

Relentless Hope: Finding Joy in What Was Lost | Luke 15:8-10

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[0:00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daley preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. All right. Well, thank you for waiting. Good morning, everyone. Are we all keeping warm and enjoying this cold weather?

I'm sure we all are, right? But really, today we're going to start our season this time of Advent.

It's a wonderful time as we're shifting from Thanksgiving with full bellies, having cranberry sauce, turkey, a time with friends and family.

For some of us, maybe you had some Black Friday shopping. I don't know. I'm getting more used to online shopping. I don't know about those crowds anymore. But as we end November and now we're in December, number one, we recognize the year's almost over.

[1:13] It's only a few more days, it seems, before Christmas. Time's slowed down where we should at least spend time with our friends and our family.

And we look forward. We consider this idea of hoping for Jesus Christ. Advent reminds us of the pursuit of humanity, that God loved us so much that he sent his only son, that whosoever believes shall not perish but have life, life everlasting.

And this mission is carried on. It starts from Jesus being born in the manger. It's carried on through the church, the Acts of the Apostles, and even to today, where the mission of the church is to proclaim the hope that is found in Jesus Christ, proclaiming the good news of the gospel.

And we, I have a verse for you today. We're going to go ahead and turn our Bibles. Feel free to use your ESV Pew Bible.

The title of this sermon is Relentless Hope, Finding Joy in What Was Lost. This is connected with our scripture reading from Jeremiah.

[2:50] So let us turn to Luke chapter 15 verses 8 through 10. It's going to be found in your ESV Pew Bible or Bible of your choice.

You have the verses up there, your mobile devices. Or page 1039 if you're using the ESV Pew Bible.

It's just two verses here, verses 8 through 10. And church, let's read it together. Are we all there? All right.

Let's start from verse 7. Starting off with or is kind of strange, don't you think? Verse 7, 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.

Verse 8, or what woman having 10 silver coins? If she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?

[3:57] And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors saying what? Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.

Just so I tell you, there is joy before the angels over one sinner who repents. This verse reminds us on the surface the importance of the word repentance.

Metanoia, to change one's mind. It's very, many of us, we may have heard before, that the idea of repentance is to turn away from sin, and certainly that does include it.

But there's so much more depth in the idea of changing your mind on who the Lord is, on who Jesus Christ is, making thinking differently, and realizing that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. It's much greater than what we hear at times of just turning from sin. Repentance is the changing of mind. We constantly go through times of repentance as even upon being saved, even upon believing the Lord and being saved, that we continue to be transformed, going from children of the Lord to mature believers.

[5:23] That's something that is very powerful. Let's go to that next slide here. So the question then comes up is what is happening in these two seemingly small verses.

But there's a lot that's happening here. You see here this image. So the parable of the lost coin, you have a woman here.

So what happened? She loses her coin, right? Let's go back, I'm going to have my... If she loses one coin, does she not, right?

Light a lamp, and sweep the house, I mean, what else do you sweep with your hand, right? So probably a broom or whatever, right? Does not sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it.

And you see this image here, right? The woman is a representation. You see this entire scene. It's a representation of someone who is seeking diligently for something that is valuable.

[6:28] I'm sure for many of us, I want you to think that how many times have you lost your keys before? I mean, I guess a modern rendition would be someone who's searching their couch for their keys or their wallet.

We've all been guilty of this. It's okay, right? But it's the same type of idea here. The woman lost her coin, there were 10 coins, and she loses one.

So she turns on the lamp and she begins sweeping around until she finds it. I like to think of this image that, you know, you think of dirt floors, right? Such as in biblical times and even throughout the world, there's still dirt floors.

How easy it might be for a coin to be covered in dirt, right? That's where the sweeping, right? This intentionality. So when we're looking at it in a literal sense, we're looking at it, okay, this person is looking around, holding the lamp, sweeping around until they find it.

And hopefully you don't bury the coin any further in the process, right? And what we're seeing here, right? The coin obviously is representing that something that is precious.

[7:39] The lamp very commonly represents the light, right? The light of the world, the word of God, the sweeping. To some scholars has been viewed upon as examining, right?

Searching diligently. Now, what's very powerful about this is there are three ways, and I'm sure there are more debates on scholars, on other ways to look at this.

One way to look at this is how God is seeking that which is lost. Does that make sense?

That when we think of the Jewish people, their idea of sin was to be separated from the presence of the Lord.

How interesting, right? It's just like when we're thinking of the Garden of Eden. Well, when God is asking, where are you, Adam? Well, he knows where Adam is, but there's still that communication that's happening.

[8:42] So there's this truth where, okay, I'm not calling God this woman here. I'm saying this is a parallel to how God searches for that which is lost.

So, okay, how do we look at this? God valuing each and every single person and seeking relentlessly to restore them with the other coins, much like the parable of the lost sheep, right? Seeking the one that runs away from the 99. There's a parallel there. We have the lamp which represents the word, the sweeping as God is removing.

Now, get this, God removing obstacles, the things that are being swept away as it were so that you can see the Lord or find the Lord.

You know how powerful that is? And then, of course, you have the celebration, right? Where there is the time of heaven rejoicing, right?

[9:48] Like it says at the end of the verse, there is joy before the angels over one sinner who repents. And I want you to think for a moment.

If you knew that heaven, the angels, rejoiced over just one person being restored, wouldn't that shape the way that you share in the gospel with others?

Wouldn't that change the way? I mean, how many of you guys have seen, it's that famous movie, it's a wonderful life, right? You guys have seen that, right? If you haven't, after today, go, that's your homework assignment, right?

The ringing of the bell, right? What's that mean? An angel gets their wings, right? And it's supposed to be like representative of something that's really exciting, right? A time of celebration in a very similar but a more powerful way is the fact that when someone changes their mind about who God is coming to faith in Jesus Christ, there's a celebration in that.

And I think of angels, I'm very overwhelmed by the image of angels, right? I know we have lots of artwork with little babies floating around, but you know, let's think of something angelic of great power celebrating over you or I turning to the Lord.

Believing in the Lord, what are you talking about? But there's something that's very powerful in that. So that's the highway of looking at that. The other way is the church's mission.

[11:20] Now last week we were talking about the parable of the Ten Virgins, where you had the women who were holding the lamps that were some had oil, some did not.

And one way of looking at that is that the women are representing the bride of Christ, representing churches. Another way to look at this is how churches are seeking out the ones that are lost. And it's a very beautiful tie in looking at the church's mission that we are to seek out those who are unchurched, de-churched people who might have been hurt and seek to restore them or encourage them, proclaim the good news of the gospel for the ones that have never believed in the Lord, that they will believe in Jesus Christ through faith, right?

Or even the ones that might have been, look, a lot of us, let's get real for a second here. A lot of us have been hurt before by churches, by brothers and sisters in Christ.

I have. We should seek out and allow for healing and restoration with our friends, our families.

Because look, it's not, the most important thing is getting everyone to believe in Jesus Christ.

[12:35] But there's also an importance for restoration, right? Think of, I'm sure all of us can think of a family member who once was Christian and has walked away from the faith.

Think of how important it is to cultivate those relationships and to let that healing pray for the ones who have walked away or pray for the ones who are yet to believe.

If seeing this as not only God, right, clearing the way for you to believe in him, but how the church, the light of the word of God, right, the being the light that shines in the dark world, clearing the way for others to come to the Lord is also a very powerful image.

And then the third way of looking at this. Now, this is really weird, but very fascinating. It's the great middle ground between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man.

Many of you may know there's a big debate on predestination and free will and I don't like going too much into that. But in the same way that God is extending the invitation, he has the light of the word and then the clearing out so that you can see the Lord, experience the Lord, feel the love, the grace and truth of God.

[14:03] Think of this on an individual level. A person who is seeking truth, a person who is searching for salvation.

Now, the lamp in this case wouldn't necessarily mean the word, but it's someone recognizing the importance of restoration and how believers can turn to the word, the light.

Does that make sense? Do you see this three layered, three layers as it were of one, two verses? Fascinating, right?

And just as God is clearing the way for you to come to experience, it's so this is an image of someone who is coming very close to having faith in Christ.

The light of the word and then the clearing of truth to come to know Jesus Christ. Fascinating, these three levels and now some scholars do debate.

[15:13] In fact, there's a famous Jewish rabbi that's not on your notes, but there has been debate in Jewish circles who have said that this is very interesting for Christ to teach this because the Jewish people were

to study the word, to meditate and pray upon it day in and day out, right?

To reflect on the word, meditate on the word, finding God through that. In this case, it's finding the Lord through study, right? Through all of that.

It's just a wonderful thing to see here. So it's just this layer upon layer about that. The woman represent, the woman losing one of her 10 coins, something of great value. The lamp, the word, right?

Being lit up, the sweeping of the house, right? Like I mentioned, the removing of obstacles and for our own personal view, it's self examination.

Just like we take a time for communion to examine our hearts, so too should we examine our hearts and how are we with our relationship with the Lord? And then the next thing finally is the fact that there's the celebration, the celebration of the coin being found, that heaven rejoices when a sinner repents and is coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

[16:36] Just as the church, we are to celebrate when someone believes in Jesus Christ and how believers, when you believe in the Lord, even when you get baptized, that's a time of celebration.

When you're growing and you're understanding and seeing the simplicity of the gospel and the transformation that comes from Him, that's a cause for celebration. And so I know we're running a little low on time here, so let's go through.

What can we learn from this? Right, the first one is the value of the lost coin that each, every single person is valuable to the Lord.

There's that invitation, right? No one is beyond God's reach. Do you realize that? The invitation is extended to every single person.

It's the question of if you respond. The second thing is God's diligence and seeking that God's pursuit is relentless. It is carried forward by His word and His spirit, just as reflected in the church's mission, that we continue the work of ministry by proclaiming in the good news of the gospel, sharing in our testimony with others.

[18:00] The third thing then is heaven's joy and redemption, right? Restoration is shared by heaven, the church and the believer. That is how important it is for us to believe in the Lord and for us to celebrate in that, going from darkness to light.

You're no longer in the domain of darkness. You're now in the kingdom of light. And then finally, we have here the connection to Jeremiah that God's faithfulness, you know, when we're thinking of the righteous branch, it is the fulfillment of prophecy.

It is the showing that there God was paving the way for the hope of Christ. God is consistent in His word and we can trust in Him by looking to prophecies being fulfilled back then and knowing that prophecy will be fulfilled.

We may not understand it. Like if you look at scripture when a maiden holding a baby, well, what did that mean in the Old Testament?

How did that work? There's many verses that we may not understand, but we know God will have His way in the fulfillment of prophecy.

[19:24] So the righteous branch being the fulfillment of God's promise to seek and save the lost, because God desires for all of us to be saved.

It's the question on, are you going to respond to the invitation or not? And so when all of this then the question then comes, how can I apply and live out these verses?

I know we're pressed on time. We're going to wrap this up. First thing is to respond in faith to God's pursuit. Respond to His pursuit by faith in Him.

Receive the invitation. Are you going to believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Are you going to have this idea of repentance, the changing of your mind from Jesus just being a cool guy?

I mean, there's some people out there like, hey, Jesus got long hair. I got no problem with that. He's walking around. He's got his sandals and robe. You know, he's pretty enlightened. He's a pretty cool guy. The transformation of your mind from seeing Him from a guru to Savior, right?

[20:35] From seeing Him as the fabulous teacher to something beyond that, that we need Him and we need that free gift of salvation in Him.

And then further, knowing that we're going to continue being transformed day in and day out, let the Word of God work in and through you.

Let God work in your life. For those of us, you might be struggling with some decision to make. You might be wrestling with God's calling for your life.

Maybe it's to contact a family member. Maybe it's to contact a friend that you haven't in a while.

Maybe it's to have a serious discussion. Maybe not. Maybe it's to accept a promotion, right?

Maybe it's to change your college major. I don't know, right? For everybody, it's different. The second thing then is to join in the church's mission. Be a light.

[21:33] There's a typo in there. Be a light in the dark by sharing in the hope of Christ. It is this continuing.

Just as God has saved us, we are to share in that goodness. Knowing that you're saved by grace through faith, wouldn't you want to share that with your friends and family?

Or is that just something you want to selfishly hold on to? I don't know. I mean, if someone bought me a brand new car, don't please don't. But if someone did, I'd want to tell everybody about it.

If you had a debt, you know, \$10,000, what, a \$50,000 student loan debt, and somebody snapped their fingers and it's gone, you'd want to keep quiet about that.

Are you serious? No, you'd want to share in that. That's why it's so important when it comes to salvation, knowing that believing in Jesus Christ is the greatest decision that you can make here on earth that has eternal consequences.

[22:39] It's a call for us to join in the church's mission, right? To go out into the world and make disciples and to baptize believers, to partake being an ambassador for Christ, sharing your testimony, sharing how God's worked in your life.

If you don't know what to say, just turn to the Word, or just be present with them. Show them John 3.16. Show them the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That's pretty simple. Or sometimes you don't have to say anything at all. Just be present with someone. Doing simple words and actions can have a profound effect.

And so join in the church's mission, be part of something, be part of the body of Christ, because we can do so much good in the name of Jesus Christ together.

The next thing is to examine or sweep your heart clean. Examine your heart for distractions or sin, and clear the way for God's truth to work in your life.

[23:39] Sometimes we get very distracted, don't we? What's this? No, really.

Is this a distraction? We don't... I don't mean to be radical when I say this, but we don't have idols anymore, do we? Don't some people get obsessed to the point where it becomes an addiction?

There used to be television. And it might still be television, right? But this thing right here, we got to be mindful of it. We have to be careful in that.

So examine your heart. Is there a distraction in your life? Is there a sin that's reoccurring in your life that may be distracting you from fulfilling what God has called for in your life?

Very often I found it. It can get... It's so easy to get distracted, especially in the world that we live in today. Number four is to celebrate the loss being found.

[24:39] If someone believes in Jesus Christ, don't be like, that's cool, man. No, you've got to celebrate in that. And if you've done that, don't. Don't do that again.

It's a cause for celebration, knowing that, hey, I'm going to see you soon. I see my time's running out here.

The kids are coming back up. But really, it's something that we distraction, right, as I was talking about, right? No, I love my kids. But it's one of those things where we celebrate when someone says, I believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord.

I believe in Him. And then further, when people get baptized, that public declaration of an internal decision, that's another cause for celebration. Or when people begin to understand things that didn't make sense before, I finally get it.

There's this proverb that never made sense to me anymore. Or there's this piece in Isaiah that I've been wrestling over. And by the grace of God, through the guiding of the Holy Spirit, I understand it now.

[25:45] That's a cause for celebration. So we continue being transformed. Celebrate the lost being found. And then number five, finally, what does that say?

Prepare for Christ's what? First and second coming. That's the beautiful thing, the amazing thing about Advent, is that we are preparing with anticipation and hope for the first coming of Christ. Rightfully so. It's a wonderful time, right? We think of the nativity. We think of the prophecies being fulfilled. But we also have got to keep in mind the second coming of Christ.

That in the same way that God fulfilled the promises and the prophecies of Jesus Christ at the first coming will be fulfilled in the second coming. Can I get an amen?

So that's something we've got to live with hope, trusting in God's promises and remain ready for his return. And so as we close with this message, let us just remember that we as the body of Christ, we've got to understand that God is pursuing us by having that invitation.

[26:54] God sent his son, right? To be born in that manger, to perform miracles, to teach parables, to suffer, to die on that cross, to be buried.

And on the third day rising again. Think about that. Think about the importance of that. And then knowing in that, we should pursue God.

And in knowing for us as the body, as the church, we need to seek out the lost. We've got to have that reconnection for those who have been hurting, those who don't even know the Lord.

That's how important. I've given this analogy before and I'll give it real quick. I want you to think if I put an empty chair here, imagine who could sit in the empty chair.

If you want to make it more real, look next to you at the empty space. Who could be next to you? Who could be there that you know?

[28:06] Is it someone that's been hurt before? Is it someone that needs healing and restoration? Or is it someone that just simply needs Jesus? Something for us to think about as we keep in mind this parable of the lost coin.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the truth and such insights, such things we can observe, things that we can learn and things that we can go out and do.

But let us remember when it comes to salvation, it's not about what we do. It's what you have done by sending your Son Jesus Christ.

I pray that we all, if we do not know the Lord, may we be on a path to knowing Jesus Christ and being saved by grace through faith. And if we know the Lord, or maybe we felt distant, maybe we've just had experiences of hurt, the failings of men, the failings of women, the failings of even people. May we trust in you that much more. May we rely on you and your word. And Father, we thank you for the hope that is found in Jesus Christ.

[29:29] May we seek you. May we know you. May we grow in you. And may we be moved to do good in the name of Jesus Christ.

May we take to heart this message of the parable of the lost coin. We love you. We thank you. We praise you.

We glorify you and we honor you. It is in the name of Jesus Christ, the righteous King, the Savior of all that we pray, and we all say together, Amen.

Amen. Thank you for tuning in to the Ontario Community Church sermon podcast. For more about our church and how you can get involved or support our mission, please visit ontariocommunitychurch.org.

May God's blessings be with you.