

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Yeshua / Jesus

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Saviour of the Lost

Reading:
Luke Chapter 15

1. Suffering Loss

Sooner or later everyone suffers loss. No matter how much insurance you may hold, no matter how careful you may try to be, the time will come when you will suffer loss. Never a day passes but we hear of nations, communities and people suffering heavy losses. It's impossible to turn on the radio or T.V. these days without hearing or seeing those who are suffering loss. With every news broadcast the story is the same. Millions of people all over the world suffering loss on a daily basis. It's a common experience today. Good news is mostly drowned out by bad news. For example:

- **Floods** in Britain, the Netherlands and India
- **Fires** in Australia, California and the far east
- **Earthquakes** in Central Asia , Japan & the USA
- **Freezing** conditions in Canada, USA & Russia
- **Global warming**, the melting of the ice caps
- **Tornadoes** that wreck havoc to entire countries
- **Famine**
- **War:** international, regional, political and sectarian.
- **Pollution:** chemical, plastic and oil pollution
- Add to this dismal catalogue the ever increasing **rape of earth's natural resources:** entire forests being hacked down, mountain ranges being plundered for their metal deposits; virgin lands being ploughed up and left desolate and degraded. The list goes on and on and on.

2. Material Loss

Then there is loss in the business world. We read of large, well known companies, which have been going for scores of years, some over a hundred years, going bankrupt and closing down. What does business loss mean for all concerned? Business loss can mean loss of house, equipment, car, pension, friends etc.

3. Loss of Health

However, business and material losses, serious though they may be, are nothing compared to the loss of **physical**

health. Visit any hospital or old people's home and witness the loss of: Hearing / Eyesight / Hair / Teeth / Vitality / Memory etc. Yes, the loss of physical and mental health is an extremely heavy loss. But, bad though the loss of good health may be, there are other areas where loss can be even worse.

4. Emotional Loss

This is the **loss of loved ones**: people whose lives are bound up with others. This includes us all. Loved ones who part from us. When they die, or even when they leave to go far away, there is a great sense of loss; an empty space in the heart which no one but they can fill. To be sure we are left with photographs, or sound recordings of their voices; but the loss of a loved one is bitter. All of us have heard of people dying a few months after the loss of a loved one: a child, a spouse or a close friend. It is a common occurrence.

5. Spiritual Loss

Surprisingly, there is yet another loss that is even worse. It is the loss of **one's own spirituality**. Did you realise that you were a builder? Yes, we are all builders, builders of **character**. Character is the only thing we can take with us into the hereafter. Everything else, no matter how precious it may now appear to be, we must leave behind when we die. On the great **Day of Judgment**, it will be our characters alone that will be under divine scrutiny. Possessions, health, education, opportunities etc. are important; but in the **Judgement** they will only count as they relate to one's **character**.

Matthew 7: 24: *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man,, which built his house upon a rock:*
25: *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*
26: *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:*
27: *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”*

No doubt many who hear or read this sermon will, when looking back on their lives, despair at their failures. Their characters are marred by sin. They have squandered their opportunities, ruined their health, repeatedly sinned against their own consciences and are now burdened with guilt. **Some are lost and don't even know it!** They have not only lost their possessions: wealth, health, friends and loved ones; **but they themselves are lost!** Lost in despair, lost in a world which couldn't care less about them. They have even lost their self respect! Many are so desperate they take their own lives. Never a week passes but you hear of some poor lost soul committing suicide. It is a tragic waste of human life; which could have been prevented if the **Gospel** had been understood and believed.

6. What is the Gospel?

No doubt many of you have heard the word '**Gospel**.' But what does the word '**Gospel**' mean? And why is it so important that the lost know what the Gospel is. The Bible tells us that in God's sight all mankind have sinned and come short of the glory of God. This means that as far as the Almighty is concerned, there is not much difference between a person who considers himself a total failure and another who considers himself a total success. Were it not for the Gospel all of us would be bound for hell. But, thanks be to God and His Son **Yeshua The Messiah**, we are saved by grace and the preaching of the Everlasting Gospel. Here are some definitions concerning the Gospel. Remember them.

- The Gospel is the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.
He is the Gospel! Without him there would be no Gospel.
- The Gospel is the road map that tells the way to man's eternal home in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
- The Gospel is God at work: convicting, wooing, forgiving, cleansing, empowering, instructing and restoring fallen humanity to its rightful place in the Family of God.

7. Have You Accepted the Gospel?

For all its merits, and I have only listed a few, unless you have accepted the Gospel it will avail you nothing. There is no excuse for not accepting the Gospel. It will cost you nothing to believe the Gospel, to confess and forsake your sins and accept the Gospel. It is the greatest offer ever made. You receive so much for so little. But unless you accept the Gospel, all your imagined worth: wealth, possessions, intellect, education, fame and other achievements are valueless. They will count for nothing on the great **Day of Judgement**. Indeed, how you react to the Gospel is by far the greatest test of your life. It is the true measure of your soul. Think about it.

Accept the Gospel and all your sins and failures will be swept aside by the Almighty; and like a miserable beggar from off the streets you will be cleansed by His Holy Spirit, clothed with the righteousness of His Son and be granted a place in the Kingdom of God! No human mind can imagine the benefits that the acceptance of the Gospel brings.

Reject the Gospel and all your achievements, however good you may imagine them to be, will not outweigh your sins. And for those sins, the greatest sin being that you refused to believe and accept the Gospel, you will die.

8. Why the Saviour Came to Earth

Scripture tells us that the Saviour came to this earth to seek and save the lost. That was His prime objective.

“The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.”
(Luke 19: 10)

In (Luke chapter 15) we read three accounts concerning that which was lost.

9. The Lost Sheep

Luke 15: 1: *“Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.*
2: *And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, **This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.***
3: *And he spake this parable unto them, saying,*
4: *What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?*
5: *And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.*
6: *And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, **Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.***
7: *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.”*

The sheep was lost because it wandered away from the shepherd. It was so busy eating and thinking that the grass was greener in the next field or just around the corner that it completely lost its bearings. It followed its appetite and went astray. It had absolutely no idea how far it had wandered away from the shepherd till it was too late. Only then did it realise it was lost. Perhaps the sun had gone down and it could hear wolves howling in the gathering shadows.

Are you like that sheep, nibbling your way further and further away from God? Let me tell you that the good Shepherd is looking for you. And it will make His search a lot easier if you **cry out in prayerful repentance** and tell Him you want to be found. Believe me He wants you back in the fold; and He will rejoice with the heavenly host when you are there.

10. The Lost Coin

Luke 15: 8: *“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?
9: And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, **Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.**
10: **Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.**”*

Are you like that lost silver coin, a part of a set - the bridal set? The set is incomplete without you and, like that coin you could be lost 'in the house;' that is, in the church. You may sit in the church, sing the hymns and choruses and give the appearance of being a believer. But in fact you may be an unconverted soul, invaluable, part of the bridal set - but still lost!

Let me tell you that the good Lord is looking for you and will search every corner of His house (the church) till you are found. Yes He wants you back in the set; and He will not give up till you are found. There will be joy in heaven when the silver set is complete and every lost member of God's family is back in the set.

11. The Lost Boy

Luke 15: 11: *“And he said, A certain man had two sons:
12: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.
13: And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there **wasted his substance with riotous living.**
14: And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.
15: And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
16: And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.
17: And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
18: **I will arise and go to my father,** and will say unto him, Father, **I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,**
19: And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.
20: And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, **his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.**
21: And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.
22: But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:
23: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:
24: **For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.**”*

Unlike the sheep that had unthinkingly wandered away from the shepherd, or the coin that was somehow lost in the house, this boy (and it could just as well have been a girl) **deliberately left his home.** He wanted to get away; and the further away he could be, the better. He was tired of his father's discipline and the dull farm life. He wanted to see the **bright lights** and meet those whom he thought were **'switched on, cool and fun to be with.'**

You will notice that his father didn't go looking for him. Much as the old man cared for his lost son, and he certainly did because in this parable he represents Almighty God, the father didn't go into that far away country looking for his son. The son had to first:

- **Come to his Senses.** This means he had to realise what a fool he had been, how he had misjudged everything and that the 'cool, switched-on life' was anything but.
- **He had to recognise that he had sinned and needed repentance.**
- **And then he had to wend his way back home;** a way he knew only too well.

Are you like that boy? Do you have the courage to go back to your heavenly Father? Do you have the humility to admit that the bright lights weren't so bright after all and that you have **'wasted your substance on riotous living?'**

Let me tell you on the evidence of Holy Scripture that your Heavenly Father is desperately keen to see you back home. Not as a slave or servant, but as a **son** or **daughter**. **He will abundantly pardon your foolishness and sin however bad you may consider your character to be.** But you must come to your senses first, else you will spend the rest of your days in the pigsty of sin and depression.

Are you lost and know it. Then stop resisting the Gospel, believe it, repent and make your way home before it is eternally too late. When you are home, there will be great joy in heaven; not to mention the unspeakable peace and happiness you will experience in your own soul! May the **Saviour of the Lost** find you before you lose everything.

Are you lost but, perhaps, don't know it? Well let me tell you that the **Good Shepherd** is looking for you. After reading this sermon, **cry out to Him in Prayer and you will be found!**

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.

Elder: Max W. Mader

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