The Joy Of Restoration

Intro: As a basis for our study together, turn to Luke 15. This chapter is full of “good things.” It is one of the better-known chapters in the Bible, often called the “Threefold Parable.” It illustrates: (1) God’s Way, (2) God’s Grace, and (3) God’s Joy.

I. BACKGROUND.
   A. Jesus is responding to the uncaring nature of the Pharisees and scribes.
      1. The publicans and sinners came to Jesus to hear him; Luke 15:1 “Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.”
      2. To this the self-righteous and uncaring objected.

      1. Luke 14:25-35 Jesus warned that one must count the cost of discipleship.
      2. There was a great multitude; Luke 14:25 “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them”
      3. This multitude included publicans and sinners; Luke 15:1 “Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.”
         a. *Drew near* is in the imperfect tense indicating a continuing stream of publicans and sinners were coming.
         b. The Pharisees and scribes charged Jesus with association with them; Luke 15:2 “And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” *Receiveth* is present tense showing continuous action.
         c. Jesus had already answered this charge; Luke 5:30-32 “But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? 31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”
      4. Jesus had compassion on the lost.
         a. Luke 7:34 “The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!”
         b. Luke 19:1-10
            (1) Zacchaeus was chief among the publicans.
            (2) Jesus was charged with being a guest of a sinner; Luke 19:7 “And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.”
            (3) Luke 19:10 “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

   C. The message is clear.
      1. The lost are to be found.
      2. The return of the lost brings joy to heaven.

   D. The message in these three parables demonstrate the Bible’s theme.

   E. Jesus will answer the objection spoken by His critic.
      1. They have criticized the Lord’s attention to the sinner.
      2. The Lord’s answer is threefold.
         a. God’s love.
         b. God’s loss.
         c. God’s longsuffering.
II. **God’s Love Is Described.**

A. In each of these parables, love is evident.

1. The lost sheep
   a. Lost 1 out of 100, that is 1%.
   b. Many would say that is not significant.
   c. But the shepherd went and searched until he found it.

2. The lost coin
   a. Lost 1 out of 10, that is 10%.
   b. She still had 9 coins.
   c. But, the woman lit a light, swept the house, and sought it diligently.
   d. She did not stop till she found the coin.

3. We can imagine the father whose son had left.
   a. Even though the son left of his own free will, the father was still broken-hearted.
   b. You can picture in your mind a father standing gazing into the far distance just praying to get a glimpse of his beloved son.
   c. It was not his only son; he still had another son.
      (1) We all know that a father’s love is not measured that way.
      (2) He loved them both, but one was out of place.
      (3) The loss of only one of them was too much.
   d. The saddest thing I can imagine would be the loss of one of my sons to the world because of my love for them.

B. In these parables we are given illustrations of God’s love.

1. Love is more than a word; it is an action.
2. God demonstrated His love for mankind.
   a. Deu. 7:8 “But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”
   b. Jer. 31:3 “The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”
   c. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
   d. Rom. 5:8 “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
   e. 1 John 3:1 “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”
   f. 1 John 4:9 “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”

3. Notice the picture of love painted in these parables.
   a. The sheep; Luke 15:5-6 “And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.”
   b. The coin; Luke 15:8 “Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?”
   c. The younger son; Luke 15:20 “And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”
d. The elder son; Luke 15:28 “And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.”

C. God’s love is demonstrated by what He had done for the sinner.
1. What about us, what do we do for the sinner.
2. How do we demonstrate our love?

III. God’s Loss Is Evidenced.
A. Sometimes people say it hurts only me: “It’s only me! Don’t worry.”
1. This is not so.
   a. In the parables:
      (1) The lost sheep affected the shepherd.
      (2) The lost coin affected the woman.
      (3) The lost son affected the father.
   b. Romans 14:7 “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.”
   c. It affects family friends and those upon whom we have an influence.
2. It also affects God in heaven.
   a. Regarding the world in Noah’s day; Gen. 6:6 “And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”
   b. Regarding Israel.
      (1) Psa. 95:10 “Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:”
      (2) Heb. 3:10 “Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.”
      (3) Heb. 3:17 “But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?”

B. Man is valuable to God.
1. We know this because of the price that was paid.
   a. The worth of man’s soul is more than all the world’s goods; Mat. 16:26 “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”
   b. The price of an object determines the worth of that object.
   c. The price of the soul is the blood of Jesus.
      (1) Mat. 26:28 “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”
      (2) 1 Pet. 1:18-20 “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers: 19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,”
2. We are redeemed so we might serve and glorify God.
   a. 1 Cor. 6:20 “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”
   b. Mat. 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

C. We must have the same feeling for the lost as did our Lord. When we do, work for the Lord will be done.
IV. God’s Longsuffering Nature is Clear.

A. This is especially seen in the last parable (the lost son).

1. The deceitful things of the world drew the youngest son.
   a. Luke 15:13 “And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.”
   b. The world had a great attraction as is always the case; Luke 8:14 “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”

2. He left the blessings of home for the “call of the world.”
   a. The things of the world have nothing to offer but eventual ruin.
      (1) Book of Ecclesiastes; notice Ecc. 1:2 “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”
      (2) Heb. 11:25 “Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;”
   b. He dismissed:
      (1) 1 John 2:15-17 “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”
      (2) Jam. 4:4 “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

3. Notice his path into the world.
   a. He made plans to leave (apostasy of heart precedes the actual going away).
   b. Next he took his journey into a far country (going the opposite direction).
   c. Then he made the wrong kind of friends (no good influence).
   d. Psalm 1:1 “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

4. He left the presence of a good father.
   a. The father loved his son greatly and mourned the loss.
   b. The father was ever longing for and anticipating the son’s return.

5. Thankfully he came to himself, repented, and returned; Luke 15:17-20 “And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”

B. How can we ever measure the longsuffering nature of God?

1. God never turns His back on us.
   a. God does not forsake us.
      (1) Heb. 13:5-6 “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”
      (2) 1 Sam. 12:22 “For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.”
      (3) Psa. 37:28 “For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.”
b. It is always man who chooses to leave God and this separates man from God.

(1) Isa. 59:1-2 “Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

(2) 1 Pet. 3:12 “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”

(3) Job 35:13 “Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.”

(4) John 9:31 “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.”

(5) Sin is the great divider.

2. Notice the longsuffering nature of God.

a. The image of the father seeing his son a long way off; Luke 15:20 “And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”

b. 1 Pet. 3:20 “Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”

c. 2 Pet. 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

C. Every blessing was restored.

1. Luke 15:22-24 “But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

2. 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

3. Heb. 8:12 “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

Conclusion: If we have wondered into a far country, allowing sin to rule our lives, then why not do as the prodigal son did. Repent and return to the Father realizing that there will be joy in heaven over your salvation.