

Two Lost Sons!

Overview

This is like being in an old gospel tent meeting here, isn't it? Praise the Lord I remember who else is off in the sunny climates and that's Cheryl who sits right up here. She's a rascal she takes off far too often. We never know where she's going to go. And she's down in Cuba or someplace like that. She's got some friends. They love to travel together. And friends are important. Always cultivate friendships. And so happy for her, happy for her, and for whoever else became rebellious and took off. Thank you.

You know what she just did. She, this is Ali, she just confirmed her spirit bear's witness. She confirms that after the message in tongues, brother here gave the interpretation and she's saying that was of the Lord. That was of the Lord. And I told somebody the story the other night when I was at a camp meeting, I was just a teenager. And at that time, I was serving God to the best of my ability at the time. I was at a camp meeting in a place called Bracide. And my favorite evangelist was there. His name is Jack West. And Jack was known to preach often about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was one of his trademarks.

And in that meeting was a friend of mine. We were Sunday school buddies. His name is Dale. And Dale had been at the altar so many times in our church. There were about 40 of us teenagers who got the baptism of the Holy Spirit in one week, every night in the church. It was an amazing thing. That's when I received that glorious immersion in the Holy Spirit. But Dale had missed out. And just a little discouraged he was. But in that meeting at the conclusion, Jack West invited people to come to the altar, and people did. And as is the habit, it's a normal thing.

After people had spent some time before the Lord at the altar, they started making their way home. Some went to Cottage's, but many would have driven well back even to this village here. But others were still hungry, and they were still tearing at the altar. And I'd left the altar, and I was sitting back somewhere, not far, just maybe you went among the first couple of seats near the front. And all of a sudden, I heard my friend Dale's voice. My goodness didn't he start to shout? This was so unlike uncharacteristic of my friend. He was kind of a shy fellow, very soft-spoken. But boy, he wasn't soft-spoken now. He was shouting in this glorious language. And all of a sudden, coming from behind me and running up the aisle was a woman.

And she's shouting at the top of her lungs, Russian, Russian, Russian. And as she, as she, somebody could have said, that lady's in a hurry, she's rushing somewhere. But she ran to the altar, and she stood over my friend Dale, and she's pointing at him, and she's crying, and she's shaking, and she's saying, Russian, Russian. And the preacher, Wes, went over and said, what are you saying, madam? She says, my language, my language, Russian, Russian. And he said, is he speaking? He's speaking Russian. He said, my Lord, what is he saying? He's praising God. He's praising God. This is something that we enjoy.

It's in the Word of God. It's in the Bible. And some say, well, everything is seized. Miracles are seized. And those churches are dying on the vine. I'm so glad that Pentecost is alive and real, and it's going on worldwide. Everybody's talking to me. They're getting little bits of news here and there. I'll get preaching in a moment. I'm just having fun right now. Word is continuing to find its way out from Iran.

There's a revival going on in that country. People are getting saved by the throngs. It's a wonderful thing, wonderful thing. And that's the kind of thing that's helping elsewhere as well. I'll just mention this. I keep on hearing it. Somebody almost says this to me every week. Have you heard Pastor that Muslims are getting saved and without anybody intervening, without anybody speaking to them, that they're coming to a gathering somewhere and they're saying, I met Jesus the other night? Jesus is coming to people and revealing himself just like he visited Abraham. That's called a Theophany. Just like he showed up in the furnace with the three here boys.

That's a Theophany. Just like he showed up in the person of Melchizedek. Suddenly Melchizedek was the king of Salem and yet you can't find his parentage. You can't find where he came from. And suddenly he disappeared as quickly as he had appeared. It was a Theophany. It was Jesus. Well, Jesus is showing up in Ethiopia Iran, and Iraq, and he's revealing himself to the Muslims. Say, amen or I'll tell you 10 more stories. Isn't this a wonderful hour to be alive? All right, I'm going to calm down now.

And if you believe that, well, I don't know what to tell you. So I wanna share with you again out of the book of Luke, the story, three stories in fact, but this morning I'm gonna take more time on the sun. And so we know the story that as I went through at some length last week, what the Pharisees were upset about, they were upset that Jesus being proclaimed by so many to be a rabbi, a rabbi being a profound teacher, word of his fame went far and wide. Not just the miracles of turning water into wine and all the rest of it, but his miraculous powerful teaching.

There were very learned people on that day who said, I've heard preachers all my life. I've heard a rabbi speak. I've been raised in this faith, but I've never heard a man teach like this man. So here's Jesus and what the Pharisees would have liked is that he would kind of fall in line with them because it'd be nice to add him to the posse. But he was in no mood to do such a thing. And so we read, you see, I went over it last week. Forgive me if I just mention it again, that the Pharisees were of the mind that not only do we abide by the clear word of God that's been given to us, but they were of the mind that we had to have teachers who would help us to understand the same.

And we're not above that ourselves. Why are you here today? You have your Bibles, you have your opportunity to read the word of God, but you come today to hear a teacher that somebody who would take a passage like this and kind of unfold it for you, help you to understand it. That's what the Pharisees were big on. And so they took every opportunity to explain what Moses meant by this, what the Lord meant by the 10 commandments, and whatever. But the Pharisees got carried away with their explanation and they started adding to it what's called the oral traditions. I say this ever so kindly and with dignity and not an apology, the Roman Catholic Church is in the very same boat just now. They have the word of God and then they have their

traditions. Like I remember when I was a young fellow, my Catholic friends always had to eat fish on Friday because it was a sin to eat meat on Friday. Well, that got canceled. Then they used to pray to these icons that were set up in the churches.

And I remember we were pastoring a little church up north and there was a little variety of stores across the street, literally across the street from our little house where we lived. I was pastoring at the time and I befriended the lady in that little store because we were the most frequent customer she had. And I remember stopping in there one day and she said, you're a preacher, I said, yeah. She said I'm really upset about what's going on in our church. I said, what's going on? She said they've decided to take out all the old saints. And I said, you mean the idols. Well, she said, we don't like to call them that, but they were taking out all of these carved-out images of certain individuals of fame. And she said they've decided we don't pray to them anymore. And she said I'm beside myself. I don't know who to pray to now.

And so where did the concept of, well, you can pray to the saints? Where'd that come from? Well, it came from these Pharisees who said, have you ever got time to go and talk to the priest? You can talk to one of the saints. They'll look after you. And so like, this is not, this is not, this is still going on today and some measures in the church. And I'm teaching on Thursday nights in my home to a group that comes together. I'm leading them through the book of Hebrews. And the book of Hebrews is all about, Paul the Apostle, trying to clear things up in the church because they added the early church, the very first early church. They started acting out as well. They had the word of God, but then they had so-called teachers who came along and said, now let me explain what that means.

And they got to, there were those out there in that part of the world where the gospel is wonderful, people were getting saved. But there were teachers among them who started telling and teaching this. You can't go to Jesus. You're not worthy to do so. You need to talk to an angel. And they were handing out the names of angels. Pick your angel and you can pray to this one. Paul had to deal with that when you read Hebrews chapter one and the very first words in that chapter you read where the Apostle says to what angel did the Lord God ever say, you are my son. Here's Paul the Apostle trying to clear up the problems that were already rife in the early church. Little wonder that that problem was there because so many Hebrew people, Jewish-raised people had now accepted Christ, but they were hanging on to some of the old folklore and some of the other things. And it was getting them all mixed up.

It was, and then you have Paul writing and saying, look, I know what you people are. Some, he said your church is divided. Some said I want to follow the teachings of Paul. No, I want to follow the teachings of Apollos. And he's saying, look, there's only one gospel. Get your act together. So the problem in this hour when Jesus was ministering is that the Pharisees had their idea of what holiness looks like. And they said, holiness has everything to do with what you look like, what you look like at the prayer hour. How you carry yourself in the street. How you dress in your appearance. How many shekels did you put in the offering?

It's all about how you are. It was almost like they were all ordering full-height tall mirrors where they could stand and look at their righteousness in the mirror. It was just about that bad. And

they were very down on anybody who did not follow their oral interpretation of the Word of God. They were very down on those people. And now they get upset. I went through a great extent last week to share with you how the Pharisees looked down on the non-Pharisees and called them, they're just the ordinary people of the land. We're the spiritual people. And they built up in their minds barriers, which became quite evident, that they would have nothing to do with that group of people. They separated themselves from them. And they didn't want to do any business with them.

They wouldn't intermarry with them. And so Israel is getting more and more divided. And that's when Jesus came along and said, come unto me, take my yoke upon you. My burden is easy. My yoke is very light on your neck. Come unto me. Jesus was saying, you don't have to fulfill all these little things that the Pharisees have come up with. But now we read in the first verse of Luke 15, then all the tax collectors and the sinners. Tax collectors were the bad people. They were Jews who went and appealed to the Romans and said, I'd like to, I'm friends with the Jews. They all trust me.

I'd like to collect taxes for you. And then became scoundrels. They didn't just charge you the taxes that you owed, but they would add interest to it. And if you didn't show up and pay your taxes, they could take away your fishing boat. All of a sudden you couldn't pay anybody any taxes because you'd lost your means to even support yourself. They could put you in jail. The tax collector could go to the Roman legion, the top dog, and say, that guy hasn't paid his taxes. He's behind by three months. I insist you put him in jail. The tax collector, a Jewish person, was acting up and causing trouble. So the Pharisees were against the tax collectors, of course.

And they're of course against all sinners. And who were the sinners? Well, anybody that didn't do as they were supposed to do. The doing, by the way, was endless, endless, endless. How many times have you had to wash your hands per day? How many times have you had to do this? How many times have you had to do that? You always wanted to know where that food came from. I've often mentioned this in a sermon I'd like to preach about when Jesus said to the people in Galilee, sit down, he had five pieces of bread and a couple of fish. And he said, why don't you sit down? If he had said that in Samaria, if he'd said that in Samaria, the people of Samaria would have said, what's he trying to do?

We're not worthy of that. No, I don't trust this Jewish fellow. Because they were in a very negative mood. And they would have walked away. They said, there's something wrong with this. Remember the woman at the well? And she said to Jesus, you shouldn't even be seen talking to me. What's going on here? Now, if Jesus had gone up in Judea, where the Pharisees ruled the day, and where were their high people and where their high schools were, and they're, you know, all of the high, if he'd gone up there and held up the bread and the fish, and said to 5,000 people, sit down, I want to feed you, the first question would be, is the bread kosher? Who prepared the bread? Where did it come from?

Because, you see, we won't eat something that is defiled. So the woman who came to Jesus with an issue of blood had no friend, she was friendless. Why? Because the word of God said that if a woman was experiencing the seeping of blood, which happens frequently to ladies at

certain times, I know it's a delicate issue, but it was a more delicate issue in those days. The woman who was going through that time had to lock herself up in the house because she was unclean, and whatever she touched became unclean. And if she came near a preacher, near a godly person, she would defile them by just touching them. It was just how it was. So now the Pharisees see Jesus spending time with the people who don't follow the oral law, our prescription for what is right. Jesus in response wants to teach the molesome. And I'm going several directions this morning and I hope I don't lose you on the road. But I want to talk to you this morning about caring, caring.

We're going to end up with the father and his two sons. We're going to talk about caring, but we're going to talk about the shepherd who cared about his sheep, the woman who cared about her and her loss, and a daddy who cared about both of his sons. But we're also going to take a look at the sons and discover they did not care. Their relationship with the father was pretty jaded, pretty troublesome. So I want to talk for a few moments just about caring and it's going to kind of hit a nerve among us because do I care? Do I care? And of course, the immediate response should be, well, of course I do, we all care. We're nice people, we care about things. Do you care about what God cares about? Or are you more focused on us? Even in your Christianity and your religious life, what's the apex?

What's the top, top thing that you're focused on? Is it your comfort, your desire, or how you want things? Or is it upon the Lord's things? Caring is described as a value and an attitude that manifests itself in the form of a concrete act. Caring is not something you feel. Caring is something you do. It's kind of like love. Love is not a feeling, honey. Love is something that you offer. For God so loved the world, he offered. He gave.

He cared and his care became an action. Job said, not Job said, the report is in Job 2. Now when Job's three friends heard of all of this evil that had come upon him, they came every one from his place, for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and comfort him. They cared, they cared enough to come. We care enough, we're gonna be going out on the streets in a couple of weeks. You know all those socks that you brought here and piled up high sky? Not next Sunday, but this Sunday after there, after two. Sunday's the way, they're gonna be on tables out here. And when you come in, you're invited to please take, take a bunch, take a lot of them, take them all, clean off the table. What am I gonna do with them? You see people every day that are going through great, great, great difficulty.

That's one of the most terrible things that's going on in our country right now. People are being taxed to death and the value of everything is going through the roof. Some families are trying to discuss, discuss. Do we spend the money to heat our homes? Thank goodness it's getting warm. Global warming, bring it on, we can't afford them, we can't afford, we're getting punished for burning oil and gas. So people are in need, so we're gonna go out and we can't feed them, we can't pay the rent, but we give them a pair of socks. We can give them a pair of socks. You know the little guy on the street corner that's out there saying anything will do? Roll down the window and say here, you should be a diesel fitter. You look, I saw a lady out on the street the other day.

She was out there paneling. I should have said to my wife, I looked out the window and I would have taken a pair of socks. I'd say, I'm a diesel fitter. Here lady, diesel fitter. You can, you don't have to give them money, you can give them a pair of socks. Give them a pair of socks. Or go into someplace that you know where there are battered women and drop off half a dozen pairs of socks. Socks are useful things. Give them a pair like I have. Oh, you can't see, the toe is blue and the rest is black. It's kind of like, you know, cool dude.

So there's all kinds of color. You brought them, you brought the socks. So let's care for people. I don't wanna see the socks on the table at the end of the service. I don't know if that was a complaint or an amen over there. So you take the socks, I'm gonna take a bunch. I'm crazy, you know that. I'll go in the streets. Cause I care about people. I can't fix their whole life. I can't, but I can show them a little bit of love.

Hello? Romans, rejoice with those who rejoice. When you know that somebody's crying, comfort them and weep with them. Remember those in prison. As if you were bound with them. And those who are mistreated as if you were suffering with them. That's in the book of Hebrews, where they're all wound up about, yeah, we like Jesus, but don't forget Abraham, and let's get those Gentiles circumcised, they were all about the law, the law, the law, the rules, the rules. And Paul said, hey, there's something else you need to do. So here's a picture of a dad welcoming his son home. But before that ever happened in our three little, our little trilogy of stories, there was a shepherd that a hundred sheep, you know the story. I don't have to go through it again.

But what's unique is to look into the law. What's unique is to look into the life of a shepherd. You know, Jesus said the real shepherd, the faithful shepherd, he will lay down his life for the sheep. How do we know that? Because David, when he went to Saul and said, I'm not afraid to take on Goliath. I defended my sheep. I with my hands killed a bear. I killed a lion. Folks, I have faced lions. I was in no mood to prove something that day. When those claws can just rip you to shreds, but David took a, he was a shepherd and he defended his sheep.

And Jesus said, if a shepherd, he said, you know what shepherds are like, we don't. Does anybody here know a shepherd? It's another culture. It's another part of the world. But those people did. He said, you all know shepherds. Everybody has an uncle, an aunt, a relative. Who, by the way, were the, they were just people of the land? The shepherds. And can I just take a side moment here, that when God sent the angels to announce melodically, joy to the world, who did he send it to? Who did he send the angels to?

Didn't send them to the Levites. Didn't send them to the Pharisees. He sent them to the people of the land. He sent them to those horrible shepherds who lie, who, underneath their fingernails, are all dirty. And you can't, you can't worship God with dirty fingernails. I mean, that was what they believed. So this Jesus says, you know what shepherds are like. You've all known them. If you lose his wife, he'll risk his life. And then there's this beautiful little line you've all heard. And when he finds his sheep, throws it over his shoulders.

You know it was a little guy brought up back to the pen with the rest of the sheep, then he called his friends. And so I've ordered in Diapepsi and 13 pizzas. Come all over to my house. We're

going to have a party. Don't lose that. I got to come back to it. Then he said, you know what would happen if a lady lost a coin? I want to show you what potentially those coins look like. They weren't loonies that you would carry in your purse. I got into the theological library in out west in British Columbia. The Piaosci call.

And I spent a day in there looking and digging around to find out what the old church fathers thought and whatever. And here's what they came up with. Those coins that that lady had lost one of would have been an heirloom of the family. And it would have been specially designed. You couldn't buy those at a little jewelry store. You'd have to go to an artful fellow. And you have to say, I want you to make up these coins and it's for my family. What would have happened is something that would look like what you see on the screen here. It would have been passed down as a necklace or maybe something that would go about the head. And it would be a special adornment to celebrate something special. And most likely, the historians said to me through all of the, uh, research I did, most likely it was something that was given to the bride in preparation for her wedding to say, this was given to me by my, uh, by my, my mother who passed it down for my, my great, my, it's been in our family for years.

And you get to pass it down to your daughter. And there would have been sort of like a little symbolic blessing that came with every coin. Not to say that we get excited about, you know, this coin is going to do this. It wasn't like a magic foot, but in this sense may the Lord bless you with children, may the Lord bless you with health, you know, every coin represented something. And the challenge that this lady had was somehow one of the coins was missing. And the devastating thing in her mind was it was passed on from generation to generation and what have I got to give my daughter? It was no ordinary thing. And he said, you know what she'll do. She'll tear her house apart until she finds it. And then he goes on to say, and you know what else she'll do. It is so important to her, that coin that when she finds it, she'll call her friends and she'll say, I just ordered pizza.

Come on over to my house. Celebrate with me. I found my coin. Let's have a party. Last story. Not a hundred son, not ten. Only two. And the youngest came to his dad and said, I wish you're dead, but you're not. So I want what's coming to me now. I want one-third of all that you intend to give my brother and me. What is silent in the story that Jesus gives us right here?

What he's silent about is what the older brother went through when he learned that Daddy was going to divide up the fortune and give that pesky little brat a third of it. We don't know what was going on, but I have a pretty good guess. If you wonder, just read on to the end of the chapter. Just skip to the last verse. You'll figure it out. So the dad gives a third to his son. The son goes to a far country and if you read on about the older son's response when the boy comes home, you'll find out that that young guy spent a great deal of that money in very, very bad immoral ways. The brother mentions he spent his money on prostitutes, Dad. Like what kind of a reputation is this guy got? Let's read it, shall we? Well, I'll read it for you.

The daddy says, bring out the best robe, put it on him, put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. Bring the fatted calf here and kill it and let's eat and be merry. Who is he suggesting is going to eat and be merry? He's already heard his son. I don't want a party and dad, I can't attend

that. I don't think the son went to the party. Well, it's okay. The party wasn't for the son. Do you think it was? N-N-N-N-A. I'll prove that to you in a moment.

The party was not for the son. The party was for the dad and he invited his friends to come. He said, maybe it was just his household. No, he told his household to get it ready. Go and kill the fatted calf. Get the potatoes cooking. Get this, get that. I want everything out. We're going to have a party. Call the band. I want them to play something from, you know, Louisiana.

I want saxophones and clarinet. I want, let's dance. Let's get this on. We're going to have a party. So he invited his friends. Come to my house. My son has come home. When the shepherd went out that night to look for that sheep, we already know, we already know from the Bible, that's our primary source. What we know about shepherds, who we get from this book. Shepherds will lay their lives down for the sheep, but I want to caution you. They're not evil, can evils look for a sheep to die for?

They would only lay their lives down for their sheep. Because you see, Jesus said, as the good shepherd said, my sheep know my voice and they follow me. What does that tell you? That a shepherd has a very warm, caring relationship with a sheep. And when one goes missing, his life is like a plowed field. I got to find, I got to, oh, oh, I know which ones. That's a little Sammy. That's a silly little rascal. He has no idea. He's out there. He's in danger.

I got to go and rescue him. I have to do it right now. He secured the 90 and 9 and he went out in the night. He faced wolves, bears, and lions. There were hyenas in that day. There's none of those animals around in that part of the country now. Somebody cooked them and ate them. There's nothing like that. But at that time, there were horrendous animals out there. It was a fearsome thing. He went out and he risked his life.

How many went with him? Jesus said, you know what he will do. He went alone. How come other shepherds didn't go? They didn't key word. They didn't care. Why would they care? These are your sheep. We can't all be looking after each other. I look after mine. You look after yourself.

He's the only one who cares. Watch this. When the woman's looking for her coin, did she call all her friends, and come into the house? No, they would have crossed. She was a poor woman, folks. And it says that she had to light a torch to see where she was looking. That tells me, I spent a good deal of time in Africa. A house with many windows is a rich house. A house where you've got to look for someone on the floor and you've got to light a torch to find it. That is a poor house. And she looked all by herself until she found it.

When she did find it, she called all her friends. You've got to come. She's hyperventilating. You've got to come. You've got to come. You've got to come. Did people come? I believe they did, otherwise, the story would have fallen on hard ground. I think those who are listening in would have said, well, of course, if my neighbor, who's a good neighbor and we're a best friend, we have coffee every morning. If she's beside herself because she's in trouble and then she calls over and she says, I did it. I found it.

Come on over to my house right now to have a party. Of course, I'd go. She's my friend. I care about her. Key. I care about her. Who came to the party that was thrown by the shepherd? People who cared for the sheep. No. You see, the party wasn't for the sheep. Allow?

Hang on to that. The party was not for the sheep. The party was for the shepherd. Was the sheep invited? Are you serious? I've had some time with sheep. I talked about this Braeside camp. One of the things that we used to do back in the day is we used to like to ring the dinner bell at about two o'clock in the morning. Big clang, clang, clang. As teenagers, we are nuts. You know what I did one night?

If you got caught, of course, you'd end up peeling onions till morning. They'd punish you pretty badly. And so I went out to the old barn. Braeside camp was a barn. It was a farmer. I went out to the barn and I found some bailing twine. I brought a whole long, like a couple of hundred feet. And I caught a sheep and I tied his leg. And the other end I tied it to the clanger. What do you call it? You know, dong, dong.

And then I scared the living daylight out of the sheep. And so the whole camp, we got clang, clang, clang. You're not laughing. You're sorry, you care more about sheep than I do. He went out alone, but he didn't celebrate alone. Listen, he went out alone, but he did not celebrate alone. When he found his sheep, he called his friends and said, come, I'm going to throw a party. I found my sheep. And the people who came, I promise you. They didn't say you got a hundred sheep. Now we're going to have a party game tonight.

Here's the hundred sheep. Heard them all into the house. Right. Who can guess which one of these little rascals was lost tonight? No such a party, bud. It's not the sheep were not invited. The party was to celebrate the shepherd. And when the ladies, and her friends came to celebrate the coin, did she put the coin out? Are you serious? She lost it once. She's put it under a big rock.

Like it is safe and sound. Nobody got to see the coin. They didn't have to. They were there not to celebrate the coin. They're there to celebrate the lady. My best friend was brokenhearted. She didn't know what she was going to do. And she found her coin. Of course, I'm going to go to the party. Son, the kid who was a brat who'd messed up something fierce, prostitutes, spent one-third of his father's life's earnings on stupidity. And he was known for it.

The brother knew at the end of the story he came to his dad and he says, Dad, you know what we've heard. Prostitutes. Go on, Dad. What kind of an attitude did the older brother have? Ferris-y. Jesus said when one sheep is lost, great celebration. He said, but in heaven when one's soul is lost, heaven comes unbound. They're rejoicing in heaven over one. He said there's more rejoicing over the one who gets saved than all the rest who do not need redemption. Jesus, why would you say such a thing? More important than the one that God found than all the rest that don't need, don't we all need redemption?

Jesus is talking to the Pharisees who say, we're the righteous ones. So you see, he's playing their game. You don't need redemption. Your boast is, that you're purified. You can get into heaven

with all of your rotten souls because you wear clean sandals. You always tithe every dime. You say your prayers 10 times a day. You fasten. You pray every month. You go to every festival. You do see dull with the right people.

You do it right. God's going to overlook your stupidity and he's going to allow you in. And I tell you, God will rejoice over one that says, be merciful to me on the sinner. He said, Heaven comes, include the joy in heaven over one. Is greater than the joy over anyone of you who claims. I'm fine. Come, come, come to my house. We've killed the fatted calf. We've had it. If I'm going to go. I hope they're going to serve Turkey as well.

I like Turkey. They're going to throw a huge banquet. Who came? Did the people who came to celebrate with the shepherd, that the people who favored that lost sheep come? No, they came for the shepherd. The people who came to the lady's house, that they came because they're all coin collectors. No, no, no, no. They came for the woman. So here's a problem that I have. I'm one of this man's neighbors and I love him. We've been friends.

Our fathers were friends. Okay. We were the best of friends. We went to school together. We got into trouble together. I loaned him some money when he was trying to get his start. We loved each other. We traded sheep. We did all kinds of things together, but he had one reckless son. We all knew about it. And I felt bad for that old fellow and quite frankly, when somebody knocked on my door and said, Hey, George says come to his house.

His son came home. Well, as a matter of fact, the whole town's talking about it. I'd heard that the son had come home. I heard about it. And I was thinking, what's going to go down now? George is throwing a banquet and he wants you to come. He's celebrating the return of his son. Do I want to be seen in that house if that son is there? That son was probably raised properly, but he crossed over and became one of the people of the land. Became an alcoholic, and a womanizer. He did all that kind of stuff.

You know, the Pharisees are not going to look kindly about me attending the thing, but I do love, I do love the old guy. I believe I'm going to go. Did he go to honor the son? He went to honor the father, the man who cared. Let me tell you something. That daddy was the only person on the planet that cared about that boy. Nobody cared about him. No one ever cared for me like Jesus. Have you heard that song? It's been sung a whole lot better. No one ever cared for me.

He has no secret what God can do. What He did for others, He can do for you, but He's the only one who can do it. He's the only one who cares. And this is the purpose of Jesus as He's saying to the Pharisees, you're messing around with sinners, and Jesus is just trying to say, you've missed it. You don't know God. You claim that you follow Him. You claim that your religion is pure. You claim that you know the book better than anybody else. You know the book, but you don't know the author. The older son has been having conniptions since his young brother took off. And when he comes back, the older brother is ticked off royal.

I'm going to close soon. He was angry, so his father had to come out. I'm not going to the party. A kid's filthy. He's embarrassed my father like he cared about his father. Does he care about his

father? His father's throwing a party. The neighbors are neighbors, but they're not blood-related. They're not really related. They're good friends. They're at the party, but his own son, his firstborn, the one that he's been honoring since the kid came forth from his mother's womb, the kid that he bragged about, the kid that he offered before the Lord is a dedication, the kid he was counting on to carry on the family tradition, the young man he was counting to be a man of God, that young man did not care about that.

He cared about himself. Ferris'es. I'm going to make it to Heaven. I know you're going to make it. You don't do it right. He's angry. He says, all these years, I served you. He's complaining. I broke my neck for you. He's putting his dad down. What's it?

He's trying to make his dad feel bad. Do you love your dad? Oh, yeah. But today I'm going to slit his throat. I never transgressed your laws. Oh, your laws. He doesn't talk about God's ways. They were raised to honor God. They were raised to honor the Lord. It was the Lord's laws. It was the Lord's commandment.

But he says, I never broke your rules. I was loyal all the way. And yet when this kid comes home, you, you, you honor him. You didn't even give me a goat, but you gave him the fatted calf. And he went and devoured it all. I want to shake your boat right now. How does the story end? Did you ever wonder? Let me read the last words. Son, you're always with me and all that I have is yours. It was right that you should make Mary and be glad for it's your brother was dead.

He's alive again. He was totally lost and now he's found. What's the son's response? It's not there and why? Because Jesus is waiting for his accusers, these Pharisees who are moment, he's waiting for them to answer. These publicans, these sinners, these drunkards, these people of poor reputation by your standards are outside of the mercy and the grace of God. Jesus was implying. Why am I sitting with them? They chose to sit with me and why did they do so? They don't fit in with your crowd and the reason they're sitting listening to me is because they want me to give them a reason to submit to God, but you won't have it. You want to say, hell, you want them to go to hell?

You would never have celebrated with that shepherd. You would never have celebrated with that lady. And right now I know your heart. He's saying to, the crowd, I know your hearts. You're mad at the father. You're angry with him. You're doing it wrong. Can the pot say to the potter? You made me wrong. Job's words. Who's going to fight with God?

Where were you when God spanned the heavens and created everything that we see? Who ordained that you would come into this world? How come God hasn't killed you off already? You're still alive. That's grace, that's mercy. That's the blessing of God. And now you are shaking your finger at the one hand. Who's on high? He is the father. And you're arguing, you're angry with the father. Kill the bad people, Lord.

We don't know how the story, we don't know if this was a real story if Jesus put it together. I have an idea that it was a factual, historical story. And if so, how would I guess how the thing went on? I'd say there could have been a murder in the house because that brother was so ticked. You

say, Pastor, that's going a little far. What did the Pharisees do to Jesus? They did him in. So Pastor Dave, what's the kernel of these things? Why are you speaking to us this morning about these things? And here it is. Our care for the lost cannot be developed out of sympathy for their catered condition.

It won't work. I went to Africa. I went to a place to preach about Jesus. The Muslims came after me with pangas. Do you know what that thing is? It's a sugary knife. It's about this long. How about 50th? They were going to cut my head off because I was there to preach about Jesus. I was there to preach to them to present the gospel of Jesus. What motivated me to go there?

These people are miserable. They're ugly. They're hateful. They're murderous. But Jesus died for them. We'll go out in a couple of weeks. We'll give out socks. Do they deserve it? Are you serious? Who's going to judge? You look like a good guy.

I'll give you a pair of socks. No, we don't get to do the judge. No, that's the role of the Pharisees. That's the role of the Pharisees. I'll say this out loud to you. I'm not afraid to say that's the Lord. He's calling. He wants to know what your decision is here today. That's okay. I put my phone on airplane mode and it still goes bing! I confess to you, that I've never regarded myself as a good pastor.

I have to work on that. I'm an evangelist. And that calling in my heart has got to do with my relationship with the Father. I don't go after the lost because I feel sorry for them or that I think they're worthy of something. If the Father values them, I need to value them. When the shepherd said, come and rejoice with me, they came because that shepherd's joy was contagious. And that lady's joy of finding the coin was contagious. And as much as the friends of the old man despised the boy, despised everything, everything that he had done, it despised it, the daddy's joy was contagious. And I need to hear it clearly again from the lips of Jesus when one gets saved, David, by any way, by a drama, by an altar call, or sitting at a park bench. Somebody's life gets changed because somebody gives him a bowl of soup or gives him a little \$5. 10 card says here, go and do something for yourself.

It's amazing the things that happen. People are reaching out and touching. People with their ministry, with their care, with their love. And the Father, I believe, I'll finish with this. I know I've said this in this church at some point. I believe there are a couple of angels that do nothing but watch the Father. They don't know everything that's going on, okay? But they know that the Father is waiting for the Word. Another one got saved. And the angels are the couple of angels watching the Father's face. And as soon as they see a smile come over the Father's face, they know somebody just got saved.

That a new name has been written down in glory. And those two guys start shouting to the millions of angels. It's party time! The Father is overjoyed and Jesus the Son just received the reward of His sacrifice. It's okay, I shout. There's a lot of shouting going on in heaven. Sorry if I blew your ears off, whoever's listening to this at home. Relationship with the Father, care about what He cares about. You don't have to love the sinner, you have to love the Father, and if you

love the Father, you'll care about what He cares about. Makes sense, doesn't it? Heavenly Father, I pray that we'll not be smug.

We're only special because you call us special. And without your word, without your calling, without what you see in me, I'm a piece of dirty rotten trash. It was you who saw something worth salvaging. Thank you, Jesus, for loving us. Thank you, Lord God, for helping us to be faithful and true to our callings. And our callings are many. We're called to worship, we're called to pray, we're called to seek your face, we're called to reach out and tell people about the love of Jesus. And it's not our problem if they refuse the message. It's our challenge to present it and we leave the rest with God. Help us to be your voice, Lord. Help us.

Help me to be your voice this week. Help me to be your voice on Tuesday night when I'm out there serving people pancakes. I'm doing it in your name. I'm doing it to serve you. I'm not there to serve the Mennonites. I'm not there to serve you because I believe that what we do on Tuesday evening at the Mennonites, I believe that it's going to cause just a little bit of a ripple of joy in heaven because we're doing something that we get nothing out of. We don't get anything out of this except the joy of knowing the Father is pleased with what we're doing. Well done, good and faithful. Enter into the joy of the Lord. We're working on that. Amen.