Christian. And you're looking past tense at the reality of God seeking and saving you, because you are the sinner who repented. And in that scenario, think about that, God went to a lot of effort to seek you because here's where the illustration breaks down in this second one. You weren't an inanimate object that was dropped from waist height, hit the toe of your big toe and rolled under, you know, the proverbial refrigerator. You were more like what we saw in the first illustration of a wayward sheep that goes its own way which matters of fact is exactly how the Bible puts our problem with sin. Isaiah 53, here's how it reads. It says we are all like sheep we've gone astray, we've turned every one of us have turned to his own way. That's the problem with sin. Sin is something that takes us on the path going where ever we choose to go. Now add the God factor to it and you can go back to Genesis chapter 3 in your minds. When you add the God factor to it, when God wants to show up in sinful people's lives they run. So, when I talk about God seeking you, I mean this is really hide and seek because sinners hide and God seeks. (24:34)

You remember that scenario I'm talking about in Genesis 3? Adam and Eve had sinned and then in that picture in Genesis 3 God comes walking personified in the cool of the day through the garden and what do Adam and Eve the sinners do? Here comes God, I'm hiding. And they hid themselves. And then not for their sake but for our sake the Lord called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" Where are you. Does God know? Of course he knows. But God is saying, "Where are you?" Where are you? Doing what? Highlighting the fact, you're running from me. You're running from me but I'm going to find you, I'm going to seek you. I gave you a passage that I want you to work through in your small groups on the back from Ezekiel that picture of the shepherd seeking the sheep. Going and going and going and diligently I'm going to find this, this wayward animal. And you ought to think that way about your conversion. If I called you up here, you stand behind the podium you give your testimony. You're going to give me a story about your life, growing up here, meeting these people, hearing that guy, hearing those people having, your parents having this youth counselor, whatever it is, lead you to Christ. And that is all a part of God seeking you. (25:43)

Now let's start with the most logical point. If you stand on this platform and give your testimony, if you sit in the audience in this congregation right now and think about your testimony. You think about your crossing paths with the truth of God's word. And not to over analogize this or to allegorize this but certainly the light of a lamp certainly we see throughout the scripture, that's a good picture of God's truth. God's truth is impacted your life. God lit a lamp, God turned on a flashlight. God as it says in Ephesians, shine this light on you and said sinner arise from the sleep, from the dead, let Christ shine on you. God got his truth to intersect with your life at some point. Now let's just think logically in this, I quote this all the time but it's a very important passage. In Acts chapter 17, Paul is there preaching to the professors of Athens and he says this in verse 26 that God made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth having – here comes reactive verb – determined the allotted periods at some point on the time line and the boundaries of their dwelling place – that's some place on the geographic globe – so that, purpose clause verse 27, they should seek God and perhaps feel their way toward God and find him. Yet he is actually not far from us, from each one of us and in him we live and move and have our being. (27:05)

Even some your own poets have said indeed we are his offspring so God is always surrounding us, he's seeking us. And if you've got a testimony he's put you face to face with the truth. Seeking you out by starting with this where you were born and when you were born. Now think about that. Because if you don't think God was involved in that



you certainly weren't. I mean you're either a random chancer or you believe in the divine sovereignty of God. And if you're a random chancer well then no one had a part in this but you like a lot of people get intoxicated with your own importance. You think somehow you came to Christ, it was all about your intelligence, all about your thinking, all about your knowledge, all about your responsiveness, or your sensitivity to God when in reality you got face to face with the truth because God first of all put you in a particular time in the time line, in a particular place on the globe and he made sure that you were face-to-face with the truth. (27:57)

And it wasn't like it was at a Junior High dance where he reached out his hand and said dance with me and you blushed and swooned and reached out your hand to dance with him. You ran from him, that's what the Bible says. Sinners they love the darkness, you ran from him. Picture that, you run away from him, he's seeking you, he wants you to seek him but you don't. That's what Romans 3 is about, none seeks after God. He has to trap you, he has to hunt you, he has to work to get you face to face with the truth until finally he peels your eyes open. To use the phrase from 2 Corinthians 4, they've been so shut they've been sealed but he's raised your eyelids and says look at the truth. I don't care how you looked at it, you may think I've grown up in a Christian home, I've always loved God. No you didn't, I guarantee, you did not, the minute God's truth came between you and doing what you wanted to do in your flesh, you didn't like it. You didn't like it, no one does. (28:51)

Trust me you weren't this little baby coming out sharing your toys and complimenting your parents, that didn't happen. You're living in a fantasy and a lot of people do. I love God since I was a toddler, I don't remember a time when I didn't love, nonsense. You loved some image that you created that was conveniently crafted to work perfectly with your little childhood experience but in reality, you were a rebel at heart like the rest of us. And every time the truth of God was there in your face unless it was convenient you weren't going to have it. God had to break your will down. And God did that for every person that can stand behind this podium this morning and give your testimony. He put you face to face with the light of the lamp of truth of his word. Capitalizing on your conscience on steroids in this regard and of the Holy Spirit took all of those convictions that were in line with the law of God, written on your conscience and he kept bringing the Spirit as he sent the Spirit into the world he says in the Upper Room discourse to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. The Spirit of God went out to seek you to do that. To put you on the time line in a particular place, in a particular family because you certainly didn't choose all that. And then he hunted you down with the Spirit of God with the truth of the word. Put you face to face with those sermons. Face to face with that dialog, put that Bible in your hand and you were convicted because he sought you, he diligently sought you. And again, it's got to be built on the former point, because why? This is mind blowing, because he valued you. (30:15)

And he's going to keep hunting you down. And you may be in the process right now, you're not a Christian and all these words that I'm talking about this morning don't apply to you yet but they will because you're in process and you're feeling the conviction of the Spirit. And you're not going to win this one. I mean God will seek and save diligently until he finds his children. I mean if you lose a kid at Costco or the mall or even if it's like at an impossible place like Disneyland, you don't leave Disneyland with two kids saying well I came in with three but I got most of them, I'm fine. You look for the one you lost. How long do you look? As long as it takes, why? Because that's your kid and you're going to find that kid and you're going to bring that kid home after you yell at the kid for getting lost. But you're bringing the kid back. You don't think God in an illustration like this and it's going to get to the two sons in a minute, the heart of a father toward his people, he loves you, he cares for you, he seeks you. And if you're already found then you sit here today going, yes, you're right, everything in my experience lead to my conversion, seeing my sin, reaching out for his grace, putting my trust in Christ. That was his doing. (31:24)

You couldn't find a way out, and I know the context of Psalm 139 is not about the conviction that the Spirit brings in terms of conversion but listen to these words in light of one of the main things the Spirit comes to do. When it says where should I go from your Spirit? And at some point in your testimony that's how you felt. Where am I going to flee from your presence? If I go to heaven you're there, if I make my bed in Sheol you're there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the utter most part of the sea even you're there and your hand will lead me and your right hand will take hold of me and the pressure of that and the conviction of your testimony you know what that's like. If I say surely the darkness will cover me and the light will be night to me and the darkness is not dark to you. Night is as bright as the day for darkness is as light with you. Now I know sinners love darkness and you did too from the very beginning. You love to do whatever it is you wanted to do you did not want to bow the knee to the God of the universe and serve him at great sacrifice to yourself, you had no interest in that. But if you sit here today and that is your story then you know this, God hunted you down until that was the reality for you. A sovereign



arrangement of your life affairs, the infiltration of the truth of the lamp and if you want to use the broom here without allegorizing this too far of the pushing and the prompting and the conviction to get you to seek him, that was his doing. The sweeping conviction of God. (32:41)

God knew what he was doing with all those things in your life, every sermon you heard, every gospel presentation you've heard it was as Isaiah 55:10 says like the rain and the snow come down from heaven do not return there but water the earth making it bring forth it's sprouts and seed for giving a seed to the sower and bread to the eater so shall my word God says, go out from my mouth it shall not return to me empty but it shall accomplish that for which I purposed it, it shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. God's word intersected with your life, so much so, probably not the first time, the second time it was probably the tenth or twentieth time but eventually that truth penetrated your hard heart and the dead came alive. He sought you until he found you. Be astonished at that because it's based on this love for you like a parent looking for a lost child but in this case the woman who's lost a silver coin. (33:31)

He's coming to a burning world and he's grabbed the things that are valuable. As it says in John 6:38. I've come from heaven not to do my will but do the will of the Father. And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me. And in that context if you know John 6 repeated there in John chapter 10 the idea of him taking the people that God has given him and seeking them and saving them and bringing them to himself. All those appointed to eternal life. He gets them, he grabs them. And as that verse ends he raises them up on the last day. Be astonished that God sought you, be amazed that God values you. (34:07)

One more here which is reminiscent of our last parable. When she finds it verse 9 look at printed on your worksheet there. She calls together her friends and neighbors saying rejoice with me for I found the coin that I had lost. Just so Jesus says, "I tell you there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." A bit of a veiled way to put it, periphrastic if you will, it's a kind of a nuanced way to say it but when it comes to this statement, the angels, in the presence of the angels of God are rejoicing because God is rejoicing. Let's just be clear about it and emphatic. It's like in the 1800 when King George II stood up, you remember the Handel's Messiah, the halleluiah chorus? When the king stands up, everyone stands up. Even if they scratch their heads as to why they would care about them, why would you go to such great lengths and spill the blood of Christ for them? Heaven's rejoicing, joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner. And the reason the angels are rejoicing, the reason the saints in heaven are rejoice is because God himself rejoices. He rejoiced over you to put it in this perspective when you were saved the moment you locked in because of his grace, heaven and cancelled hell, I mean picture that, the kind stood up. And the angels rejoiced. Number three you ought to be humbled by that. It's certainly a humbling thought. Be humbled that God rejoices over you. (35:26)

3. Be Humbled God Rejoices Over You

And again, it's only you, if the last phrase of verse 10 applies to you. Are you a sinner, who knows he's a sinner and you've repented of your sins? If you have, the Lord stood up and rejoiced. That's huge and humbling. The God of heaven rejoicing over our salvation. I haven't turned you anywhere yet, let me turn you to a couple of Old Testament passages as we come in for a landing here. Zephaniah chapter 3, Zephaniah it sounds like I sneezed but that's an Old Testament book. Zephaniah. Go to Matthew, you know where that one is, turn back four books or scroll up or just type into your iPad, Z-e-p-h. Zephaniah chapter 3. One of the many Old Testament prophets, now follow this carefully that telescopically looks at the redemption of God's people. Telescopically, this is helpful perhaps to you. There was the historical concern about the people of God in Judah being taken off to captivity by the Babylonians in the sixth century before Christ. And there was always the hope that was the golden lining around the dark cloud of God's judgment on his people, they would be restored, they would come back to the land. That was a seventy-year journey into the doghouse for them but they came back and the prophets wanted to make that clear as God inspired their words and as God gave those truths through the prophets, they would come back. Then beyond that there was the ultimate fulfillment that one day it wouldn't be, oh God's governor is there, it wouldn't be this very weak kind of reassembled Judea in the intertestamental period it would be the great David, that's how it was put in the Old Testament promises which we know is the Christ the ultimate Messiah, the Anointed One, sitting on the throne in a place that we understand as the Millennial Reign of Christ. So, there will be a complete fulfillment of those things. So telescopically we look to the fifth century BC and then we look to the Millennial Kingdom which is yet to come. And then of course the way we shift sometimes from the city of Jerusalem to the city of Zion, which is the, really the code in the words of the prophets to speak to the ultimate fulfillment where we have the New

Jerusalem and the eternal state. You can see that in all these Old Testament prophecies. This telescopic look toward God's work in his people. So, while you may be a historical person and say, well let me think about what he's going to do in the restoration of Israel. Or even as an eschatological fan you'd say, "Well let's see how these apply to the Millennial Kingdom. You should see yourself in these passages because ultimately and there's no missing it in the language and the context of this promise. It's speaking of us too and the ultimate fulfillment of God's good that he does for his people. So, let's read it with that in view. Zephaniah, I want to take you to chapter 3, let's start in verse 14. Zephaniah four doors down from Matthew, chapter 3 verse 14. (38:17)

You want to talk about the king standing up and getting other people to stand up during this great scene? Listen to these words. Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; Sing aloud all you people that are part of this redeemed community. Shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all of your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! Do you think God's trying to get everybody excited about what he's trying to say? Wow, what are you so excited about? You want us all to be excited just like when one sinner repents. And he says, I want you to do this because – verse 15 – the Lord has taken away the judgments against you; and he's cleared away your enemies. Now if you think that's the Syrians or you know, you think that's the Medopersians or you think that's the Babylonians, we're looking far past that as we will see. Even with the word Zion we get a clue, we're thinking much bigger than that. And if you really want to think of it from the ultimate perspective, I see the words, he's taken the judgments against you away, he's cleared those out. What are the judgments against us? What's our problem, why should we be sprayed with the pesticide of God and cast into outer darkness. Well, it's called our sin, it's called the law of sin and death. The wages of sin is death. I deserve nothing but God's justice and I should be cast into outer darkness and pay for my sin and rebellion against God. That's the law of sin and death and all that judgment taken away. And when it was taken away the Bible says because of this work that he's done in my heart to trust him all of my sins and these rules about sin causing death, These things were hostile against me they were as Colossians says pinned to the cross. What does that mean? Someone dies with a charge over their head and what was on that placard according to Pilot because they couldn't come up with one and the Jews didn't like it. It's King of the Jews was really there from God's perspective poetically my sins and yours. And all of those things when he cries out, tetelestai, everything that is hostile against you, every judgment, every enemy which was every sin that you committed, tied with the justice of God that should penalize you was all cleared away. That's a New Testament way to look back at this passage. (40:18)

The king of Israel, the lord is in your midst. He was not only in the work of redemption but one day in the New Jerusalem when the dwelling place of God is among men and the incarnate Christ looking like he did on the mount of transfiguration who comes and makes his dwelling among men. Sits on the throne of David, not just in the Millennial kingdom but in the New Jerusalem. I mean, man they can't get any better than that. Yeah, it can't. look at the rest of verse 15. You shall never again fear evil, never again. Now there's going to be a shiver down the spines of everyone in the Millennial Kingdom at the end of the Millennial Kingdom when Satan is released and there's temptation so ultimately the only way this is ultimately fulfilled is in the eternal state when you and I are living in a place where the dwelling of God is among men and God has now put us all in glorified bodies, we're redeemed and there's never again a fear of evil, there's no tempter, there's no sin, there's nothing fallen in my flesh. On that day, verse 16, it shall be said to Jerusalem, fear not O Zion. And again, he's not concerned about streets and city walls, we're talking about the people here. Hey people, don't fear. All you redeemed people, let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst. God is among you, this isn't a long-distance relationship anymore, this is not like I'm praying to God I can't see him, God is living among us. All the blessings of God unmitigated through the presence of God himself. The mighty one who will save. (41:46)

Now look at this, underline it, highlight it, bracket it, star it, he will rejoice over you with gladness. He will quiet you by his love, he will exult over you with loud singing. Now here's some verses we need to remember from time to time. A constant diet of that could get yourself out of perspective but let's stop and remember that God says, I get excited when a sinner repents because I know where it's leading. And we talk about being saved but you're only saved forensically, legally right now. You will be saved when you should be cast into outer darkness but instead your life clothed in Christ is accepted and you're hauled into the kingdom and now you're blessed by God. And he says you're never going to fear evil again. Fear not O Zion; let your hands not grow weak, the Lord God is in your midst. A mighty one who will save, he will rejoice over you with gladness. He will quiet you by his love, he will exult over you with loud singing. Do you understand that the reason God gets excited the day that you repented of your sins and put your trust in Christ is because he can with clarity look to the future at the reality of the day when everything in our lives is exactly how it ought to be? And he will rejoice over us, he will quiet us, he will exult with loud singing over us. That'll change your perspective on things. (42:58)

Be humbled that God rejoices over you, specifically over your rescue. Do you think there's any celebration when those astronauts on Apollo 13 made their way back to earth? Do you remember that back in 1970? Us old people remember that. You young people remember the movie, but you know. Can you imagine? I mean think about the wives and the young children of those astronauts. I mean they thought they were going to be spun out into the cold vacuum of interplanetary space and suffocate and that would be their eternal grave, at least humanly speaking. That's what they pictured. That oxygen tank blew up, they thought oh man it's doomed. And because it was patched up, and because help arrived, the data to fix this and everything was made right. You can watch the movie afresh and then they were turned on their way home, do you think they rejoiced in Houston? Do you think those wives rejoiced? Do you think those families, I bet there was a lot of rejoicing? And then when that thing touched down, splash down, I mean what were the parties like? People rejoicing and that's over temporal salvation, that's over physical deliverance. God's looking at something that has a much bigger price tag. A much more huge ramification in terms of eternity. And he said man we're going to rejoice. When we get that ship turned around and we see that person now heading, man we're going to rejoice. The king is going to stand and when that happened in your life, he rejoiced and it's only in anticipation of the ultimate rejoicing when he sings over you with gladness and he quiets you by his love, when he exults over you with loud singing. (44:36)

As long as we're in the Old Testament let's turn to one more Isaiah 62. Keep going to the left, keep scrolling up Isaiah 62. If you think that phrase there especially if you're macho men in the room, he quiets you by his love, if that make you uncomfortable? This will make you really uncomfortable. Isaiah 62, again a telescopic look into the future restoration. Of course, Isaiah is concerned that they have hope that they're marching off to Babylon but God is going to eventually bring them back. And while there will be a time of restoration there it's just a foretaste of the Millennial Kingdom which is just a foretaste of the eternal state. Verse 1, and again we get a little clue that we're looking telescopically when we start seeing the word Zion being used. For Zion's sake, that's a kind of the idealized way to describe the inhabitation of Jerusalem, which is not just the earthly Jerusalem, it's not the dusty streets of an ancient city as the book of Hebrews makes clear, we're talking about the celestial city, we're talking about people that are redeemed. For Zion's sake, I will not keep silent. For Jerusalem's sake, I will not be quiet until her righteousness goes forth as brightness. He's rejoicing because of where this is headed. And her salvation is a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness and all the kings your glory and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. And you shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. And again, we're not concerned with streets and walls and buildings, it's about the people. You want to talk about valuing you, look at a crown of beauty, a royal diadem in his hand. Now a little play on words in the Hebrew and you can look at all the footnotes later to see how these Hebrew words rhyme but look at verse 4. You shall no longer be termed "forsaken" and your land shall no longer be termed "desolate" but you shall be called "my delight is in her" and your land "married". For the Lord delights in you and your land shall be married. (46:29)

You want to talk about marriage, the ultimate thing here in people's mind in terms of the consummation of great things the fulfillment and joy. Look at this for as a young man marries a young woman so your son shall marry you. You people are going to love this place, love these people, great. And it gets even more personal, seatbelts uncomfortable. As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride so shall your God rejoice over you. It's called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. And the day, follow this now, he slipped that engagement ring on your finger so to speak. And locked this thing up, hell was cancelled, heaven was secured and he was leading you to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The king stood up, he rejoiced over you because he knows it's headed toward the culmination, the consummation of the reconciliation of our relationship with the living God. That right now its long distance, I've got the ring on, I'm engaged to God but I'm not yet in the kingdom and it's coming and he's rejoicing. I mean in the most intimate expression of illustration like a bridegroom over his bride, so God is going to rejoice over you. Be humbled that God rejoices over you. This is important. Be amazed he values you, be astonished that he sought you, just like a woman finding a silver coin that she lost so I tell you there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. (47:52)

Have you ever been on a cruise ship? What's the best thing about a cruise ship? Okay, honest people, food right? Some of you said it, you wanted to say it, it's time for lunch you feel it, food. See it's not just today on these vacation cruise lines this has been really a staple of pride for these cruise lines even back to the time when these cruise ships were the transportation across the ocean. I mean they took pride they hired good chefs they have great dining halls, it's a very important part of this ancient travel across the sea. Well, there was a young Russian



immigrant that took his first cruise which was the transportation from Russia to Halifax Nova Scotia, he was coming over here for the first time as a young teenager, his family could only afford to send him. He came over here, he studied, he actually went back to Russia and founded a very fruitful missions organization. But in his story, as he tells it, he came over as a teenager and his parents put him on this ship. His mom packed his bag that had just the basics in it as he went to America to find his future. As he went down that ramp and got on that boat and opened up his case he saw what his mom had packed, was just enough food to make it. It was a 14-day cruise, it took to get from Russia to Nova Scotia. And so, he had to kind of ration out his food, and every day on that boat as he's killing that time or walking those decks he pass by that dining hall he'd look, longingly through the windows of the dining hall and see all these people in nice clothes and all these butlers and waiters coming out, and the chef back there doing their thing. And he was like, man it would be so great to be in there all those rich people. And finally, some of the workers on the ship, some of the sailors saw him walking and looking longingly and stopping to look in the window of the dining hall. They said, hey kid do you want some of that? He said, "Oh, do I ever." He's just trying to eat his little rations that he's got, they're getting stale in his room. Of course I would. So, we can make a deal. So, these sailors winked at each other and started to put him to work. They said if you carry that, if you mop that, if you shine that, if you buff that we'll give you a little bit of this. So, they give him some leftovers from the dining hall just for doing this and he did that every day. He thought this is the best I can do, this is great, it's better than the stuff my mom packed in my suitcase. On the last day of the voyage he finds out in discussion with someone on the deck of the ship, that those meals in the dining hall, were all included in the price of the fare to get on that ship. He'd never eaten like that before, he didn't think he could go in there. He never tried. His parents had bought him a ticket that included those meals. He went the whole time working for scraps. (50:21)

You know, you and I are created in the image of God. We naturally thirst for the things that God experiences in the Trinity. The kind of fellowship, the kind of acceptance, the kind of value and the kind of love, we long for that. I mean that's just the way we're made and if we admit it, no matter how manly you are or how autonomous you may feel, I mean, we want those things. We want to be treasured, we want to be valued, we want to be loved, we want to be cared for, we crave them. But most people unfortunately they just try to make do with the scraps they get as they try to work these relationships on Earth. Try to find it in their marriages, they try to find it in their relationships, they try to find it in all these things on Earth that they can get, but it's meager. I mean it'll do I guess. Yet the Bible says if you're a Christian, God has such incredible love for you, a kind of love that values you and sought you and rejoices over you, like a bridegroom over a bride. And Paul said if you can just understand the details of your salvation. He prayed that for his early congregants, in the book of Ephesians chapter 3 verse 18 he said this, I am praying that you may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and the depth and the height and the breadth of the love of Christ. To comprehend the love that is beyond comprehension. Here's the play on words, to know the love of Christ that's surpasses knowledge. Infinite concept to think of God the holy one, loving and seeking and valuing you. But I pray that you'd get a handle on some of that. Why? Next verse, so that you may be filled with the fullness of God. (51:58)

Do you know this one sermon that I have just preached, if we could really understand the intricacies and the importance and the value and the profundity of our salvation, that God so loved the world that he gave his Son for you? It'll have an effect in your life. All these things that we sell out for, all the temptation Satan tricks us into, all the things we long for and frustrate us when we don't get it in our earthly relationships. You don't think that there's something that relates directly to what Paul said when he says, "I've learned the secret of contentment. I know what it is to have a lot or a little." I can rejoice as we read today in our Daily Bible Reading, I know people can desert me, they can betray me, I'm okay. Why? Because he's filled with the fullness of God. What is he, he's full of what? The thing that he craves as it's put in that passage, the breadth, the length, the height and the depth of the love of Christ. (52:50)

Do you know what a big deal it is that you can say Jesus loves me, this I know? I mean that if you understand it changes everything. Let's not live like the rest of the world. You're valued, you were sought and God rejoiced over the day that you put your trust in him because it's a foretaste of what's coming for us. (53:15)

If you're not a Christian, I'm sorry, none of this applied to you. You need to feel the pressure of the conviction of the Spirit that you might join our team and become a follower of Christ. And if you are, man that's the best thing that could ever happen to you. To have that assurance that God loves you, everything else pales in by comparison. That ought to amaze us. Let's pray. (53:38)



God, help us to be amazed by that, astonished and humbled by it as well. That you are a God that loved us so much. That you would give your Son, your only Son, if we would believe in you we would have eternal life. First verse we learned as a kid. And God it is the most profound and central component of this doctrine of our salvation, that you would seek us, knowing we weren't in an inanimate silver coin but a rebellious wayward transgressing sinner. But you sought us, you enlighten us, you've given us the truth and you brought us to the place of repentance and when that happened, after all your work, you stood up and rejoiced because you know what we're going to experience one day when the consummation of all the reconciliation that you plan for us is going to be fulfilled. So, God help us not to get tripped up with all the trivial things in this world that don't really matter. Help us to keep our mind set on things above as Colossians 3 says. Lord keep our heart there that we could be much more like the Apostle Paul who knew the secret of contentment, who understood what it was to be loved. Even if everything in this life went the opposite direction. God fill us with the fullness of God today as we contemplate the incomprehensible love of Christ. In Jesus Name. Amen (55:13)