Rejoice with me

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Preacher: Rev Alister Montgomery

[0:00] Let's turn now and with God's help consider the words in the chapter we have read. The Gospel according to Luke chapter 15, reading from verse 8.

Neither hot 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. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I have lost.
Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented. We have, first of all, in this chapter, the testimony of the enemies of the Lord concerning him.
They did not mean their thoughts and their words to be a testimony, but we find that this is what it is.
This man, he eateth with sinners. This man taketh sinners to himself and saves them.
[1:38] And Jesus goes on to teach in this chapter concerning the testimony that his enemies have given him.

And as we look upon those parables, we see that they are not repetition. They are not stating over and over again the same lessons.
Although there is one lesson in the tree, and that lesson is this, that God is saving sinners.
Now the first two parables, we think, they teach us concerning what God has done and his doing.
And the third parable, the parable of the prodigal son, is the response of the sinner to the work of God's grace.
The experience of a sinner whom the Lord is saving. Now in this parable, the parable of the lost coin, we have some lessons that we would like to think upon together this evening.
[3:05] And the first lesson is this, that we are lost. This is what Jesus teaches the Pharisees and his church and the world.

That all of us by nature are as a piece of money that has been lost. Now we see that this piece of money, it could be in a clean place, or it could be in a relatively filthy place.
But wherever it is, whether it is relatively clean or filthy, there is one certain fact that it is lost.
And we believe that this teaches that we may be lost, and yet be upright outwardly in life, moral to a degree.
And yet be in this condition of being lost and being dead in trespasses and in sin. Now this coin might be lost in another place, in a place that is relatively filthy.
[4:28] And this teaches us that man is immoral by nature. And he might be outwardly immoral, just as he is inwardly immoral.

His life may be profligated outwardly, and yet the one who is outwardly modern is in an unequal lost condition with him.
He is lost, lost to God, without God and without hope in the world. Now secondly, we see that the coin is unconscious of its lostness.
And Jesus teaches here that you and I by nature, that not only are we lost, but we have no life.
We are taught that we are dead in a condition of separation from life. Dead without God and without hope in the world.
[5:44] Now this condition that is described in the parable, it began in the Garden of Eden. And you remember the words of God to Adam.

The day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt truly die. Now Adam ate of the fruit of the tree.
And Adam died according to the word of God. But yet Adam lived. Adam was a living person with a true body and a reasonable soul.

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And yet the commandment was, do this and live. And we see that what occurred in this experience was not something natural, but something spiritual.
Something that is beyond our comprehension. What is life? What was the life that Adam had with this God in the state of innocence that he lost?
[6:54] We cannot describe it today. It is gone. This life of God, a spirit-filled life, a spiritual life. And that died.

And now man by nature is in this condition. He is naturally alive. And he is spiritually dead.
And as one said, if a creature from another world had come into this world, and saw the man and women and children whom God had created in his own image, perfect knowledge, serving him acceptably, and to see the state that they are in now, what shall we eat?
What shall we drink? What shall we put on? Those creatures who have been created in God's image, to serve him, to be with him, to have fellowship with him, where are they?
An individual from another world would marvel when he sees the state in which you and I are in by nature. We are dead to the invisible.
[8:14] We are dead to the eternal. We live here in this life in the realm of time and sense, as if this was reality.

And the truth of the matter is that the unseen is real. The unseen is unreal. The unseen is real because the unseen is eternal.
It will last. All the blessings of the unseen will last and will continue. And all that we have here in this realm of time and of sense will cease, will come to an end.
And man lives now in this life, as of all that mattered, was this realm of time and sense, the things that we see, the things that we hear, the things that we feel.
That is to us life. And we dismiss all that is unseen as something that is unreal. And this is the awful state in which we are in.
[9:23] If you ask an actor al-Man, what would he like in this condition? He would speak of health. He would speak of riches. He would speak of the glory of the world.

He would never speak of forgiveness, or justification, or adoption, or sanctification. He would look upon those things as things that are unreal, things that are irrelevant to his life in the world.
And that is of state, by nature. We live as if nothing has an existence, but what we see, and what we feel.
We live according to our five senses. And the fool therefore saith in his heart that there is no God.
Man by nature is dead. Dead to reality. Dead to the things of God. He is with God, and he is without hope in the world.
[10:34] Without God, and without hope in the world. He is lost. He is unconscious of his lostness. But God, in his mercy, did not leave the sinner in this condition.

Lost and unconscious of the fact that he was lost. For just as this piece of money is lost, yet it is valuable to the one who owns it.
And the one who owns it is to seek for it. And to seek diligently for it until it is found. And this is the hope of the gospel.
The only hope that you and I have who are in this condition dead in trespasses and in sins without God in the world.
that our owner, our creator, will not leave us here, but will seek us. Now we see that Jesus teaches that there is a woman, a woman who has lost this piece of money.
[11:52] And it is hers. And you know that there are two ways in which this can be interpreted. It could be true of all of us, of all of mankind.

But God has not lost his wife to us, although we have rebelled and lost him and turned from her. He still demands of every human being in this life obedience to himself and obedience to his moral law.
and from that point of view all of us are responsible. And God claims all of us from that point of view as his own.
He has not forsaken us although we have forsaken him. But we think that something more is talked here. We find that the apostle Paul speaks of election.
And he speaks of the work of God in eternity. And we read that we are chosen in him before the foundation of the world.
[13:14] That God the Father chose his people. Jacob have I loved. He loved them as Jacob.

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That is he named them. And we are taught that they are chosen individually by their names. And those names are written.
They are written in heaven with himself. And those who are written who have been separated by God to be saved.
Every individual one of them belong to him. From this point of view that they are his by election. He loved his church and he gave himself for his church and for his church alone.
[14:14] For the elect that number that are his own from all eternity. Now far from this being this doctrine being a stumbling block to unbelievers it is our only hope that we shall be saved.

For election is the foundation of the gospel. You see if God did not separate for himself a people from all eternity all of us would remain in this condition dead in trespasses and in sin.
So no matter what arguments might be brought to bear upon us no matter how eloquent the gospel might be only a creator can bring the dead to life and only God can do this can work through his word as we shall come to see and save sinners by bringing them to a condition of life and all those who have been separated from all eternity in the covenant of grace all of those will come and they will come in their own time and the means used will be blessed by God that the glory may be his and his alone.
He uses instruments but they are weak they are erving that the glory of his grace may be seen to be his and his alone.
Now those people those who may have separated from himself from all eternity he has given to his son the father gave his son his church all of them and the purpose behind this giving of the father is that the son would come and would give them life and you hear his words I am the way the truth and the life no man cometh unto the father but by me and the father give the son his people that he might be the means of life giving of salvation in this state of sin and misery in which they are in they are there for his they belong to him and no man can question his right to them
[17:08] Satan questions that right we read in the prophecy of Zechariah in the third chapter when Joshua the high priest when he stood before the angel of the covenant to minister to worship that Satan was with him there and Satan pointed to Joshua and as the accuser of the brethren he attempted to spoil his work and his worship and we hear the angel Jesus saying the God who chose Jerusalem to rebuke you O Satan the God who chose Jerusalem this is an argument and there is no argument against it this is an act of a creator

God of Jehovah the God of Israel who will say to him what do as thou will the clay say to the potter do this or do that it is impossible the clay has been shaped by the potter and here we have the glorious God of all ordaining his people separating them in the eternal covenant as those who will be saved by no matter what the devil may say no matter what the world may say or the flesh may say there is no argument against this the God who chose chariuzama the beauty and that God who chose them chose them in justice chose them in truth in such a way that they are his legally lawfully they belong to him and that in
Christ Jesus now we see that he uses means in finding them in their lost condition they are his and he has used means to find them and we read of two meanings we read of a candle a light and a broom that sweets the floor and that discovers where the coin is now scripture teaches us that there are two meanings that God uses in the salvation of sinners and that is his word again and again we read of the word being a light to our feet a lamp to our path and the spirit as the quickener as the comforter as that power that takes of the word and uses the word to bless the sword of man and to bring him from this state of death to life now we see that
Jesus used those meanings in his human nature in the world you remember what the baptism of Jordan teaches us first of all a voice from heaven speaking the word this is my beloved son in him I am well pleased and the spirit as a devil descending upon the savior and those two meanings given him when he is separated as the head of the church to go out into the world and to begin the task of salvation of preaching the gospel Christ went before the church and as the church uses the word and the spirit so Jesus used the word and the spirit first of all in this life and you see its effect the effect of the word and the spirit has changed this world as one said concerning
Christ where an unbeliever where is his memorial and the answer look around you his memorial is around about us it is here the effect of the word and the spirit working mightily in the world and bringing the church to Christ he says the woman searched and she searched diligently now we are not to think of the means as means without effort or effect why is some think of the ministers of the word or the preachers or any preacher as one who goes into a pulpit and all that he does is open

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his mouth and God will put words in his mouth well you can dismiss immediately those thoughts because the one who preaches he must study and he must prepare as God will give him will give him understanding and ability it all comes from him but he does not in any way spare our nature he uses human nature he uses the ability that he has given the powers of body and soul to work and this is true not only in salvation in bringing sinners to
[23:43] Christ in the work of the preaching of the gospel but it is true of the life of the church you hear the apostle Paul in the epistle to the Philippians when he teaches that he forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth to those things that are before I press toward the mark for the high calling of God now here is one who has already said I know in whom I have believed and yet knowing that he is saved this does not this does not create in this sense of well be and as it were of laziness that he might now sit down and rest for all is well we find the apostle

Paul striving and running away as it were using all his ability all his bodily strength and all the strength of his intellect to fight to overcome and all the time he is speaking of God working in him to will and to do of his good pleasure it is by the efforts of men we mean by men men women and children the human race it is by their efforts that the gospel has been proclaimed and that sinners are saved we are saved not only by the preaching of the word and the effort that is put into the preaching of the word but also by personal effort in our personal lives by prayer by watching by believing by searching the scriptures by growing in grace and in holiness and in newness of life that is the only way of salvation you know that Jonathan
Edwards one of the great preachers and teachers of a past generation he went as far as to say this concerning the apostle Paul when he speaks of him as being a castaway he said that Paul looked upon salvation as perfection in holiness he looked upon salvation as perfection in holiness and he said anything that came short of that perfection came short of salvation and that is why Paul was concerned when he discovered sin and when he discovered that sin within glory against the soul Paul wishes to be perfect and therefore he feels danger and he strives to overcome the danger that he might be saved now those were the thoughts of one of the most able of God's people on this earth and we believe them to be true it is true of every believer that he is continually coming short and he is striving he is working he is seeking after holiness after perfection and this is what is meant by the search the search for salvation it is continually it is continuing and remember it is the saved who are searching for salvation they are already saved but because they are saved they are seeking perfection and they are using the means but because they are saved they are seeking perfection and they are using the means that they might attain to perfection the word and the spirit discover our lostness now we are taught that it is the spirit that quickens and he uses the word but what the word does it is like a mirror the apostle
James speaks of it as a mirror that we look upon that we look into and see an image and you and I will discover that we are sinners only by the word of God as we compare our lives to the system of truth taught in that word and especially the life of the Lord be ye holy for I am holy and Christ was perfect in thought in word and in deed when you and I come without lives without thoughts to the word of God and we read there what he demands of us and when the reality of our condition is brought home to us then surely we cry for mercy and for salvation and we are taught that it is the spirit of God when he is come he will convince the world of sin of righteousness and of judgment to come he will convince now there is a very solemn side to the work of the spirit of God in the church in the world and it is this
John speaks of a sin that is unto death and he teaches us that we are not to pray for those who have sinned that sin unto death and we believe it is this it is opposition to the spirit of God for he who is holy and perfect has come to deal with a sinful creature in order to save him from his sins and nowhere in his creation is he nearer to the sinner than when he comes into his heart when he comes by the spirit to work with him now the solemn part of that work is this that we can resist him and that we can even resist that spirit until we have quenched his work and it is awful to think that this is what
[31:21] John means when he says there is a sin unto death and if we continue in opposition to the one who is striving with us the one who is leading us to holiness if we grieve him if we resist him then surely we are in danger and you know that your heart and mind is something similar to a volcano that is liable to erupt at any time sin is spontaneous it is spontaneous a look a thought can activate it and concerning concerning holiness it is a work it is not holiness is not spontaneous but sin is spontaneous and when the spirit of god strives with us we sin and we resist and what if he

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says let him alone and when we think of his work do not look upon him as a law as a law that must continue my spirit will not strive continually with men the spirit of god is the work of his good pleasure and his good pleasure alone and he can withdraw his presence he can withdraw his spirit and when that happens there is apostasy and there is death there is spiritual death and there is damnation there is therefore we are asked to cooperate we are asked to respond as he works as he strives as he leads us and the church should always seek grace that they might be co-workers with him now remember having said this we do not mean that any individual will be lost will receive the holy spirit of god for scripture and this parable makes it perfectly clear that those who are his will be saved they will persevere in grace but we are speaking just now of the strivings of the spirit of god through the gospel and what man can do in resisting his work and even here the believer though he will not be lost he might be in the condition that David was in in the 51st psalm when he grieved the spirit and he wished the joy of his salvation to return he had lost that joy he had lost the comfort of god's spirit because he had sinned and if we have thoughts concerning eternity and if we have thoughts concerning guilt and if our consciences from time to time bring before us those facts that we read of in scripture that there is a sin hate in god and that sin hate in god will meet

with us then do not resist what god is teaching us he is worth asking worth with to respond to the leading of the spirit we know that the church will respond but we know also that the church can resist and will resist until he overcomes now it is the spirit that quickens and what he does he will convince of those in sin and eternal things the things of the spirit of god not as as we say an intellectual exercise not as something that we can think of and speak of to others that we can discuss but he gives a heart knowledge of those things you see the difference between a man who reads in the bible that sin is any want of conformity to our transgression he can think of those things as those thoughts as facts that he can't read of and that he can understand right sin is a breach of god's law but it is something else to feel that we have sinned against god and to say in our hearts because we have felt experimentally the effect of guilt lord be merciful unto me as sin and you ask god for his spirit and you know that we are commanded to ask him and we are taught also that he will never refuse the asking the desire of his spirit in luke chapter 11 ask and it shall be given you seek and ye shall find knock and it shall be opened unto you and we may say that hezekiah hezekiah he asked for life and god was pleased to add to his life now in many cases the believer might ask for things that god will not grant him in this world but there is one certain thing that if we ask for the spirit of god if we ask for grace we shall refuse he will never refuse he will give us what we ask for because this desire comes from himself the desire for the spirit of god will never come from the man of flesh the card of man it is one of the signs of the spiritual man it is one of the signs of the spiritual man that he will ask for the things of the spirit of god and he will continue to ask for those things because he has received them now this conviction of sin will lead us to christ be merciful unto me a sinner this is what we should see we should we should continue until we find it a conviction of sin it is the work of the spirit of god and there are twins
in the soul he speaks of repentance he speaks of the angels of god rejoicing when this piece of money is found and he applies this to the repentant sinner who is found who is convinced of sin and who is convinced of christ as the way and the truth and the life now where repentance is concerning sin there is fear you see repentance of itself which is a turning from sin to god with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience that is an act of faith because why should one repent if there is no mercy in god and if faith does not see and does not know as a merciful god there can be therefore no repentance as such following a conviction of sin without an act of faith and faith always has an object and that object is christ you see there is here as it were a chain a chain of events and they are linked together where you have one you have the other there is a penitent fear now what is it what is faith that the spirit of god works in the convicted sinner and we think there are three things involved in it faith is knowledge faith is conviction and faith is trust faith is first of all knowledge it is a knowledge of christ a knowledge of him as the way and the truth and the life it is a knowledge of one who meets the every need and the deepest need of the convicted sinner of the convinced sinner before god it is seeing him as the power of god and the wisdom of god you remember paul's argument he looks upon the cross of calvary and there are two individuals looking upon it and one sees their foolishness and a stumbling block there is no sense in the fact that the son of god died the death that he died on the cross unless we are in need of him as the sinner as the saviour of sinners as the sin bearer as the one who exalted the law for us and who made it honourable who bore the penalty of that law and faith lays hold upon him and faith is convinced of what he has done

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and therefore faith puts its trust or faith is trusting in christ that we might be saved remember it is not believing that we are saved that is something else it is believing in christ in order that we might be saved now we found lastly there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of god in heaven over one sinner that repents and you know that we are taught here that the sinner who repents and who is saved
will never be lost again once found all was found once in christ all was in christ and the doctrine of scripture is this that the saints of god will persevere they will persevere they might stumble they might fall but they will persevere in this life of grace until the end until they are glorified evacuated made perfect in holiness and brought into the nearer presence of god therefore the angels of god rejoice because they realize what has happened that a soul has been saved that a soul who was lost is found now think of the value that the angels place put upon the soul of a human being think of the value of your soul it cannot it cannot be measured it is measureless it is something that we cannot weigh we cannot enumerate and if you lose your soul scripture your teachers that it is better that you had never been born that you had never received a true body and a reasonable soul if you die in your sins for Christ spoke of a place in eternity he spoke of himself as the way and the truth and the life but he spoke also of
Gehenna the rubbish dump on the outskirts of Cherusim we would call it a middle and think think of what is involved in that thought he taught that there is here a fire that will not go out and a worm that will not die but those two things are in a middle there is a fire and there is a worm and the Jesus who taught us in my father's house are many mansions he taught us of Gehenna and that there is such a place in eternity and the only escape from that place is here a scripture brought before us that we might be found and being found give the glory to him who came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost
[46:45] Spurgeon tells us of a godly woman and a young man who came one day to see her and he began to describe his condition and he said you know he said I am lost I am lost and she began to smile and eventually she began to laugh and he thought for a moment that she was mocking and the condition in which she was in and then she quoted those words the son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost he was qualified qualified by God brought into this condition of lostness and there was one to save him who came into the world to save sinners whoever lives to make intercession for us and may

God grant that you and I may be found in him and that when we are found in him that we give the glory to him who worked and who is working mightily in the church and in the world and he will save to the othermost all who come unto God by him let us pray thank thee that thou art really as the great head of thy church and grant that thy blessing might rest upon us we pray that thou wouldst convince us of our sins and lead us unto him who alone is able to save to the othermost all who come unto God by him and grant O Lord that thy blessing might be upon the congregation during this week and thy servants who proclaim thy word hold and be with them watch over us and pardon no sins for Jesus sake
Amen

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