

# The Gospel of Luke

## Lesson 17

### ***Dropsy on the Sabbath***

**Luke 14:1** It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on *the* Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching Him closely. <sup>2</sup> And there in front of Him was a man suffering from dropsy. <sup>3</sup> And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" <sup>4</sup> But they kept silent. And He took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away. <sup>5</sup> And He said to them, "Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?" <sup>6</sup> And they could make no reply to this.

A struggle is taking place between the religious leaders and the Son of God on earth on Saturday, March 31, 30 AD. By this time, the Lord has been condemned by the religious leaders many times for healing on the Sabbath but in this instance, the Lord surprises them by asking if He can heal the man of dropsy. In the Scripture, dropsy is a disease of fluid retention and swelling and a symptom of a disease of the heart, liver, kidneys or brain. The condition involves the accumulation of fluid in the body cavities or in the limbs. Thus, this man's arms and legs are probably swollen. Jesus heals this man. In front of the Pharisee's eyes, the swelling goes away! What can the religious leaders say about this? It is a true healing! The man needs a miracle and he gets it on the Sabbath.

Although the religious leaders are silent on this occasion, it does not mean that they are happy with Jesus. It is the calm before the storm to come in the next week of Jesus' life, His last week here on earth.

### ***Invited Guests***

**Luke 14:7** And He *began* speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor *at the table*, saying to them, <sup>8</sup> "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, <sup>9</sup> and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give *your* place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place. <sup>10</sup> "But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you. <sup>11</sup> "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Still in the home of the Pharisee on the Sabbath, Jesus addresses the problem that has occurred in the home. It is not a new theological discussion because the same topic has been covered in the writings of Solomon in Proverbs.

Proverbs 25:6 Do not claim honor in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of great men; <sup>7</sup> For it is better that it be said to you, "Come up here," Than for you to be placed lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen.

### **Dinner Reception**

Luke 14:12 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and *that* will be your repayment. <sup>13</sup> "But when you give a reception, invite *the* poor, *the* crippled, *the* lame, *the* blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

The words "your repayment" deserve a special look and understanding. They confirm the doctrine of a reward according to the deeds on the judgment day, but not because of the deeds. The Lord is probably speaking of when He will give rewards and emphasizes the importance of deeds as the evidence of faith in the Truth which He is seeking to impress on the Pharisee's minds. "The resurrection of the righteous" is a remarkable expression. The Lord does not use it in deference to a commonly held belief among the Jews that the resurrection is the special privilege of the righteous. It is far more probable that the Lord is referring to the first resurrection spoken of in Revelation 20. It is a resurrection in which only the righteous will take part, a resurrection which will be the special privilege of the righteous and will precede that of the wicked.

### **Reclining at the Table**

Luke 14:15 When one of those who were reclining *at the table* with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" <sup>16</sup> But He said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; <sup>17</sup> and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' <sup>18</sup> "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.' <sup>19</sup> "Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.' <sup>20</sup> "Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.' <sup>21</sup> "And the slave came *back* and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' <sup>22</sup> "And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' <sup>23</sup> "And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel *them* to come in, so that my house may be filled. <sup>24</sup> ~'For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'"

These verses contain one of the Lord's most instructive parables. It is spoken in response to a remark made by a person sitting next to Jesus in the Pharisee's house. "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" We are left to conjecture about the purpose of this remark. It is possible that the person who makes it is the sort of person who wants to go to heaven, likes to hear good things spoken about it, but never goes any further to obtain it. The Lord takes this opportunity to remind him, as well as those eating at the table, that people may be offered the kingdom of God, but if they deliberately reject the offer, it will be lost forever.

### **Family and the Lord**

**Luke 14:25** Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. <sup>27</sup> "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. <sup>28</sup> "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? <sup>29</sup> "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, <sup>30</sup> saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' <sup>31</sup> "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand *men* to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup> "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. <sup>34</sup> "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup> "It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

We learn from this passage that true Christians must be ready to give up everything for Christ's sake. Our Lord says:

**Luke 14:26** "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. <sup>27</sup> "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

Scripture should never be explained in such a way that it contradicts other verses of Scripture. The Lord is not telling the people to hate their relatives; that would go against the fifth commandment. He means only that His followers must love Him with a love deeper than that for their nearest and dearest, or even their own lives. They must be prepared to offend their families rather than offend Christ. On the last day, judgment day, thousands of Christians will bless God because they had relatives and friends who chose to displease others rather than Christ. That very decision may be what made them think seriously and finally led to the conversion of their souls.

## ***Salt Becomes Tasteless***

**Luke 14:34** "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?"

This striking and solemn saying about the salt which loses its saltiness is found in three places in the Gospels, the other two in Matthew 5:13 and Mark 9:50. The wickedness of sins against light and knowledge and the possibility of giving ourselves over to a reprobate mind are fearful acts to ponder. People seem to forget that committing an unpardonable sin and that if salt has once lost its saltiness it cannot be salty again. The Bible teaches that it is highly unlikely that a sinner who has been saved will fall away and return to the world. No heart is so unlikely to be changed as the heart which once professed to love the Gospel, but later becomes cold and indifferent.

## ***Grumbling Pharisees and Scribes***

**Luke 15:1** Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him.  
<sup>2</sup> Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

The attacks on the Lord are greater than anyone on earth can ever imagine. From the very people who should love the Lord beyond measure, hatred and disdain spew forth. Yet the Lord has come to the earth for this very purpose, to be the Savior of all people on earth, for everyone who has ever lived. He is to be the Lord of the richest sinner and the poorest sinner alike. Sadly, the richest sinner often thinks that he is in a perfect relationship with God because of his wealth. This attitude can actually be the Lord's eternal justification for not allowing someone into His heaven. Wealth does not take away the sin of man. It is more difficult for a wealthy man to enter into a right relationship with the Lord because of the way he treasures his wealth. Remember, to whom much has been given, much is required! The wealthy Pharisees have been given the very oracles of God, yet their hearts are hardened to the precepts found within its word. The Lord had chosen a people to be His own. From this people a Savior was to come to redeem the lost. The chosen people are Jews, and all the others are Gentiles. Jesus came to earth at just the right time to be the Savior and Redeemer for all people, both Jews and Gentiles. The leaders of His chosen people have formed a religion under the shadow of the oracles of God that fails to represent the true structure designed by God. The Pharisees hate the poor sinners and will not accept the Lord because of His totally unconditional love for all mankind.

## **Ninety and Nine**

**Luke 15:3** So He told them this parable, saying, <sup>4</sup> "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> "When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> "And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' <sup>7</sup> "I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

The three parables that conclude this chapter represent three examples of the Lord's purpose in coming to earth. In this first parable, the Lord describes the owner of a flock of sheep, one of which has gone astray. We must understand that heaven is already filled with angels that continually raise resounding praises to the Lord God. Furthermore, we must understand that saints of all the ages who faithfully follow the Lord have already been secured for all time in His safety. Yet here on earth, His chosen people have gone astray. The Lord has come to find them and bring them back into the flock of faithful followers. One by one, souls of every tongue and nation are coming to Him and there is resounding praise in heaven over each one.

## **Lost Coin**

**Luke 15:8** "Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? <sup>9</sup> "When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' <sup>10</sup> "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The parable of the lost sheep shows just how much we are valued by the Lord. He does not want even one of one hundred to be lost. In like manner, the Lord does not even want one out of ten to be lost. He will search to and fro seeking the lost until they are found. The problem is that not all want Him, and not all want to be found. But when one is found, there is a great and mighty joy among all the angels for those who have seen the wonder which awaits the saved in heaven.

## **Two Sons**

**Luke 15:11** And He said, "A man had two sons. <sup>12</sup> "The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. <sup>13</sup> "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. <sup>14</sup> "Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. <sup>15</sup> "So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup> "And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was

giving *anything* to him. <sup>17</sup> "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! <sup>18</sup> ~'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'"

Here is the picture of a son who goes out into the world. He is the younger son, not the chosen son who will receive the birthright blessing. He will always have to follow in the shadow of the older son, just as the Gentiles will follow after the Jews. This son is worldly from the beginning, not having placed upon him the expectations that have always been placed on the older son. He is not instructed in the ways of the family and he is much wilder with fewer rules placed on him than on the older son. He wants to go into the world and make his own way, longing to be happy and merry in worldly ways. But as today, his means run out and he is without any hope of making it on his own. Knowing how his father treats the servants back at the farm, he comes to his senses and returns to seek a position as a hired slave in his father's household.

### **Repentant Son**

**Luke 15:20** "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion *for him*, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup> "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; <sup>23</sup> and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup> for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.

Picture the joy of a wayward son who has lived in the filth of the world and come home ready to serve in the lowest position in the family if the father will allow him to do so. He has learned his lesson and has repents. In this story, the Father rejoices just as the shepherd rejoices in finding the one lost sheep and the woman finding the one lost coin rejoice. So, too, the joy is there for the wayward son who has come home. Gentiles are like that today. They are wayward because they have not been born into the chosen place, yet many have come home to the Father through the Lord.

### **Loving Father**

**Luke 15:25** "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> "And he summoned one of the servants and *began* inquiring what these things could be. <sup>27</sup> "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup> "But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and *began* pleading with him. <sup>29</sup> "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I

have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and *yet* you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends;<sup>30</sup> but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.'<sup>31</sup> "And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.'<sup>32</sup> ~'But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and *has begun* to live, and *was* lost and has been found.'"

The oldest son represents the Jews who are the chosen people of God. They hold to the position with great fervor. The Jews are offended by the position of the Gentiles with the Lord just as the Pharisees are offended by the position the sinners have with the Lord. Now the Lord becomes very specific in His wording in this parable. We all have heard many sermons on this passage, but when put in context with the setting in which the Lord delivered this message, we gain a new and different insight.

Two sons are identified in this passage. At first reading, we might say that it is a story about the good and the bad son. The reality is that both are just as bad, just as guilty of sin. In reality, it is a picture of the Jew and the Gentile. Both belong to the Lord. The Jew represents the son who stays home, follows the so-called rules, never leaves the perceived direction of the Father. Yet, he is filled with resentment and vile anger. The other son represents the rest of humanity who long to chase after the seemingly good things of the world, things that in reality only bring a person to the depths of despair and hopelessness. He is a man without God. He is a man who needs God. In reality, both boys need God. Perhaps now would be a good time to read in the Scripture what a man without God thinks.

### **Angry Son**

**Luke 15:25** "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.<sup>26</sup> "And he summoned one of the servants and *began* inquiring what these things could be.<sup>27</sup> "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.'<sup>28</sup> "But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and *began* pleading with him.<sup>29</sup> "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and *yet* you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends;<sup>30</sup> but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.'<sup>31</sup> "And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours.'<sup>32</sup> ~'But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and *has begun* to live, and *was* lost and has been found.'"

Perhaps now is a good time to read in the Scripture what a man with God thinks.

**Matthew 5:3** "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.<sup>5</sup> "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.<sup>6</sup> "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they

shall be satisfied. <sup>7</sup> "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. <sup>8</sup> "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. <sup>9</sup> "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. <sup>10</sup> "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.