

Trinity III

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[0 : 00] If there is one thing that I would like for us all to remember from this morning's sermon, just one thing, it is that if we ever doubt our Lord's love for the lost, it would be a good idea for us all to turn again and read Luke chapter 15.

For in Luke chapter 15 our Lord gives us three distinct parables which each teach us pretty much the same lesson. Now two of these parables we have already heard that in this morning's gospel.

And they are the parable of the lost sheep and the parable of the lost coin. But the third of these parables, the parable of the lost son, or the parable of the lost and part of his son, is simply all the rest of Luke chapter 15, the part which we did not read.

But again, each one of these parables basically teaches us the same lesson. For in each one of these parables somebody loses something or someone.

A sheep, a coin, or a son. And when that something or someone is finally found, all three parables basically end the same way.

[1 : 23] They all end in joy. For example, the parable of the lost sheep in Luke chapter 15 ends with the shepherd returning home in order to call all of his friends and neighbors over to his house so that they might rejoice with him.

For he has found his sheep which was lost. And the parable of the lost coin, which is also found in Luke chapter 15, basically ends the same way.

The woman calls her friends and neighbors over to her house in order to rejoice with her because she has found but one coin which was lost. And after the lost or prodigal son returns to his father's house at the very end of Luke chapter 15, the prodigal son's father tells the prodigal son's brother, Rejoice with me and be glad.

For your brother was dead and is alive again. He was lost and now he is found. So all three end in great, great joy.

And I think it's safe to say that if our Lord is teaching us the same lesson over and over and over again, three times in a row, that this is a lesson our Lord probably wants us to learn and to learn very well.

[2 : 48] And that lesson is this, that whenever a child of God abandons the faith, leaves the flock, or gets lost and caught up in all the trials and temptations of this life, and stumbles, only to realize his or her mistake, and to repent, to return, that this is neither the time to grumble and complain like the scribes and Pharisees did, whenever they saw our Lord hanging out with tax collectors and sinners, nor is this the time to play hypocrite by pointing the finger and calling someone else an even worse hypocrite.

No. Instead, whenever somebody stumbles or hares, only to repent and to return, this is a time to rejoice, a time to celebrate, a time to be glad.

Whereas Jesus tells us this morning, there is more joy in heaven over just one sinner who repents than over 99 just persons who need no repentance.

How about instead of just continuing to talk about all of these things, how about we just stop talking and actually just start doing them? How about by God's grace, we all just start living the reality of the parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son today, this very hour.

For very soon you shall hear your priests say, ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins and are in love and charity with your neighbors and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God and walking henceforth in His holy ways, draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament to your comfort.

[4 : 53] In other words, repent and rejoice. Rejoice just as all those people at the end of each one of those parables in Luke chapter 15 rejoice.

Rejoice alongside friends and neighbors. Rejoice in the presence of angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. Rejoice now inside the Lord's house, inside the good shepherd's home.

For today, this very hour, that which was lost has been found, and that which was dead in sin has been restored to life again.

In order to serve and be served. In order to forgive and be forgiven. As full-fledged and active members of the kingdom of God.

For this morning, we all have a fresh start, a clean slate, by the grace of our good shepherd. in order to extend and defend his kingdom.

[6 : 14] Therefore, if any of us ever doubt our Lord's love for the lost, let us turn again to Luke chapter 15. And let us recall all the reality of the grace that we have received this day.

Grace which we have received in joy. grace which we have received in the presence of friends, neighbors, angels, archangels, and all of the country of heaven. Grace which we receive inside the Lord's house.

And from his most holy altar. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.