

### Week 3

#### 16/7/17: "This Man Receives Sinners"

**Verses:** Luke 15:1-10

It must have felt like a kick in the teeth, all those outcasts crowding around Jesus and He didn't send them packing. His claim that He was the Son of God didn't fit with what the Pharisees expected of their messiah, they were expecting a king that would uphold the law of Moses and pharisaic tradition with an iron hand. The system that was set up to offer mercy for sinners like those that crowded around Jesus feet, gave nothing more than misery. The grace the church should have been showing, it had covered with ceremony and tradition, many souls these days are lost simply because they are on the receiving end of a similar experience, the church is to be Gods faithful witness reaching the lost with a message of hope.

*"This parable, like the preceding, sets forth the loss of something which with proper search may be recovered, and that with great joy. But the two parables represent different classes. The lost sheep knows that it is lost. It has left the shepherd and the flock, and it cannot recover itself. It represents those who realize that they are separated from God and who are in a cloud of perplexity, in humiliation, and sorely tempted. The lost coin represents those who are lost in trespasses and sins, but who have no sense of their condition. They are estranged from God, but they know it not. Their souls are in peril, but they are unconscious and, unconcerned. In this parable Christ teaches that even those who are indifferent to the claims of God are the objects of His pitying love. They are to be sought for that they may be brought back to God. {COL 193.3}*

**Reflection:** I wonder do we think about the reasons why someone may not be attending church? How does the way we live help people see Jesus?

**Further Reading:** Christ Object Lessons p185-197

#### 17/7/17: "Lost and Is Found"

**Verses:** Luke 15:11-32; Is 55:6,7

The son wanted nothing to do with his family, as far as he was concerned he didn't need them anymore, he took his money and left for a foreign land spending all he had and indulging in every evil thing he set his mind to. The son went against everything that he knew was right, getting as far away from his father and his faith. What is so astounding about this story is the act of the father who saw the son a long way off, breaking Jewish tradition, he ran to the son and welcomed him home. The father didn't care what the son had done, that was the last thing on his mind, the repentant son was welcomed with open arms and a party was thrown to celebrate his return. God doesn't care what we have done in our lives, He just wants His child to come home to His open arms.

*"Little did the gay, thoughtless youth, as he went out from his father's gate, dream of the ache and longing left in that father's heart. When he danced and feasted with his wild companions, little did he think of the shadow that had fallen on his home. And now as with weary and painful steps he pursues the homeward way, he knows not that one is watching for his return. But while he is yet "a great way off" the father discerns his form. Love is of quick sight. Not even the degradation of the years of sin can conceal the son from the father's eyes. He "had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck" in a long, clinging, tender embrace." {COL 203.1}*

**Reflection:** Gods love transcends our actions, does this mean it doesn't matter what we do?

**Further Reading:** Christ's Object Lessons p198-211

## 18/7/17: "Spare It This Year Also"

**Verses:** Luke 13:1-9; Heb 3:7-14; Eze 11:19

If we do something often enough it becomes a habit, some habits are good while others are bad. The danger with a habit is that it is hard to break, the effort required far outweighs any joy we may have experienced. Sin has a way of becoming a habit, when we indulge in things we know we shouldn't we become de-sensitised, the more de-sensitised the less we will be truly repentant. I have heard and have even used the phrase "it's easier to ask for forgiveness ..." what scares me most about this phrase is that whilst it is used as a harmless pun, this becomes our subconscious attitude toward sin. Hard heartedness really does come easier than what we think.

*The heart that does not respond to divine agencies becomes hardened until it is no longer susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Then it is that the word is spoken, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" {COL 218.3}*

*Today He invites you: "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God.... I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.... I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.... They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.... From Me is thy fruit found." Hosea 14:1-8. {COL 218.4}*

**Reflection:** What are some of the things you "let slide" and how easy are they to do after a while? Ask God to soften your heart and show you what you need to give to Him.

**Further Reading:** Christ's Object Lessons p212-218

## 19/7/17: "Go into the Highways and Hedges"

**Verses:** Luke 14:1,12-24

Spiritual indifference is a terrible condition that plagued the Jewish nation, whilst upholding the law of Moses as an important standard, they had lost sight of the true meaning of the gospel. We are to be so careful, the world is pressing in on all sides and we allow ourselves to be occupied by other "more important" matters. All those invited to the feast gave excuses as to why they couldn't attend the banquet, nothing was so urgent that they couldn't, they just didn't want to. What they saw in Christ was no attraction for them, there was no glory and they weren't willing to sacrifice anything. There was however a class of people that saw in the Master, hope, joy and salvation, it was to these that these that Christ pointed the eyes of the Pharisees to.

*"The host turned from those who despised his bounty, and invited a class who were not full, who were not in possession of houses and lands. He invited those who were, poor and hungry, and who would appreciate the bounties provided. "The publicans and the harlots," Christ said, "go into the kingdom of God before you." Matthew 21:31. However wretched may be the specimens of humanity that men spurn and turn aside from, they are not too low, too wretched, for the notice and love of God. Christ longs to have care-worn, weary, oppressed human beings come to Him. He longs to give them the light and joy and peace that are to be found nowhere else. The veriest sinners are the objects of His deep, earnest pity and love. He sends His Holy Spirit to yearn over them with tenderness, seeking to draw them to Himself." {COL 225.3}*

**Reflection:** What excuses do you make for not doing something you know is right? Ask God to help you put Him first again today?

**Further Reading:** Christ's Object Lessons p219-242

## 20/7/17: The Measure of Forgiveness

**Verses:** Matt 18:21-35; Matt 10:8; Ps 130:7

To the Pharisees forgiveness was an exercise that was limited to a maximum of three times, Peter innocently thought he was showing greater mercy declaring seven. Christ however emphasized through a parable and figure of speech that there is no limit to love and mercy, this doesn't let us off the hook and there are still consequences to sin. God has promised that if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Because of sin both repentance and forgiveness don't come easy, thankfully we have one who stands as our example. True love and mercy is seen in Christ Jesus, when we fix our eyes upon Him we will not only see the example of God's love towards man we will also view our fellow man around us through the eyes of our saviour.

*"When one turns away from human imperfections to behold Jesus, a divine transformation takes place in the character. The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart conforms it to His image. Then let it be your effort to lift up Jesus. Let the mind's eye be directed to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. And as you engage in this work, remember that "he, which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5:20. {COL 250.3}*

**Reflection:** The man that received pardon on his very large debt you would think would forgive the man who owed him little. Can you think of a time when you may have acted like this man did? Do you limit your compassion and mercy? Think about ways to focus on Christ in the most difficult of circumstances.

**Further Reading:** Christ's Object Lessons p243-251

## 21/7/17: Gain That Is Loss

**Verses:** Luke 12:13-21; Prov 11:25; Mal 3:10

We seem to forget sometimes how feeble life truly is, happiness and joy can be replaced by sorrow and misery in the blinking of an eye. We store up earthly treasure in the hope of living our twilight years with the greatest of ease, perhaps providing for our children when we pass. The reality is that very few that have planned ahead ever see their dream come to fruition, the effort that was required to make the dream come true destroyed them in the end. The parable of the rich man highlights such an important aspect of want... The rich man's barns were full and yet he wanted more. He could not be nor ever would be satisfied with what he had. There is only one way that leads to true happiness and that is to give, the irony is when we selfishly keep for ourselves, we have less than if we had given freely to those in need. When we commit all to Christ we receive what we need when we need it and there is no need to be stressed about having enough our God provides abundantly more than we need at the right time.

“And He spake a parable unto them, saying, the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself, saying, what shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods, laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” {COL 255

**Reflection:** Think of a time when you worked so hard to get something and when you finally got it you were disappointed.

**Further Reading:** Christ's Object Lessons p252-259

## 22/7/17 Reflection

There is no reading today, I would suggest taking the time to catch up on some of the further reading. Reflect upon a passage which spoke to you this week. Enjoy your sabbath rest and have a blessed day.