

L 8 ... Making Jesus Rejoice

[Luke 15:1-7](#)

Now we come to one of the most important components of kingdom living. What comes to mind when you think about God? Do you picture a harsh judge, anxiously waiting in heaven to punish anyone who does something wrong? Do you think of a grumpy, old “killjoy”? Nothing influences our lives like what enters our minds when we think about God. More than anything else, what you believe God to be like determines the kind of Christian you are.

One of the best descriptions of God in the Bible is in [Psalm 103:8](#). Write it below:

To illustrate the truth of that verse Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep. This parable will cause us to have the right thoughts about God and make Jesus rejoice. There are at least **two** requirements.

Remember Why Jesus Came (15:1-4)

Jesus tells this parable because *publicans and sinners* were coming to hear Him teach ([15:1](#)). Jesus always attracts the “down and out” and the outcasts. The *publicans* were among the most despicable people to the Jews. They were hated because they were Jews who collected taxes for the Roman government to finance the oppression of Israel. To cause even more hatred, they collected more taxes than the government required and pocketed the excess. The *sinner*s were probably people known for lifestyles of sin and disregarding the Law of Moses.

The Pharisees and scribes complain that Jesus associates with these sinful people and even *eateth with them* ([15:2](#)). The *Pharisees* were a religious political party who lived by the letter of Mosaic Law, as interpreted by the *scribes*. The *scribes* were respected, authoritative teachers of the Law of Moses. We read about the most famous scribe in the Bible when *Artaxerxes* (art-uh-zerk´-sees-), king of Persia, writes a letter.

How does the introduction of that letter begin in [Ezra 7:12b-c](#)?

The *Pharisees and scribes* were the most respected Jews, but they had the wrong view of God. By criticizing Jesus, they gave Him His greatest compliment and the Gospel in a nutshell: *This man receiveth sinners* ([15:2b](#)).

The religious leaders of Jesus’ day didn’t understand Him because they had the wrong concept of God. Therefore, in response to the criticism, Jesus tells a parable. Since sheep herding was one of the most common occupations in the Holy Land, Jesus asks a question anyone could answer.

He asks, if a man has a *hundred sheep* and one of them is lost, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine to go and search until he finds the one that is lost ([15:4](#))? Jesus knew everyone in His audience would agree the shepherd would search until he found the wayward lamb.

The emphasis of this parable is not the lost sheep; it is the seeking shepherd. In its essence, the Gospel is the Shepherd seeking lost sheep. A better title for this parable would be "The Seeking Shepherd."

Therefore, reaching lost people is to be the top priority of kingdom living. There are more lost people in the world today than when Jesus died on the cross. The main reason is we have forgotten why Jesus came.

However, Jesus tells us very clearly in [Luke 19:10](#). Explain below:

To make the Lord rejoice, **remember why Jesus came** and...

Reflect On Why Jesus Wants You to Remain (15:5-7)

When we think of God, we should think of the seeking Shepherd and His reaction when a lost person is found or saved. In Jesus' parable, when the shepherd finds the lost sheep, he lays it on his shoulders, *rejoicing* ([15:5](#)). He doesn't beat or drag the sheep back to the flock. He lovingly puts it on his shoulders and carries it back to the flock. When the shepherd arrives home, he calls together his friends and neighbors.

What does he say to them ([15:6](#))?

Jesus pictures a person in this world without God as *lost*. What does that mean?

The word translated **lost** (**apolōlos**, **uh-pol'-oh-los**) means "to perish" or "to destroy." This means a person without Christ will perish and be destroyed.

Earlier, Jesus sent out seventy-two of His followers in thirty-six teams, to reach the multitudes. He said to them, *The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few* ([Lk 10:2a](#)). Then, Jesus says something critically important in the rest of that verse.

What does He say ([10:2b](#))?

Before Jesus sends them out, He tells them to pray for the *harvest*. As someone has said, "The reason we don't talk to our friends about the Lord is we don't talk to the Lord about our friends." Also, we should not pray for our friends to be saved unless we are willing to be part of the answer—to put "feet" to our prayers.

When the seventy-two return to celebrate their victories from praying and then harvesting souls, the response of Jesus is very important.

What does He do ([10:21a](#))?

This is the only time in the Bible that Jesus is recorded as rejoicing. **Therefore, what makes Jesus rejoice? When we faithfully pray for and seek to win the lost.**

Jesus explains the purpose of this parable: *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* ([15:7](#)).

While there is certainly *joy* over those already in the kingdom, there is more *joy* for each *lost* person who comes to Christ.

A major part of kingdom living is doing what makes our Lord rejoice. What can you do this week to make Jesus rejoice? Pray for and seek lost sheep! Don't be condescending by saying, "turn or burn" or "die and fry." Just be their friend; then—and not before—share the Gospel with them or invite them to Bible study or worship services to hear God's powerful, life-changing Word.

After thirty plus years as a pastor, I have learned I can't change anyone, not even my wife or children. But the Word of God can. If you persuade your lost relatives, friends, neighbors, and associates to sit under the teaching and preaching of God's Word, **the Lord will do the rest.** God promises His Word will not return *void* ([Isa. 55:11a-b](#)).

What does God promise in the remainder of that verse?

To reach the lost, we must encourage them to come and hear God's Word. Then, the Holy Spirit will draw them to Christ. The problem isn't the message, it's the messengers.

LifeWay Research and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention did a study of unchurched people. They found that sixty-three percent of unchurched people would respond positively to an invitation from a friend or neighbor to attend church services.

This means about two-thirds of the people you know who don't attend church would come, if you invite them in the right way. The right way is laying the groundwork first. Share with them how important and helpful your church is to you and your family. Plant seeds before you try to harvest the fruit.

Why does Jesus want us to remain on earth after we are saved? Why doesn't He just take us on to heaven? There are only two things you can't do in heaven that you can do here on earth. What are they?

One is sin! The other is win lost people.

After we are saved, which of these two things do you think God leaves us on this earth to do?

How does Jesus answer that question in [Mark 16:15](#)?

To make Jesus rejoice,

REMEMBER WHY JESUS CAME AND

REFLECT ON WHY JESUS WANTS YOU TO REMAIN.