

Verse by Verse: Luke 15:3

By Lloyd Anderson

Lloyd Anderson:

Good morning friends in radio land. It is my deep delight to be with you again today and to share with you those inimitable and eternal things that come to us straight from the heart of God moving as they do through the pages and the verses and the wonderful words of the Word of God itself. This is Dr. Lloyd T. Anderson again speaking in the place of Dr. Lewis T. Talbot who is Chancellor of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. Now this morning I do want to mention to you again the need that you keep the lifeline open between your own hearts your own prayer life and your own pocketbook and the Bible Institute of Los Angeles.

These are the days when great institutions like the Bible Institute of Los Angeles are more and more dependent upon people like you people like you to send letters to them indicating your reception of the program. People like you indicating by what they place in the letter that which will help the Bible institute to go forward with its tremendous Ministry of reaching young men and women with a gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some time ago I was talking to a number of the young people who are now in the Bible Institute of Los Angeles who have come down here to go to school from the First Baptist Church of Salem Oregon of which I was pastor up until last March.

And you know as I speak to these young people as I meet them from time to time here I am delighted with their own personal expressions concerning the Bible Institute of Los Angeles

expressions coming from the hearts of these young people like I've never been in a place like this before. It is simply wonderful I cannot express it in human language oh the chapel hours. They say how God speaks to our hearts. And then again and again I've heard those fine young people say how much we're getting out of our class and our studies.

As we sit at the feet of these wonderful men and women who are the professors and teachers in the four great schools that comprise the Bible Institute of Los Angeles the Bible College the Bible institute Talbot seminary and the school of missionary medicine. Now will you continue to pray then if you will that God's touch and God's hand will be upon this tremendous place? Now this morning if you do have your Bibles I would have you turned with me at once to the Gospel According to St. Luke and in chapter 15 and particularly beginning with verse 3.

Now you remember with me that here of course we have that great passage that has to do with the parables of Jesus parable number one was the story of the sheep parable number two the woman who had ten pieces of silver but nevertheless lost one parable and story number three a certain man who had two sons and one of them became the prodigal son. A tremendous passage and I wanted to read beginning with the third verse and he spake unto them. This parable saying what man of you having a hundred sheep and having lost one of them does not leave the 99 in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he find it.

And when he had found it he lay that upon his shoulders rejoicing and when he come home he call us together his friends and his neighbors saying unto them rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost I say unto you that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner

that repent of more than ninety nine Righteous Persons who need no repentance. Now I'm sure as I speak to you this morning on the subject of doing your best and I doing my best to win people to Christ that it certainly is a truism to say that all the blessing which has come to God's people here or anywhere is intended by the Lord to fit and to prepare you and me for his service.

Down here in the world now Christian people are not intended to be self-contained but Christ communicating to those with whom they are brought into spiritual contact. The generation of spiritual ecstasy which is not translated and in some cases it is not I fear even translatable into Christian energy bears no authenticating sign of divine origin or even divine approval. Certainly we need to connect in our minds this morning and I pray that God will make the connection with our lives. That the spiritual blessings which I received today and tomorrow and the days that follow is a God ordained blessing and should result in only one thing that You and I should be able to do our best as believers in Christ to win people to Jesus Christ for you and I are moving out every morning to live in the midst of a lost men and women.

We need to come to the place where we never use that term thoughtlessly nor lightly for it's a tremendous term. Its content the woe is absolutely unspeakable. You and I every day are going out to live among the lost and the obligation rests upon every God blessed man and woman in his own place to seek lost men and women in Christ name and by Christ power and find and bring them to him who wants us to go and reach them. Now I want you to study with me in the brief and of course necessarily incomplete way in which the limits of time and radio land place upon us the well-known story in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel According to St. Luke that chapter

that has ended these wonderful parables the lost sheep the lost coin the lost son in the world and of course the lost son in the home the elder brother.

And may God himself my friend give us the grace to recognize in the pictures which our Lord is here drawing for us those among us whom we live and labor and who correspond in-state at this present moment to these lost things and the lost ones we find in Luke Chapter Fifteen. It is probably the best known and the most generally loved of all New Testament scriptures. Now why is that so? Because my friend Luke Chapter 15 records Christ's incomparable illustrations of the divine love of God and the length to which it goes in search of its own objective of its own unconditioned forgiveness of injury to itself of its largeness of heart of its entire dependableness in all the variations of human experience consequent upon its outrage and downright denial in all of the ages.

Men have seen themselves as lost sheep. They have seen themselves as a lost coin as the lost son and they recognized in the shepherd of Luke chapter fifteen the housewife and the father the love that sought and found and ultimately rescued them and brought them back to the Lord again.

And because of all this which is vivid and pictorial is presentation a wonderful presenting of the Gospel. Men have in every generation my friend this morning preached this wonderful chapter of Luke and they rejoiced in seeing the light of heaven break forth upon the lives that up until that moment had been just as black and dark as night itself and they've seen the hope and the confidence and the joy that comes as these wonderful messages of Luke 15 have been related again and again to the hearts of men and women.

Now my present endeavor this morning is rather to present these stories to you as defining the obligation which rests upon every Christian to seek the lost in the union with him and making him show that his life is an open testimony and an open book and to win men in their own homes and in the throngs of life in their own circles of acquaintance. And in those wider spheres in which we all have inevitable contact with men and women in the very life of the world itself. Now at the very beginning of our study and meditation this morning we need to be assured of one thing that there is nothing plainer my friend in the New Testament than the fact that all men and women are desperately lost without Christ and that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost.

And he still carries on that purpose through the lives of men and women who believe in him and who are living in every generation. Now someone has well said it was Dr. Stewart Holden that God has no hands for the distribution of his gifts save the hands of his own people. He has no body on earth except the body of his own redeemed. He has no feet where with the errands of the Gospel shall ever be run except the feet of his own people. He has no voices to declare the love of God except the voices of those who are united to him in real faith and in spiritual fellowship in the things of the Lord.

He has sent his people out into the world to do the works that I do as he said and greater works than these because I go to my father. If then we have learned my friend in the days of our own doing anything of the personal meaning of the gift of the Holy Spirit sent down upon his disciples by the Ascended Christ. If we have learned anything at all of the obligation of the consecrated life which God fills with his own enabling presence it is incumbent upon you and

incumbent upon me that you and I should go out and do the works that Jesus did to seek and to win the lost to change the conditions as far as they might be affected under the influence of which men and women actually have become the lost men and women born lost and living lost is the plight of an redeemed mankind too often with the very best will in the world Christian people do not know what they're looking for when they engage to go out in Christian service they look for nothing and I am afraid that they are only too successful often in finding nothing.

I think the Lord Jesus Christ gave us these four parables to help us see in Luke 15 whom we are to look for and how we are to recognize them. Men and women who are actually lost to all of the vital meanings and the purposes of the love of God itself. Now let me recall to you my friend the opening verses which form the introduction to these wonderful four parables. For they do explain the circumstances in which Jesus spoke to these people. Now you will recognize the fact that he gave them not to sinners to convince them of their lostness but he gave them you recall to Pharisees and scribes who murmured at the ready access which was accorded by Jesus to the crowd of sinners and the lost people who thronged him on every side.

Now these Pharisees I'm sure in a sense were not consciously hypocrites but men who were sincerely striving to preserve their own personal sanctity. They were mainly externalists in testimony not necessarily to their unreality but to their own zeal. There is one thing I think this morning to be said about the religion of the Pharisees it was not an easy religion to keep up to be a Pharisee was not as easy my friend as it appears to be. If I may say so as to be a modern evangelical. It was a religion which made infinitely more searching and consistent demands upon their lives.

You see in the days of Jesus to be a good Pharisee a man had to work at his religion 24 hours out of 24. I would to God that we had somewhat of the same spirit today. Only of course in a much better cause the Pharisees were not ere religious men. They were rather too religious in the wrong directions of life. They were not unscrupulous men. They were rather over scrupulous in regard to wrong things. They were not lacking in earnestness. They were rather too earnest in regard to matters of quite negligible importance.

They were righteous overmuch. They emphasize and magnify the value of trifles to such an extent as to make trifles the great end of life while duties of supreme urgency were always in their lives in danger of deepest neglect. They became absorbed in externals until they actually came to that place in which they saw nothing in the really vital factors of any situation. Now the Lord Jesus Christ my friend when he was here hated Phariseeism just because he loved Pharisees and never forget it this morning and because he hoped and longed for them to save them from the unavoidable nemesis of their own self-centeredness in life his burning words to the Pharisees and believe me he spoke words of burning delight and of causation to their own hearts.

These words are always to be understood in the light of his only yearning soul. He longed to save them unto the true life the life which constantly does the will of God. And so he spoke these parables to them in Luke Chapter Fifteen a good deal less than justice has been done to the Pharisees but never by the Lord Jesus Christ. And of course in Luke 15 Jesus is not here speaking to them an irony when he calls them Righteous Persons and just persons. He is saying in effect to these Pharisees you have discovered your own need of relationship with God and you

have satisfied yourselves that by meticulous ritual observance that need is being met in your own life.

But you have lost sight of the fact said Christ that your mission in life concerns others who have not so found their need of definite relationship with God. You are actually living among the lost men and you are doing absolutely nothing to help them find themselves. Your religion is altogether too self-centered and on this account. It has actually ceased to be really religious in the Christian sense of the term. Now so I would say in an open translation is the thing that Jesus is telling these Pharisees as he confronts them day by day.

Now that is a state into which not only the Pharisees of Jesus day but men and women of our own day have often come their religion actually ceases to bear any traces of likeness to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ and such a statement of what as you will find in First Corinthians chapter 13 which is the great chapter on the love of God. And so I say to you friend of mine this morning Jesus speaks this series of parables directed toward the creation in them and in us of a sense of real responsibility and toward the quickening of apprehension in respect of the kind of people who are lost and why they are lost and how these people are to be recovered now just as on other occasions when one individual asked him who is my neighbor you remember Jesus told him in the form of the striking parable of the Good Samaritan and the church this morning generally and Christians individually are just in as great a need as these whom Jesus addressed on this particular occasion.

For men all around us my friend are actually lost not merely by reason of their own perversity nor because of the conditions under which their lives are cursed but because the church and Christian people individually speaking generally today have failed to seek them and have failed to reach them. These who are lost before the Lord but my friend they can be found if we only know who and where they are and give ourselves to the labor of that search impelled by the love of Christ and endued with his spirit of real concern and of real constancy I am sure is the answer to the problem.

Now first of all today we have the parable of the straying sheep that is the parable of the thoughtless those who yield to the flock instinct and who get their heads down into the lush grass and nibble themselves away into danger which they do not recognize themselves. They are the victims of their own ignorance but they are all together unaware of their true worth as evidenced by the fact that the shepherd had to search them out and moreover these sheep that were lost they are for the most part victims of somebodies carelessness somebody left a broken hedge unmended or left a gate open and out into the perilous highway have gone the sheep.

And so these Lost Sheep all around us remember this morning are not entirely to blame for their own condition. Now I mean they are not to blame for the condition of the fact that they have not always known where to go to get relief from a lost condition into which they were born. The blame must often be traced back to those of us who have left the gap open and the hedge and we realize that with a sheep nature they have done the rest. They've wandered off these lost sheep or lost not only because they were born in sin not only because they commit sin but because they also have a deep seated loss of a sense of direction they cannot find their way back.

They are not in themselves vicious sheep is the least vicious of any animal living and yet they wonder and a vicious circle every circuit of which is simply increasing the hopelessness of their own condition they cannot get back of themselves they want nothing but sweet pasture they are blind to every other consideration and they are moreover extremely shy. When you try to approach them and that's the way a like of all sheep and of some men that are lost. What are the like these who when asked where are you going. They say nowhere in particular.

They are simply aimless thoughtless careless people going nowhere in particular trying to have a good time trying to make a decent legitimate living and then laying themselves down to rest and they wander without any well-defined purpose in life and they just meander carelessly and casually through life. Now of such are often young people and older people who have not yet come into contact with Jesus Christ.

These people are to be found everywhere in society and homes and schools and colleges churches and in the worlds idly busy crowds on every side they are in the main heedless or restless thoughtlessly keeping up with a crowd and bleating like sheep in unison with its silly catch phrases and every generation. These people of course are mistaken and their self-opinionated and pathetically self-satisfied but oh my friend listen to me this morning. They are of tremendous worth to the one who is the shepherd of the sheep the Lord Jesus Christ and oh this morning Christian.

If you and I were only living in true fellowship with him sharing his aims filled with His Spirit we should recognize in these men and women all around us their splendid potentialities and we

would look for them prayerfully patiently lovingly and with the wisdom that certainly does come down from above for nothing but the shorn yearning of the shepherd heart expressed in the kindness and sympathy of Jesus will ever win that cloth class of lost men and women. You recollect yourself how Jesus himself saw the multitudes as he said. As sheep that did not have a shepherd.

Not deliberately and strenuously evil but spiritually indifferent needing the control of wise leadership but never hopeless. And again I say this morning nothing but the yearning of the shepherd heart of Christ which means that Christ is working his will through you and through me in reaching these people will ever bring them to the foot of the cross.

But I do pray that you and I may well realize that it will win them. We have given our young people laws enough. God Himself knows. But have we ever sought to inspire them with the enthusiasm for Christ. We have often deplored even publicly their restlessness. But oh I wonder my friend if you and I have ever tried to win them to Christ then there is the second group of lost ones as recorded for us here and Luke Chapter 15. And I'm simply using it in the expression of being lost because it illustrates my evangelistic thought this morning and yet I am among those people who have not always looked upon the parable of the prodigal son as a son who in actuality was lost at all because he was in the family and he came back to the family that he had only left for a little while.

But to illustrate my message I'm using these parables nevertheless now as I said there is a second group of lost people. They are not a bit like sheep. Not alert restless and almost perpetual motion but they are rather insensible to their lost condition as a coin that has fallen out of a woman's hand and rolled under a bureau. The lost coin like the lost sheep in Luke Chapter 15 is lost by somebody sheer carelessness indeed and whatever be the first cause it is in consequence out of right relationship with life and with those economic forces which give to money their own value.

But there are men who are exactly like coins that are out of circulation. They are making no contribution to life for they are out of true relationship with God and with his will for which they were created. They are good enough when they are found and put into circulation. The medal is good. The images there. The superscription has not been defaced from the coin. They represent the ordinary people as like to each other as any coin is like to another who have gotten the wrong ideas of life who are selfish and narrow and self-contained and self-content.

They are not doing harm to anyone. At any rate. Not wittingly but they are altogether unaware that they were created for a life of fellowship with all of God's other children and that they are denying the very reason for which they have existence. They have great immeasurable potentialities for good and for evil. And as money indeed always has one it is joined up together with all of the great social forces of the world and in Luke chapter fifteen you have the story of the coin that the woman dropped and lost and there are many people just like that coin.

These people are out of right relationship with God and life and they need conviction of the sin of withholding life from the service of Christ whose image they bear. They need to be convicted of the sin of living a life that is not increasing its dimensions that is gaining nothing that is accomplishing nothing in this old world. They are apt to rely upon the fact that they are not influencing anybody for evil that they are just living their own individual lives that their sins its sins they do have are not social sins they say and we're not injuring anyone else.

Well my friend we ministers know the answer to this description. Men who will only be saved if new thoughts of God's purpose and of life's value one of ultimate spiritual moralities can ever be given to these people. Yes they are like the coin that was lost. They are out of circulation. They are not being touched with a message and someone is to blame if the coins are lost. And my friend those of us who humbly believe that the spirit of Christ has come into possesses must go out to win these people and find them no matter what the cost may be. Yes. The sheep that was lost the coin that was lost both of them were found and returned and you and I can be in the service of Christ.

Our Father we thank thee this morning for thy grace for thy mercy and peace. For we pray it in Jesus name amen.

Announcer:

This is Bible institute hour Los Angeles 17 California. Just a moment. I'd like to ask you a rather personal question when you hear a radio broadcast or when you hear a preacher mentioned finances is your feeling oh there they go asking for money again. I know I too have felt that way

frequently and if we were asking for money for ourselves or for someone of our staff members I could never come on the air and tell you the needs of this broadcast. However through the past five years our Lord has privileged us to proclaim to the people here in the western part of our country the truths of God's word the entire staff joins with me right at this time thanking each and every one of you who has had a share large or small and making all of this possible through the past five years nearly 800 programs have been broadcast eight hundred programs by faith purchased on your station at regular commercial rates.

We have no wealthy people behind us. You're our sponsor and most of the gifts that we receive ranged in a few dollars a month. Our good God is to supply an almost insurmountable amount. Now we trust that if you haven't become a partner with us this month that you'll do so today. We have said that this is a work of faith and we remind you as did Paul of the needs and then leave the burdening with God. The programs that blessed your heart. If you'd like to witness through us to your neighbors and other friends in your community help to give the winds a mighty voice. Each dollar you invest helps us reach six thousand. That's why we say that little is much when God is in it.

[Music Begins]

Choir:

Goodbye our God is watching o'er you. Goodbye his mercy goes before you.

Announcer:

Anderson: Verse by Verse: Luke 15:3

Until Wednesday then once again we'll be transcribing your way. Don't be one who fiddles while sin burns.

Choir:

Now goodbye may God bless you. Goodbye our God is watching o'er you. Goodbye his mercy goes before you. Goodbye and we'll be praying for you. Now goodbye may God bless you.

[Instrumental Continues]

[Music Ends]

Announcer:

Mid-year inventory.

[Background Music Begins]

Announcer:

We want them out in homes of those who want to know more of God's Precious word and this is the only time they'll be offered at this period. The Heaven book the Panel discussion book the home study books on psalms and on Proverbs the book explaining why we worship on Sunday and lastly the Alka prayer picture they're free for the asking. Maybe that you'd like them all. That's perfectly all right. Don't hesitate to ask for them they are free. We never put a price tag on our gifts.

Anderson: Verse by Verse: Luke 15:3

If you can't send a penny you're just as welcome to have them. But I'm sure you well realize that these broadcasts are expensive to carry on. Yet if men and women can be reached for Christ as they are then the cost is well worth it. A dollar of your investments for Christ reaches more than six thousand people and that's why we say that no gift is too small for a little as much when God is in it. This has been the difficult summer period. That's all we're going to say we're just trusting that God will burden your heart to write Today.

Choir:

Goodbye our God is watching o'er you. Goodbye his mercy goes before you.

Announcer:

Until Wednesday then when once again we'll be transcribing your way remember there are no disappointments to those whose wills are buried in the will of God.

Choir:

Now goodbye may God bless you. Goodbye our God is watching o'er you. Goodbye his mercy goes before you. Goodbye and we'll be praying for you. Now goodbye may God bless you.

[Instrumental Continues]

[Music Ends]