



Campbell Chapel

Sermon by Bob Bradley



Joy in Heaven Over One Sinner that Repenteth

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Luke 15. We want to talk to you about a few things this evening. If you do much reading, and you do much research and you do much looking at statistics—and I like look at them sometimes. I don't like what I find sometimes, but I like to look at them. You will find out that church attendance is down, across the country. Even in the last 2 to 4 months it has dropped to 10% or 12%. I don't know why it has.

However, I thought about this today. There is coming a day, very shortly, that our churches are going to be full. They are going to be sitting everywhere. The parking lot is going to be full. There is coming a day—I'm not talking just about here, but about churches all over America—are going to be full. Do you know why they are going to be full? There are going to be people trying to find some help. Things are about to change in America. Things are about to change in a big way. We cannot, this country cannot go on in the shape that we are in without some drastic consequences and they are on their way. I don't know when that is, whether it is a week, a month, or a year. I don't have any idea. I do know one thing; there are some drastic changes coming to America very shortly.

What I want to talk about tonight is this. Let's read then I will talk.

Luke 15:1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

Luke 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Luke 15:3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

Luke 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

Luke 15:5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing.

Luke 15:6 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.

Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Jesus has been doing some tremendous teaching and healing some people here; and He has been doing some great things. When you read chapter 14, a lot of great things have happened. When we get to chapter 15, what I read to you is this. The Bible says that “then drew near unto Him, all the publicans and sinners.”

Now, He has been teaching. He has been preaching. He has been talking about some great things. He has been changing people’s lives. The Pharisees, the religious crowd were always around. They were there on this particular occasion. However, the common people; what these people hated—the Bible says, publicans and sinners. They all drew near unto Jesus. They had heard a message from Him. They heard a message of love. They heard a message that had changed the lives—and seen a message change the lives of some people and transform some lives. Do you know what? The publicans and sinners wanted some of that.

I thought today, if the gospel of Jesus Christ was being preached all over America in the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit of God; how many that we would see coming and being saved.

Listen. When people see what the gospel can do for them and will do for them, then there will be some that will come and be saved, because there are folks that are looking for something, watching for someone to change their life. These publicans, they were people that were hated. The Pharisees and the scribes, the religious people hated these guys. They absolutely hated these publicans. They were tax collectors. According to the Pharisees, and according to the religious leaders; these guys were traitors. They had sold out Israel. They had sold out God. They had gone to work for the Roman government. They were collecting taxes. Everybody hated them. However, Jesus did not hate them.

Luke 15:1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

Not only that but also, He mentions the word sinners. To the Pharisees and the scribes, these were the people who were morally impure. These were the ones that we might look at, and harlots may be in this crowd, liars, thieves and all kinds of immorality. These people had done all kinds of things, yet they come to hear and want to talk, and to listen to Jesus Christ.

Do you know why they did that? They knew they were lost. They knew they were not right with God. They knew that they were sinners. They understood that. Do you know what? They were willing to accept that.

The big issue that we have in America today, is that it is hard to get people to understand that they are lost. The thing—if you do much visitation—you will find out when you talk to people that are unsaved, do you know what they will want to tell you? They say, “Preacher, I have done pretty good. I have gone to church here. I have done this. I have done that.” Have you ever been born again? “No. I think that is old fashioned.”

Listen. It is not old fashioned. If we are going to go to heaven, we have to be born again. There is no way around that. The thing that is so hard today to get people to understand is that they are lost. They are lost. They are doomed. They are damned. They are on their way to hell. It is hard to get people to understand that.

Do you know what? The publicans and the sinners knew who they were and they knew they were lost. They knew they needed Jesus Christ. I would to God that my family and probably some of your family would understand if we are going to go to heaven, we have to be born again. We have to have a changed life. We have to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, if we are going to go to heaven.

You probably have some in your family and I know I have a whole bunch in mine.

Luke 15:1 Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

But they came. The Bible says all of them came. "They all drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him." They wanted to hear a message that would change their lives. They were spiritually hungry and they wanted to hear a message from Him. They wanted to hear something that would give them spiritual food, that would give them rest, and would give them peace on the inside. They wanted to hear something from this man called Jesus Christ.

Do you know what He can still yet do today? He can still do the same thing today. He is still yet bringing peace to souls today. He is bringing peace to people that will recognize they are unsaved.

If you won't recognize that you need Him then you are not going to get one thing from Him. If you don't recognize that you are lost and on your way to a lake of fire, you will never be saved.

These publicans, sinners, the Pharisees, the religious crowd, all those that were high and mighty in religion; they hated these guys. They would not even greet one of the publicans, or one of these so-called sinners. They would have nothing to do with them. They thought they were so much better than what these guys were, but they were not. They were lost. This religious crowd, they were lost. They were religious but they were lost. They went to church but they were lost. They could recite a lot of law but they were lost. They did not know God, yet they were so judgmental against the publicans and sinners. It is amazing how much God loves people.

It does not matter what we have done in life. It does not matter how cruel, or whatever the situation may have been. If we will come and hear Jesus Christ and repent of our sins; do you know what He will do? He will forgive us. He will forgive us. He will cleanse us. It does not matter what the religious crowd says.

Listen. We have a lot of folks in religion today that goes to church today, who thinks they do not need Jesus. Friend, you need Him. I need Him today, worse than I needed Him yesterday. I will need tomorrow more than I need Him today. Listen. You will too.

Young people, I want to ask you a question here. What do you know about sheep? What do you guys know about sheep? (*Answers from congregation.*) They need a shepherd. What else about sheep? They travel in flocks. What else about sheep? He brings up a good point. Do you know what sheep need? Sheep needs other sheep. We will talk about that in a minute. What else about sheep?... If sheep are going to do and be what they need to be and do, and really produce, they have to have green grass and clean water. Don't they? We know that. I want you to think about sheep. I want you to think about us.

Jesus Christ, when we look at the scripture; He compared himself to a shepherd. We know that He is compared to a shepherd many times. We are the sheep of His pasture. We are compared to sheep. Now some of things that you all said about sheep, that is up to you guys. Okay? Really, we are.

We fall into the same category a lot of times. We don't eat grass but we have to have spiritual food. Sheep have to have good, clean grass to be able to do what they need to do and so forth.

Here is what is going to happen.

Luke 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

Do you know why they were murmuring? Because people were coming to Jesus. They were murmuring because people were coming to Jesus.

Isn't it sad when we hear people complain about people coming to church? We do from time to time. Isn't it sad that we hear people complaining about someone coming to church that we may not like, that we may think are publicans and sinners. Isn't it sad that people would come to church and we would sit around and murmur about that?

Get this. When we do that you are no different than the scribes and the pharisees. You are no different. You are just as lost as they are; when we do that. They murmured. They were murmuring because this man, Jesus; He was receiving sinners and eating with them. That is what they were murmuring about. That is what their complaint was that Jesus Christ, the guy that had been doing all this stuff, healing people, and raising people from the dead, and doing all that He was doing; the religious crowd were murmuring because sinners were coming to Him. Isn't that crazy? You would think that these people, being the religious crowd that they were would have wanted people to have a better quality of life. You would think that they would have wanted them to be healed, and wanted them to be fed, and wanted them to have a good life, follow Him, and have peace. You would have thought that they would have wanted that.

Do you know why they did not want that for these people? They did not have it. They had no peace. They did not know anything about a relationship with God. They murmured because Jesus was receiving sinners.

I am going to tell you something tonight folks. Everybody sitting in this building, everybody listening to me, wherever you are at tonight; you are a sinner. You are a sinner. I'm not talking about you going out here and sinning every day. I'm not talking about that. You were born in sin. The only thing different between you, if you are saved, and someone else that is not saved is that Jesus Christ has saved you and cleansed you. That is the only difference. You are still yet a sinner that has been saved by the grace of God.

Listen. You have no room to murmur or complain what Jesus Christ is doing with other people that you may think is not worthy for Him to bless. Isn't that sad? That is sad.

Luke 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

Does everybody get that? A fellow has a hundred sheep and he is in the wilderness. One is lost. He goes and leaves the 99—get that—in the wilderness. They are not in the sheepfold. They are in the wilderness. There is a lesson there that we will talk about some other time. He goes and looks for the sheep that is lost.

Do you know what Jesus Christ did for you and me at one time? He came looking for me and you. He died on a cross outside the city of Jerusalem at a place called Calvary, a place called Golgotha, a place that looked like a big skull. There He died. Do you know what He is doing today? He seeking people. He is looking for those people that are lost. Jesus is not lost. We are lost. Jesus is not lost. He does not need to be found. Mankind needs to be found. Does everybody get that?

This sheep goes wandering. This sheep wanders off. Some of you said a while ago a sheep does that. They wander off sometimes. Don't they? Sheep just wanders off. Most sheep are not very intelligent. They cannot fight for themselves. They can't defend themselves. They don't know where to go look for water. They don't know where to go look for grass. They need someone to lead them. Sometimes, they wander off.

That is what I want to talk about here for a minute. You, young people; get this. Okay? I want you to listen. There are reasons...there are reasons that people wander off from the flock. There are reasons for that. There is a reason that a sheep—if there are a hundred sheep out here, there is a reason that one of them will wander off. The ninety-nine will stay right where they are at. They will stay right there with the shepherd. They know he will take care of them. They know that he will provide for them. However, sometimes, one or sometimes more than one will wander off. There are reasons for that.

Get this. Sometimes, the sheep—one of the reasons is that they get attracted, or...something out here in the wilderness attracts them, or gets their attention. I don't know what it is. I don't know what it may be out here, in the world, that gets some of

you, young people's attention, middle aged, or all of us. I don't know what it is sometimes that may get your attention or attract you, but sometimes it happens. Sometimes we are drawn to that. We get attached to that. We get attracted by the things that are out in the wilderness. We sort of just wander away from the flock, and we wander away from the shepherd.

Now, I want to tell you something about wandering off. There is an enemy out there that is out here in the wilderness, and he trying to devour you. Just like sheep that is in this fold that is wandering off. As this sheep is attracted, and he sees something out here in the wilderness, whatever it is, there is an enemy out here in the wilderness just lurking and waiting to get to where he can catch the sheep and kill and eat it. That is what he is trying to do.

When we wander off from the flock of God, when we wander off from our shepherd; I want you to remember something. The wilderness that is out there is a tough place. There are briars, and thorns. There are predators. There are rock cliffs. There are...places. There are all kinds of things that are out there that you had not planned on. The biggest thing is there is an enemy that is whole lot stronger than what you are. There is an enemy out there that is a whole lot smarter than you are.

In talking to young people today, sometimes we get the attitude, "I have all of this figured out. Papaw, you are just getting old and you are senile. Your generation has passed."

Listen. There is an enemy out there trying to kill you. There is an enemy out there that is trying to destroy you. Seventy thousand people in America, last year, died because of overdose on drugs. That is what we know of for sure. Seventy thousand people. Do you know what? A great part of them were young people. Seventy thousand people; do you know why? These people did not think about the enemy being stronger than them. I am going to try drugs one time. My friends are doing it. We are going to have a little party. We are going to have a get together. We are just going to try it one time. Let you experience it and see how you feel, and see what you think. The numbers are staggering of the kids that overdose and die on the first time they use drugs. Not on the tenth time, twentieth time, or the hundredth time; a great percentage of kids that overdose on drugs die their first time they do it.

There is an enemy out there that is stronger than you are. It may attract you. It may get your attention. You may look at it and say, "All my friends are doing it." However, the enemy is a whole lot stronger than you kids are. You get this old man! That enemy is a whole lot stronger than you are. When it gets you, you may not get a second chance.

Not only that but also, there are things out there that does attract us and appeals to us.

The second thing is this. Sometimes sheep just wander aimlessly. Something may attract them and they go towards that. However, sometimes they just wander off. Not having a place to go; they don't have a place on their mind that they are going to go to.

They just sort of...their mind is preoccupied. Their head is down. They are eating grass and they just sort of wander off aimlessly. Not thinking about where they are going, not thinking about what is going to happen, not what thinking about the enemy that is there. They just sort of wander off aimlessly.

Friend, listen. They are not paying any attention to what is going on around them. They are paying no attention whatsoever to all of their surroundings. They just wander off. Many sheep die. Do you know why they die? They get tangled up in briars and thrones. They can't get out. They get all tangled up in it and they can't get out. If the shepherd does not come and rescue them—they die.

Listen. Keep your head up. Do you know what the enemy wants to tell you? It is not worth it. The enemy wants to tell you to do your own thing. The enemy wants to tell you that it is no big deal. Just aimlessly drift along.

Listen. There is an enemy out there and he is out to get you. Do you know what? Here is the thing that is scary. Here is the thing that is so scary. While people, us, while we are wandering aimlessly away from our heavenly shepherd, not really having any thought, any direction, or anything; we are just wandering off. We get farther and farther and farther away from Him. The scary part is that we don't figure out that we are lost until we are lost. Get that. That is saying something when I say that. We don't figure out that we are lost until we figure out and we get to where we are lost. Do you know what? We may not know the way back. Again, the enemies, the rocks, the briars, and the cliffs, and everything that is there that is trying to destroy us and destroy our families.

Do you know why the enemy is working so hard today on dad's and mom's? Do you know why he is planting all kinds of garbage in dad's and mom's head today? He knows if he can lead dad and mom aimlessly off, the children are going to follow. Do you know who the devil is looking for today? He is not jumping on strong people. The devil does not do that much. He jumps on the weak. He jumps on the immature. He jumps on those that are very vulnerable. They wander off aimlessly. They never figure out that they are lost, until they figure out they are lost. They wake up. They open their eyes and here they are. Their lives are in a mess. That is a sad thing.

Not only that but sometimes sheep will not heed the warning or the voice of the shepherd. You know, a shepherd does this and as some of the kids mentioned...sheep had enclosures and modern-day shepherds and sheep...had fences. If you have ever messed with cattle—I don't know why they ever do this—but you can have grass this tall on this side of the fence and grass this tall on this side of the fence. I don't know why cattle want to do it or why sheep wants to do it. However, the old saying is, "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." That is what cattle and sheep do. Do you know what the shepherd will do? The sheep will get out. He will get out of the fence. He will get over in a place of danger. He will go back and the sheep. Warn it.

Talk to it. Bring it back and put it back in the fold. He does that a time or two. Do you know what happens after a while?

Get this. What happens after a while, some of the other sheep starts falling off after the one that is getting on the other side of fence. He goes and gets it, and brings it back. Then after two or three times doing that the one that is rebellious and the one that is leading other sheep astray—do you know what the shepherd does? He brings it back home. He brings it back on this side of the fence and he breaks their leg. Snap! Do you know why? He won't lead anybody else astray. He can't get out anymore. Do you know what a shepherd will do? He will take and put a splint on that leg and that sheep will hobble along the rest of its life. Do you know what that sheep will never do? That sheep will never lead anybody else astray.

Listen. It is serious stuff when we wander off aimlessly and we lead others aimlessly off; there is a price to pay for that.

Sometimes we just refuse to heed the warning. Sometimes God speaks to us and God tells us that what we are doing is wrong and the direction we are going is wrong. Do you know what? Common sense will tell us sometimes the direction we take in life is stupidity. Common sense will tell us sometimes that it is absolutely wrong and it is not going to work. Do you know what we do? We just go ahead and do it anyways.

They refuse to heed the warnings of the shepherd. Not only that but also, they refuse to heed, and they refuse to watch, and they refuse to follow the older sheep. Some of your elders can teach you some things folks. Some of you, young whipper snappers get in your mind sometimes that we have it all worked out. I am going to tell you something. You don't have. You had better have somebody in your life that you can trust. You had better have somebody in your life that you know is going to tell you the truth—not what you want to hear—but somebody that will tell you the truth because you need somebody to lead you. Amen! I do and you do. Not everybody will tell you the truth. A lot of people will tell you what you want to hear. A lot of people will pat you on the back and say I feel sorry for you and all of that. That may be good sometimes and probably it is; but it is not always good. Because sometimes we need a kick in the butt, is what we need.

Listen. Our families are dying. Our families are dying. We are wondering about someone getting our seat when we come to church. Shame on you! Worrying about somebody getting your seat. You don't own these seats. Amen! Your name is not on any of them. That makes me sick of my stomach sometimes. It really does. To hear statements like that made, and I know it was made. My, my, my! We are no better than the Pharisees are. We murmur and complain.

Not only that, but some of them get attracted and some of them attached. They lose the attachment that they once had to the shepherd. They lose the attachment that they had to the other sheep. They just wander off. They used to have fellowship with the sheep. They used to have fellowship with the shepherd. They just wandered off, wandered off

aimlessly, wondering off. Never thinking, never considering anything. They just sort of wander off. They wake up one day and they are all alone. They are by themselves. They think that nobody loves them and nobody cares about them. I am going to tell you something friend. That is not the case. There is somebody that loves you. People loves you. Not only that but also sometimes, the people just don't trust...sometimes people get to thinking that God really doesn't love them and God really does not care about them. Don't ever think that God does not love you because God does love you. He loves you. He cares about you. You, young people listen. I don't care where you get to in life, God loves you. He loves you enough that Jesus died for you. Don't ever think that you are a throw away. Don't ever think that nobody cares about you. Don't ever think that your life is not worth living because it is. Jesus loves you. He died for you.

Here is what happens.

Luke 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

Do you know what this guy does? He has a hundred sheep. One wanders off, he goes and finds it. He goes. He looks. He searches until he finds it.

Listen. You may be a long way from God tonight. You may be a long way from where you need to be with God tonight but the Lord is looking for you. He is searching for you. Do you know why? Because you are His sheep. He loves you. He cares about you. He died for you. He wants you and He wants to have fellowship with you. He goes and seeks. He looks.

I don't know how long he goes. I don't know how long it took him to find the sheep. This one was wandering. This one was lost. But he goes and searches and finds it. He looks until He finds it. Do you know what he does when he gets it?

Luke 15:5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing.

Now I don't know whether the sheep was too weak. I don't know whether it had been injured. I don't know whether he broke its leg when he found it. I don't know what was wrong, but this sheep had got so weak or whatever it was that in my mind, as I read this; it could not make its way back by itself. Do you know what the shepherd does? The shepherd puts it on his shoulder and carries it back to a place of safety.

There have been times in my life, in the years I have been saved that I needed for Him to come and rescue me. I'm not talking about before I got saved. I'm talking about after I got saved. There have been times in my life that He needed to come rescue me. I'm not talking about out there committing sin, getting drunk, and immorality. I'm not talking about that. However, there have been times that He needed to rescue me. There have been times in my life that I got real...lonely. Does that happen? It does happen. I can remember times...

One time I was on the road, and everybody thought that everything was just fine, and it was great. We were making all kinds of money. They were flying in the best planes around. Staying in the best hotel rooms. Do you know what I did not have? Do you know what was missing? ...I was able to be at church on Sunday morning and Sunday night. I was missing being there on Wednesday night. Do you know what? I got to the place that I was done with that. Do you know what I needed? I needed rescued. I needed for Him to come and get me. Do you know what He did? He picked me up. Do you know what else He did? He brought me to Campbell Chapel. Amen!

There are times in our life that we get that way. Everyone of us, there will be times in our life that we need a pickup. We need to be encouraged. We need the Lord to come along and to rescue us. There will be times in our lives when it looks like the enemy is going to destroy us and He is going to get us. He is going to kill us and then it is over. We need Him to come and rescue us. Do you know what He will do? He will always come and get us, if we want Him to come and get us. He will come and get us.

In my mind, when the shepherd got where this sheep was at, if this sheep was able to smile; I'd say the sheep smiled. I'd say this sheep was very happy to see this shepherd. Do you know why? Do you know what this sheep knew? Hey, this is the guy that led me right. This is the guy that led me to where I could eat green grass, and drink clean water. I could sleep at night and He watched over me. I'm glad to see this guy. That did not mean there wasn't some repercussions that came along with it. He gets him. He puts him on his shoulder and brings him. Do you know what he does?

Luke 15:6 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.

There was a time of rejoicing.

Get this. When we, "us," when we are out in the wilderness wandering around, out here gommeing around in places we shouldn't be gommeing around. Christians do that sometimes. God comes and rescues us. Listen. We come and we repent. We tell our shepherd that we are sorry that we have sinned, that we have messed up.

Listen. Do you know what happens? There is a time of rejoicing. Do you think it rejoices the heart of God when we repent? Do you think it rejoices the heart of God when we say, "Lord, I am sorry that I aimlessly walked away? Lord, I am sorry that I would not listen to your warnings. Lord, I am sorry that I got attached to what was in the wilderness. I am sorry Lord. Please forgive me." Do you think that rejoices God's heart? I will guarantee you it does.

Do you remember the kid that spent some time in the hog pen? When he got home, do you know what they did? They had a party. Didn't they?

Listen. When you and I repent, and we come back to God and get to where we need to be with God; there is rejoicing. The Bible says this.

Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

I want to say something here about that. Everybody needs to repent. You know it says, “ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” When you read that in some of the translations and some of the manuscripts...it could very well be relating this back to the Pharisees. The Pharisees did not think that they needed any repentance. They did not think that they needed repentance. However, this one lost sheep, this one lost sheep that has been out in the wilderness—I don’t know how long he has been there. I don’t know what he looked like when the shepherd finds him. I would say, he is probably all matted up. He probably did not smell good. He may have lost some weight. He may have briars and thorns all over him. But the shepherd puts him on his shoulder and brings him back home. The relationship is back to what it needs to be.

Listen. All of us at times in life, wander off. We listen to the call of the world. We listen to the call of our friends, or so-called friends. We listen to the wrong voice. We get led astray. We wake up one day and we are all by our self, all alone, nobody around to help us, nobody around to rescue us. The enemy is on every side.

Listen. I want you to know something tonight. You, young people listen to me. Jesus Christ will forgive you. He will cleanse you. He will put you on His shoulder. He will bring you back home. Do you know what He will do? He will have a party. Everybody will be able to rejoice. He will tell everybody, “Hey, this is my sheep that was lost. I went and found him. I searched and I found him. I brought him home. Now we are going to have a time of rejoicing.”

Listen. He loves you that much. He loves you that much that He will search for you. He will look for you until He finds you, if you will just come to Him.

If you want to come and pray, come and pray.