

Luke Chapter 15 v 1 - 10

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[0 : 00] Morning. Welcome. Good to see you all. Good to see some folk visiting us from various parts of the country and around and about.

We do welcome you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we're here to join with God's people in worshipping our Saviour.

This is what we read in Psalm 89. I will sing of the Lord's great love forever. With my mouth I will make known your faithfulness through all generations.

I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself. We're here to do just that, to sing of the Lord's great faithfulness to us as a local church, but also especially his faithfulness to us and his love to us as individual believers.

And our first hymn is that wonderful old hymn, I will sing the wondrous story of the Christ who died for me. Let us stand and sing. 707. I will sing the wondrous story. 707.

[1 : 14] For each one of us who's put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a story.

Not a story which is a fable or a myth or made up, but a living and relevant history, as it were, of what God has done for us in our lives. So let's come and give him thanks and praise for his goodness to us as we pray together.

Let us all pray. Father in heaven, we come to you once more as those who have experienced your faithfulness and love in our lives personally.

We thank you that though your word is wonderful and marvelous and tells us of what you've done in the lives of others, how throughout history you have blessed and saved and rescued and helped and worked through this world and in the lives of so many different people.

We thank you, O Lord, that it is in our lives and in our experience that you have worked. And that's what makes the real difference.

[2 : 29] We don't just read about you, Lord. We know you when we have come to know you through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Not just know about you, not just know about what you do or what you're like or what you've planned, but know you personally.

So we can call you our Father. We can call you our friend, our Savior, my Lord, my God. And we thank you that again, that through this week you have shown yourself to be faithful and good. You've shown yourself to be loving and gracious. And though, Lord, we may have been through difficulties this week and trials and struggles, yet, O Lord, we thank you that you've never left us nor forsaken us or given up on us or forgotten us.

And the very fact that we're here this Sunday morning in this place able to worship and sing your praises is evidence that you are a God who provides our needs, a God who never lets us go, a God who is there for us in every circumstance and situation.

But, O Lord, we thank you that the greatest and most wonderful experience that we have of you is not just your providing for our needs or giving to us breath day by day, but, Lord, the forgiveness of sins.

[3 : 50] That's the most wonderful thing that we know and have felt and continue to feel. That, Lord, though we are sinners and though we've broken your commandments and though we get it wrong, Lord, you still forgive us.

You still are gracious and patient with us. Lord, because of what Jesus accomplished on our behalf at the cross. Because Jesus paid the debt in full, not just for our past sins, but for all our sins, for all life long.

We thank you that through him, through faith in him, through repentance, Lord, we can know and enjoy the lifting of that weight of guilt and shame.

And we can know the fullness of the joy of life with God now and forevermore. We pray, O Lord, that as we come this morning, our hearts again may be filled with that sense of wonder and joy that we may long again to sing, not just to sing, but to live out the glory and praises of our God. That we may, O Lord, be those who know what God has done for us and that we tell the story. We tell the story to the men and women of our land, of our town, of our nation, who have not known that experience, who are so far from you.

[5 : 13] O Lord, we pray that our testimony in our lives may speak in such a way that others may be drawn to seek after the living God and find their peace and joy in him.

For we ask these things now in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. Turn together in our Bibles to our reading this morning from the Gospel of Luke and chapter 15.

Luke chapter 15, and that is page 1048. If you have one of the red church Bibles, page 1048.

Luke 15, and we're going to read the first 10 verses. Luke 15, beginning at verse 1.

Now, the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering round to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.

[6 : 27] Then Jesus told them this parable. Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

When he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, Rejoice with me.

I have found my lost sheep. I tell you that in the same way, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent.

Or, suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?

And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, Rejoice with me. I have found my lost coin. In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

[7 : 41] Now, great, great, great, great words and truths that we can sing and assure ourselves with. Well, hopefully you've got a Bible to hand.

If you haven't, we'll make sure you get one. And we're going to read, go back to Luke and chapter 15. And to these two very well-known parables of Jesus.

That he speaks and declares to a certain group of people that we're going to think about this morning. I'm sure that all of you have been aware of the very terrible illness that has been causing so many deaths, particularly in China, but in other parts of the world as well.

And it's coronavirus. The last, as it were, tally, sadly, of people who died has been over 1,600 people.

Mainly, again, as I say, in China. It's only really, in one sense, a very bad cold or flu. And thankfully, many thousands of people have had it and recovered and with no real ill effects.

[8 : 55] But like cold and flu and these other illnesses, it is spread through coughing or sneezing. And from person to person.

And folk, as you know, have traveled and taken the illness with them and so on. And that's really how most diseases spread, aren't they? Most illnesses are spread through contact, personal contact, through germs that we know about now that contaminate us traveling through the air or through touch or whatever it may be.

Now, there is an even more terrible disease, an even more awful illness, which cannot be passed from person to person.

And that terrible disease is sin. And the sad thing is that there were some people who did believe that they could catch sin, as it were, from contact with or association with other people.

And those people who thought that were here in chapter 15, verse 2. They're the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. They were the ultra-religious people of Jesus' day.

[10 : 01] They were the very strict people who sought in every way to keep God's law and, in fact, added to God's laws all sorts of traditions and so on. And they had this belief that a good person like them, a good law-abiding Jew like them, should steer clear of anybody who had any immorality about them, anybody who lived their life wrongly and against God's law or broke God's law because they were afraid that they might be contaminated by these people.

Not contaminated with leprosy or some other disease or contaminated with fleas, but contaminated with their sin. And so these Pharisees, these religious leaders, were very, very careful about who they mixed with.

And, in fact, they were so careful, they were so concerned about being contaminated with people's sin that whenever they went out of their house and went to the shops or wherever they went, as soon as they came back home, they washed their hands.

Mark tells us about it in his gospel when, in a similar situation, we're told the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders.

When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash, and they observe many other traditions, such as washing cups, pitchers, and kettles. Now, it wasn't that these people were ultra-hygienic.

[11 : 34] It wasn't that they had learned about germs and disease, and so they washed. All they did was actually have water poured on their hands. There was no soap or anything like that. And it wasn't that they had OCD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, that whenever they touched something, they had to wipe or cleanse their hands.

It was because they thought that they might contact or pick up sin. They might pick up other people's sin and therefore become, in their eyes, unclean before God.

So every time they came in, water would be poured, and they'd avoid anybody who could possibly contaminate them. Now, because the Pharisees had this sort of way of looking at the world and other people, they were really puzzled by Jesus.

They couldn't get their heads around the way that Jesus lived and the way that Jesus related to people. It was completely opposed to their view of people and their view of God.

And particularly here, as we read in chapter 15, verse 1, the fact that Jesus spent time with people who were openly sinful and these tax collectors, and we'll come back to who they are in a minute, it really baffled them.

[12 : 45] And in fact, it annoyed them so much that we're told there they muttered, this man welcomes and eats with sinners. To them, you see, Jesus' actions showed that he approved of sin, that he approved of wickedness.

And to the Pharisees, Jesus was guilty of sin by associating with these people. This was always a problem to the Pharisees. It crops up in several different places.

Earlier in Luke in chapter 5, a similar situation. And in fact, the Pharisees go to the disciples and say, what are you doing eating with sinners and tax collectors? To sit down and eat with somebody was to accept somebody as an equal, was to say that I am one with you.

Not just talking to them, but actually receiving them into your home or sitting down and eating with them. And so, in response to the Pharisees and the religious leaders, in response to their mutterings about Jesus, he tells them three parables.

And it's directed especially to them. Do you notice there in verse 3, then Jesus told them. It's not the crowd, not the sinners necessarily, that he's aiming these parables at, though they would have been there and heard them, particularly the religious leaders.

[14 : 04] He wants to correct their understanding and their thinking about God and about sin. And so these three stories are specifically aimed to answer the question, why does Jesus welcome and eat with sinners?

We're going to look at the first two parables, which we read just a little while ago this morning, and then, God willing, in a fortnight, we'll look at the better-known parable, the most-known parable, which we call the prodigal son in a fortnight, I hope.

So why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and sinners? Well, who are tax collectors and sinners? We need to establish who they are, don't we, before we think of that.

Well, in Jesus' society, tax collectors were the most hated people. They were Jews who worked for the Roman authorities, and the Roman authorities ruled the country.

They ruled by having soldiers and troops on the streets. They were an occupying force, an enemy force against the people. And so the tax collectors were traitors in the eyes of the Jewish people, working for those who were their enemies.

[15 : 14] But, as well as that, the tax collectors were always on the fiddle. They were always bribing people, taking backhanders, skimming the cream, as it were, off the top.

They took the taxes, and a little bit more for themselves. So they were really rotten to the core. They stole, as well as they were treacherous. And they were reviled and hated.

They had no friends, apart from their own tax-collecting group, as it were. What about sinners?

Well, the tax collectors were part of that. But sinners to the Jews was anybody who'd made a mess of their life.

Anybody who'd fallen upon hard times, in the sense of they'd fallen into sin. They'd broken a commandment. They were living a sinful lifestyle, or they were employed in a way which the Pharisees considered to be sinful.

These people were outsiders of society. They were considered to be scum, unimportant, didn't matter, didn't matter and were beyond any help.

[16:17] The Pharisees could do nothing for and would have nothing to do with these sort of people. They were worthless in their eyes. And so Jesus, we're told, gathers with them, meets with them, eats with them, welcomes them.

Why's that? Why did he do that? And what is it he's teaching the Pharisees here? And what is it he's teaching us about how God views people and how God views people that perhaps we consider to be unimportant or worthless?

The first thing that's very simply clear here is this, that every person is valuable to God. Every person is valuable to God.

The lost sheep and the lost corn are obviously of great value to their owners. The shepherd. It wasn't like he said, well, I can't be bothered. It's a worthless sheep.

I don't want that. I won't be bothered to go after it. The fact that it was worth something and of value to the shepherd is why he went to look for it. And naturally with the woman as well. It wasn't that she had so many thousands and thousands of silver coins.

[17:28] She only had these ten and she lost one. It was of great value to her. And so she goes and searches for it. We can understand that a little bit, can't we?

If you walk along the street and you drop a penny, okay, half the time people don't bother picking them up. What's the point of picking up a penny? It's worthless, really. You can't even buy a sweet nowadays for a penny, can you?

In my day, you could get half any sweets, couldn't you? Anyway, although that's a long time ago.

But imagine that you'd lost a gold bracelet. Then, of course, that is something valuable, isn't it?

Then you would make a search for it. Then you would be concerned about it. You'd be looking down the side of the settee and you'd be looking under the bed everywhere until you found it because it was valuable.

Well, Jesus is talking here not about sheep and coins but about people. People who are valuable.

Pharisees did not consider these people, these outsiders, these sinners, these who'd made a mess of their lives, those who were, they viewed far from God, they did not consider these people of any value to God and not to them either.

[18:39] Sadly, even in our own present day, we sometimes face, place very little value on human life. We may even place little value upon our own lives.

In our society today, an unborn child's life has almost no value to many. And there are many who are pressing for the law to be changed because they believe that someone who is terminally ill or frail or extremely elderly no longer has value in their life.

We may not agree with that and hopefully we don't agree with that and we count those people as being valuable but if we're honest, all of us act towards other people and we value them according to how we perceive them.

So somebody who may be a member of parliament or somebody who may be very rich or a businessman or somebody like that who seems to have great influence, we may show greater respect to and consider of more value to than somebody perhaps who's homeless, somebody who's in prison.

Whether we like it or not, we find ourselves being fashioned into this way of thinking of valuing people with different values.

[19:59] The reality is this though, God does not view people as having differing values. God doesn't look upon people in the way that we do or that others do.

He considers all people as having equal value to each other and equal value to Him. Throughout the Bible we get this sense, this reality and Paul talks about it in Romans chapter 2.

God does not show favoritism. He does not look at one person and say that person is more valuable than that one or that one's, in my eyes, better and worth more than that one. Every person, whatever their age, whatever their possessions, whatever their intelligence, whatever their ability, whatever their color, whatever their language, whatever their gender, is valuable to God because every single one of us was made in God's image.

Genesis chapter 1, right at the very start of creation, we're told this wonderful truth. God created mankind in His own image. In the image of God, He created them.

[21 : 07] Male and female, He created them. God is not a sexist or a racist. God is not in any way an ist of any kind. He treats all people and values every person as being valuable to Him because we have been made by Him.

From the very youngest newborn child to the very oldest person, you are God's most wonderful creation. You were made by God to display His glory and His beauty and every life has that within them.

You are not an animal that is evolved or a creature. You bear God's image. You are an immortal soul and you are more valuable to God than anything else in the whole universe.

Do you believe that? Not only about others but about yourself. And if you believe that, is that how you live? Is that how you treat others?

Is that how you react to others? Do you recognize the importance of seeing that we are created in God's image? Why is it that human life is so cheap?

[22 : 21] Is it perhaps to do with the fact that human life is not considered anymore to be divinely given but is merely a project of evolution?

If we are nothing more than evolved apes, then we have no more right or value than an ape. And so it goes on. But we are, dear friends, the creation of God.

And so the first thing here that Jesus needs to tell these Pharisees and us is every single person is of value to God and of equal value. But the next thing we see as well in this parable is this.

Every single person is worth finding. Every single person is worth finding. And so we read there in verse 4, suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them.

Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

And again, verse 8, suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one.

[23 : 20] Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully till she finds it? Every person is worth finding. Notice that both the sheep and the coin become lost.

They are separated from their owners. That's why the shepherd and the woman will stop at nothing to give their time and their energy to find what they've lost.

It's clear that they're both devoted to this thing that they've lost. And Jesus gives a little bit of an elaboration, doesn't he, to the story.

He talks about how the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine, the rest of the flock in the open country, he doesn't leave them to look, he leaves them in safety, okay, they're in safety, but he goes off into the open country, he goes off to find this sheep wherever it's gone.

And he hasn't got a quad bike, he hasn't got a Land Rover, he has to go on his feet. Would have taken him time, energy, perhaps in the dark, perhaps days even.

[24 : 22] But we're told then there's a sense there, until he finds it, he's searching and searching, he's giving his time, his energy. Because he must find it.

Likewise, the woman with her coin. She goes to some effort as well, doesn't she, to find this elusive and lost coin. She lights a lamp.

In those days, the houses wouldn't have had glass windows, let in the light, they may have had a slit, may not have had any windows at all, so it would have been dark. If you're searching in the house, even in daylight, you need a lamp.

And if you need a lamp, you need lamp oil, and lamp oil costs money, and so she's spending money, she's spending, spending her precious money to find this coin. And again, what we're told, she sweeps the house, she doesn't just sweep the kitchen, doesn't just sweep the bedroom, doesn't sweep the lounge, she goes to the whole house until she finds it.

It is valuable to her, it's worth finding. There is no one who God thinks, sorry, there is no one who God does not think is worth finding and restoring to himself.

[25 : 30] There is not one person who has ever lived that God says, I can't be bothered. They aren't worth anything to me. I can't be hassled. All people, you and me included, belong to God,

created by him as we've seen.

He made us, and we belong to him, but we've become separated from him. We are lost and far from God. That's not because God has been careless.

This shepherd wasn't a careless shepherd necessarily. This woman wasn't a frivolous and foolish woman. It's not because God has been careless with human beings, because he hasn't shown interest or concern with humanity that we are lost.

It's because we've chosen our own way. Joel mentioned this verse in Isaiah where we, as humanity, as people are described as sheep, we all, all like sheep have gone astray.

Each of us has turned to their own way. We are lost because in our hearts and our minds we have decided that we know better than God, that we can do it on our own, that we do not need him, and so on and so forth.

[26 : 41] But God values every single person so much that he has gone to huge expense, massive effort to find us.

And that, of course, is in the person of Jesus Christ. The person of Jesus Christ is the Son of God who himself gave up his home in heaven, left that place which was his rightful place from eternity past.

He came into this world in its brokenness and its lostness to search for and to find those that were lost. That was his mission in life.

That was his reason for living. That was everything that drove Jesus. He says later on in Luke 19 that he had come to seek and save the lost. He was born to find sinners.

He died so that they could be saved and returned into the possession and the care and the joy of God. Peter, writing to the Christians in his first letter, tells them about Jesus' suffering and death and the purpose for it.

[27 : 55] For Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous, that's the good, for the unrighteous, that's the sinful us, to bring you to God.

Why did Jesus die on the cross? To bring you to God, to find you, to rescue you, to save you because you were lost, to bring you back into his care.

And so, we see that every person is valuable to God. Every person is worth saving, finding. No matter who they are, no matter how rich they are, no matter how far they've sunk in life, no matter how far they've gone from God, no matter what their background, no matter what their sins.

Dear friends, we need to grasp that ourselves because again, something of that attitude that permeated the hearts of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law permeates our hearts as well without being specific.

We know of people who have carried out the most atrocious and awful crimes against children, against people in so many ways and we would say, well, that person is not worth saving.

[29 : 19] That person is beyond salvation. That person doesn't deserve to be found. And there within us lies that same spirit of the Pharisee that says, I am good.

Yes, God should save me and rescue me because within me I'm better than that person there. But we are totally wrong. Totally wrong.

You and I, dear friends, are sinners. We are those who have wandered and strayed and gone our own way and committed sins of thought and word and deed which we would be ashamed of if they were published on the wall behind me.

It is only by God's mercy that you and I have not sunk as deep as others have. The reason that you and I are not imprisoned for murder or whatever it may be is because God has mercifully spared us, not because we are better than they.

And if we cannot grasp that, then we have failed to grasp the very heart and mind of God and we have failed to understand our own sin and our own hearts.

[30 : 36] We are deceiving ourselves. But there is something else here, isn't there? And surely this must be the main theme, I think, of Jesus' parable. Not only that every person has value to God, not only that every person is worth finding by God, but also we find that every person found gives God joy.

every person who is found gives God joy. Do you notice how each one of them ends the story? The shepherd rejoiced with me, I found my lost sheep.

The woman calls her friends and neighbors and says, rejoice with me, I found my coin. And here's the main point of the story, isn't it? I tell you that in the same way, verses 7 and in verse 10, in the

same way, just as a shepherd would rejoice over his sheep found, just as a woman would rejoice over her lost coin found.

So in the same way in heaven, before the angels of heaven, there is rejoicing. But it's more, isn't it? It's much, much more. It's greater rejoicing.

Well, who is rejoicing? It's God who's rejoicing, isn't it? It doesn't say the angels are rejoicing. It says there's rejoicing in the presence of angels. There's rejoicing in heaven.

[31 : 51] And the person who inhabits heaven is the Father, the God of heaven. He's rejoicing with great rejoicing every time one of these people, one person who others have discounted, one person who is considered completely and utterly devoid of goodness, is restored to him and brought into his care once more.

God. That's what Jesus wants the Pharisees to get. God rejoices. God is happy. What delights God?

They thought that they made God happy, though they would never use the phrase or sense that God rejoices, but they hoped that by their law keeping and their rule keeping and their tradition keeping and by being the squeaky clean people they were and washing their hands when they came in and all these traditions and rituals that they did, they thought in some way they could keep God happy with them.

They could never comprehend the thought that God could rejoice and never comprehend the thought that God could rejoice over those sort of people who they looked down on and were considered to be utterly devoid of any hope.

But they were wrong, completely wrong. There is one thing which gives God the greatest joy and the greatest joy you and I can give God is when we are restored to him, when we are brought back into his fold, when we are restored to the one who created us and made us, when we who are lost are found.

[33 : 31] And notice, and I hope that we've noticed it because it comes out very clearly, doesn't it? The coin did not find its owner, the sheep did not find its shepherd, shepherd. Jesus, the good shepherd found the lost sheep.

Jesus, the careful, caring and considerate one, has come and found us. We don't find Jesus. We have to be careful with our language. I know that many of us talk about, oh, the day that I found Jesus, but actually that wasn't the case, was it? The day that Jesus found me. I'll sing the wondrous story.

The wondrous story is not that I found Jesus and I sought him and came back to him, but rather he sought me and found me. You see, even if we'd ever been even been bothered to think about God, and the majority of people, of course, do not think about getting right with God and sorting things out with God and never consider the fact that they're lost.

Even if we did think of that, there's nothing we could do to get back to God. God. The whole world is full of religions that are all about people trying to get back to God by praying five times a day, by visiting Mecca in their lifetime, by burning incense or washing in the Ganges or whatever it may be, and all the time they are as far from God as they ever were before.

[34 : 57] Even if we thought about getting right with God, we could not do anything, anything, to come back to him. Because we're totally, utterly, completely lost.

But Jesus came to find you. Jesus came to search for you. Jesus came to restore you.

And the wonderful thing is this, that when Jesus brings us back to God, something happens in us. There's something that we must do, something that must happen to us when Jesus finds us.

You see, Jesus does not automatically save and find everyone who is lost. It's not that somehow those people who are still lost without Christ, who are far from God, will automatically go to heaven, even though they're unaware of it, even though they've never trusted in him, or done anything, or experienced him.

Jesus tells us something must happen and does happen to everyone who meets with Jesus as he comes to find them, an experience which is one and the same, and it is repentance.

[36 : 18] Notice that. He doesn't say, I tell you that in the same way there'll be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who is found. And again, in verse 10, in the same way I tell you there's rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who is found, but no, over one sinner who repents.

More rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents. Every single lost sheep, every single lost person, when they encounter Jesus Christ, repents.

It happens. It must happen and it will happen. And if it doesn't happen, then that person has not been found. You see, because being found is much more than recognizing you're lost.

Being found is much more than realizing you've sinned. Being found is much more than simply saying, I need to get right with God, or whatever it may be. Being found is not simply believing that Jesus came and died for sinners.

Being found is an experience of being brought back to God, acknowledging that we have sinned and broken his commandments and that we have been found by Jesus.

[37 : 29] Repentance is recognizing that we are wicked people. Repentance is recognizing we are sinful people. Recognizing that we have gone the wrong way and been living our lives in opposition to God and to his commands and laws, and we now repent by turning around in our attitude back to God and turning around in our life to say, Lord, from this day on I will go your way rather than my way.

Without repentance we remain lost. Christ. And Jesus just a chapter or two earlier said this, unless you repent you too will all perish.

Unless you repent you too will all perish. The sad truth is this, that God counts your soul and you so valuable that he was willing to give his own son to die in your place.

The sad truth is that we do not count ourselves as valuable as God does. We don't recognize that our immortal soul will either spend eternity in heaven with God or eternity in hell without God in a lost state of total sorrow, grief and heartache.

And so Jesus came to the lost and this morning the same thing is happening here. Jesus has come through his word and he's calling you and speaking to you and saying, why will you stay lost?

[39 : 10] I'm here and you can know and experience what it is to be found and restored to the God who made you. Will you repent of your sin?

Will you recognize that you've gone the wrong way? Do you see that you need to be rescued and saved? I'm here to rescue and save you. I'm here, he says, amongst the lost sheep.

All you need do is repent. Not wash your hands. Not try to be a better person.

Not read your Bible more. repent. No. Repent. See the way you've gone. See the way that you now must go.

Let's pray together. Father in heaven, we are so amazed that you rejoice over us. We're so amazed that us sinners repenting and receiving your love and forgiveness gives you tremendous joy and rejoicing and we thank you that around the world even today we are sure that there are many who for the first time have been found who were lost previously.

[40 : 38] We're sure that around the world today there will be many who for the first time see just what terrible danger they are they were in and Lord they are found by you and brought into and restored to that life with God.

Lord we thank you that this that there is rejoicing in heaven today. But Lord you you know our prayer our prayer and longing is that even here in Whitby this morning there may be one or more who will cause you great joy as well.

That those who are lost here this morning would not continue to stay lost wandering in their own way but that rather you would come to them and speak with them that you would find them and give them repentance and faith that they may see oh Lord that you are such a wonderful God that their soul is worth much more than they could ever imagine and that you've paid the price to purchase them back to yourself.

Lord we thank you for what you've done for us each one of us who is a Christian this morning it's not because we found you or sought you but you came looking for us. We're so grateful and glad that you found us oh Lord and rescued us and brought us back to yourself.

We do pray Lord give to us that same sense of worth when we meet with others who have yet to know you. Give us that same concern for them that you have that same desire that they should be found.

[42 : 18] Deliver us from that pharisaical pride or self-righteousness or exaltedness that says that we are better than others. Let us always ever give you praise and thanks that you have kept us and delivered us from the most vile of sins but help us ever to see that in our hearts oh Lord we need your forgiveness and that you give it freely because you paid fully with the blood of your son.

Help us then we ask in Jesus name. Amen. To God who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his presence in glory without fault and with great joy to the only God our savior be glory majesty power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all of time today tomorrow and forevermore.
Amen.