

divine mercy whereby He may **“save that which was lost.”**

Obedience to the Gospel

Is this automatic—did Jesus’s death automatically save every lost soul without any action on the part of those **“lost”** as a result of sin? No. The message of Jesus’s sacrifice on our behalf is the **“good news”** (or **“gospel”**) of salvation. Paul called it, **“The power of God to salvation for every one who believes”** (Rom. 1:16). If I don’t believe in Jesus as the sacrifice for my sin, His death is of no benefit to me. I must be willing to accept this **“power of God to salvation”** by being obedient to its mes-

sage. Paul told the Thessalonians that punishment will come to, **“Those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Thess. 1:8). How do I *obey the gospel*? I must die with Christ. Paul taught that in baptism into Christ for the remission of sins we are **“buried with Him through baptism into His death”** (Rom. 6:4). If I have not been buried with Christ, I am still in my sin—I am still **“lost.”** But, from baptism Paul says we are then **“raised with Him through faith in the working of God”** (Col. 2:12). Living a new life in Christ means things must be different. I must turn away from sin (Luke 13:3) and live in obedience to God’s word (John 8:31). I must have the courage to tell others of my faith in Jesus (Matt. 10:32-33). If sin comes into my life again, I must confess it to the Lord and turn from it immediately (1 John 1:9) trusting in Jesus as my intercessor with God the Father (Heb. 7:25). Are you *lost*? Jesus is ready even now **“to save that which was lost.”**



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ISSUE

25.6

February 5, 2023

Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN
OF THE
OLSEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Am I Lost?

By Kyle Pope

Matthew 18:11 records a statement Jesus made about the very purpose of His coming. It reads, **“For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost”** (NKJV). These words tell us that Jesus’s life-purpose was to rescue or **“save”** those whom He calls the **“lost.”** But who are these people whom Jesus refers to as the **“lost”**?

Causes of Sin and Its Consequence

In the context of this text, twice before Jesus has warned about things that may cause one **“to sin.”** First, He warned about the seriousness of influencing another person to **“to sin”** (Matt. 18:6), and then He warned about yielding to things in our own life that may cause us **“to sin”** (Matt. 18:8-9). He warns that this danger is so serious that if it is not avoided one may be **“cast into the everlasting fire”** (18:8b) or **“cast into hell fire”** (18:9b). From this we may conclude that **“the lost”** whom Jesus has come **“to save”** are those in danger of being condemned to hell as a result of sin.

Things Lost and Found

In the fifteenth chapter of the gospel of Luke Jesus teaches three parables about lost things. First, He tells about a shepherd who left ninety-nine other sheep to search for one sheep that was lost (Luke 15:3-7). Second, He tells about a woman with ten coins, who searched to find one that was lost (Luke 15:8-10). Finally, He tells about a father with one faithful son and one who left his father to live

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM
9:30 AM
10:30 AM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McNear
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Justin Smiley
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

a sinful life (Luke 15:11-32). When the unfaithful son returns, the father rejoiced, just as the shepherd and the woman did with each thing that **“was lost and is found”** (Luke 15:32). It is clear that Jesus used each of these parables to illustrate the condition of one **“lost”** in sin and in danger of hell, but His words tell us more about these people. First, from Jesus’s teaching it is evident that things that are **“lost”** once belonged somewhere. We belong to God in our entrance into this world, but sin changes our relationship to Him. Second, it is also evident that God, like the father, the shepherd, and the woman are emotionally moved by the loss of each soul that is alienated from Him, and when reconciliation with each lost thing

takes place there is joy. This explains why Deity would make it the life-purpose of Jesus to **“save that which is lost”**—He cares about us.

Darkness and the Shadow of Death

Earlier in the gospel of Matthew the Holy Spirit revealed that Jesus’s life fulfilled a prophecy that Isaiah declared years before Jesus came to earth. It reads, **“The people who sat in darkness saw a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned”** (Matt. 4:16; from Isa. 9:2). Here the Scripture speaks of those **“in darkness”** and the **“shadow of death,”** but to what does this refer and how might this relate to the purpose of Jesus’s coming? First of all, it addresses a principle that has been a truth of man’s existence from the beginning—**“the soul who sins shall die”** (Ezek. 18:4). When a person violates God’s will as revealed in Scripture, either by committing an act prohibited (1 John 3:4) or by failing to do what is commanded (Jas. 4:17) he or she **“sins.”** Since this is a violation of God’s will, it is a sin against God. When we sin, even if it is only one sin—even if it is something that might seem to us to be **“minor,”** it compromises our relationship with God separating us from Him. This helps us understand the **“darkness”** described in Isaiah’s prophecy. John called the practice of sin *walking in darkness*. He wrote, **“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth”** (1 John 1:6). In sin we are separated from God. In sin we are **“in darkness.”** In sin we are **“lost.”**

Spiritual Death

This separation is a condition the Bible speaks of as spiritual death. We can see this from the warning given to the very first couple before they committed sin. They were told, **“The day that you eat of it you shall surely die”** (Gen. 2:17). They did not die physically, but **“the day”** that they sinned they were spiritually separated from God. This same thing has happened to every accountable soul the very first time we ever committed sin—we died spiritually. We were **“lost.”** Is this true for only a few very wicked people? No, Paul taught, **“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Rom. 3:23). All who sin become **“lost”** in sin.

The Nature of God

Is this because God is picky? Is God unforgiving? No! It has to do with His very nature. John declared by the Holy Spirit, **“God is light, in Him is no darkness at all”** (1 John 1:5). God’s very nature is such that nothing about Him is sinful, wicked, or evil. How can something pure come in contact with something that is impure and still remain pure? Imagine that I gave you a glass of pure clean water, and you asked if it was clean to drink. What would you think if I said, **“Yes, it is pure, it only has one drop of poison in it!”** *Would you drink it?* Of course not. Pure water is not polluted by impurities or it is no longer pure. The Holy Spirit led Habakkuk to declare of God, **“You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness”** (Hab. 1:13). God by His very nature must be completely separate from sin.

The Death of Jesus

So, if sin separates us from God, and **“all have sinned”** who are the **“lost”**? Every soul capable of sin, when he or she has sinned is **“lost.”** In such a condition (as we noticed above) this sin will ultimately lead to **“eternal punishment”** (Matt. 25:46). So how is it that Jesus came **“to save”** us from this condition? How has Jesus brought light that delivers us from **“darkness”**? How does His coming

overcome sin’s separation of us from God? While in the past God provided other ways to address the problem of sin, since the time of Christ He now provides only one—the death of Jesus for our sins.

The prophet Isaiah, centuries before the coming of Jesus, foretold, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, what Jesus’s coming would accomplish for all who are willing to accept it. Jesus was, **“wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities”** (Isa. 53:5). We deserved punishment because of our rebellion against God, but Jesus accepted a measure of what was due to us in our place. On Jesus, in His death, **“the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”** (Isa. 53:6). Jesus had no sin, nor did He become guilty of our sins, but God accepted Christ’s death as a sacrificial payment for our debt of sin. God the Father, accepted the death of God the Son as **“an offering for sin”** (Isa. 53:10). Through this offering, it can be said that, **“He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors”** (Isa. 53:12). By Jesus’s death He satisfied the purity and justice of God, but also demonstrated