

WHAT THE HEART OF GOD IS REALLY LIKE

Luke 15:1-32

Introduction: Some may remember the television commercials where someone states in a loud, firm voice, "The Army (Marines) are looking for a FEW good men..." That sounds a bit selective and not everyone need to apply. Thankfully salvation is not a matter of certain people being already chosen to be saved and the rest having no chance and need "not apply."

God actually weeps over those who refuse to believe in His Son, Jesus, and celebrates whenever someone turns to Jesus and is saved. God is constantly pursuing the lost, not wanting anybody to perish. Jesus gives many parables, stories, which reveal the real heart of God, here are three of them.

I. THE HUNDRED SHEEP (*vv 3-7*)

1. To look for a single, lost sheep was EXPECTED behavior of a good shepherd.
2. To look for a single, lost sheep was also an ACT OF LOVE, for the shepherd knew all about every single one of his flock.
3. All his friends knew of the lost sheep, therefore they were the first ones he told when he found the lost sheep, and they also, being shepherds, rejoiced with him.
4. God not only records the name of every single believer in Jesus in His Lamb's Book of Life upon that person's belief, but He has actually been seeking every lost person, trying to bring every single one into His fold.
5. Upon a person's salvation, belief in Jesus Christ, ALL of God's friends in Heaven rejoice with Him.

II. THE TEN COINS (*vv8-10*)

1. The lost coin was part of this woman's dowry, a part of her headband, therefore very important to her, being a prospective bride.
2. Her house was dark, had dirt and straw floors, therefore making the search for the lost coin extremely difficult.
3. Her friends had been told of her loss and upon her finding the lost coin, they rejoiced with her for they also knew what value the coin had.
4. God is deeply touched when one He has been seeking for so long is saved, found.
5. Uncontained joy, pure bliss, unrestrained celebration in heaven is the result of a single sinner coming to Jesus for salvation. The lost one (coin) has been found and now is safe.

III. THE TWO SONS (vv11-32)

1. (vv11-24): One of the two sons displayed a contemptible behavior of being a spoiled, selfish son.
2. This son did his own thing and when his money ran out, so did the fun. He finally came to his senses, but only when there was nothing else left, nowhere else to go.
3. Sorrow led to his repentance, his sense of need and he finally admitted he had been wrong. He wanted to ask his father for forgiveness, to cast himself upon the mercy of his father and was willing to even accept the position of a hired servant.
4. Here is a complete turn-around, an unconditional surrender, a complete submission to his father. He is now a totally different son.
5. Upon returning home, he found that his father had been looking for him ever since he had left.
6. Before this son could even hardly get a word out, his father quickly spoke words that told him that he had already been forgiven and he had been restored.
7. (vv 23-32): The older brother was furious, jealous, without care or compassion. It was just not right for his father to accept and receive back and welcome such a rebellious and wayward son.
8. This angry brother, also was lost, but could not see that he was wrong. He felt that he deserved more and his wayward brother deserved nothing. He could not see that his attitude was wrong for after all, he had never left, he had been there all the while, working.

CONCLUSION:

1. God longs for the lost to be saved and seeks each and every one who is lost.
2. All heaven rejoices whenever a single person is found, saved, brought "home."
3. Often the most unlikely sinners are quicker to understand their lostness and turn to Jesus than "religious" sinners.
4. God seeks all who are lost:
 - those who acknowledge their sin and turn from it will find God's open arms, welcoming them into His fold, His family.
 - those who refuse to acknowledge their sins and turn from them will find themselves excluded from God's fold, His family at judgment time.
5. Now is the time to turn to the God who has His arms open to YOU.