

Historic Baptist Church
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JOY IN HEAVEN

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This last Sunday (May 23, 2010) I preached on Luke 15 on how heaven rejoices when a sinner repents.

Jesus responded to the Pharisees and scribes who murmured that, “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”

First, praise God our Saviour receives sinners. Without that grace I would be lost. Without that grace, the world would be lost. This reproach of the legalistic self-righteous, religious leaders is in fact a great praise and wonderful attribute of God.

In Jesus’ response, he made it clear in his first parable of the *lost sheep* that there is “joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth” (v. 7).

He made it doubly clear in verse 10 that there is “joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,” when giving the parable of the *lost coin*.

Jesus topped it all off in the parable of the *lost son* – the prodigal son as we know it – when he showed how much the Father rejoiced when he received his son safe and sound.

As I preached this message I made mention of the *increase of value* as the parables progressed – first, one sheep out of an hundred (1%); then one coin out of ten (10%); then one out of two sons (50%). Only God could have spoken such deep things.

I preached fervently on how God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost rejoice in heaven when a sinner repents. I preached how God command all men to repent (Acts 17:30). I preached how we ought to be like God and rejoice when he rejoices (Romans 12) – and *not* like the elder brother. I preached that the elder brother had the inheritance because he was faithful, while the prodigal had lost the things that he had wrought (2 John 8).

Last night (Sunday evening) and today as I meditated on my own preaching, God showed me something that made me greatly rejoice. I share this now with you readers:

I pondered first, why the three parables and the varied percentages? And second, why the particular scenarios of the sheep, coin, and son? God gave me the answer as follows:

In answer to the first, I see three viewpoints of how heaven rejoices: First, through the eyes of our Saviour (the Shepherd). Second, a view through the eyes of the Holy Ghost

(the woman with the coins). And, third, a view through the eyes of the Father (the prodigal).

All three rejoice when a sinner repents.

And now the scenarios and the percentages – notice:

In the three parables, the first deals with how Jesus “seeks and saves” that which is lost. Even though there are 99 saved, he will still seek the hundredth lost sheep. The value of even one small sheep is of great value to the Saviour. One out of an hundred is small to us (1%), but not to Jesus. The lost need repentance to be saved. Heaven rejoices when a sinner repents and receives salvation.

Then, the Holy Ghost loses one out of ten. The Holy Ghost then “lights a candle and sweeps the house.” This shows me that the church (the *House of God* and where the Holy Ghost resides in the believers) needs repentance. The Holy Ghost is associated and typified by Light. In the church, the Holy Ghost lights the house and sweeps it clean (washing of water by the word). The Holy Ghost wants to “reprove” or make manifest by the light. *Could it be one out of ten church members need repentance?* I am sure this is the least. But that is why God used the silver coin – indicating redemption (silver). Those who are redeemed need not to wash their whole bodies, only their feet. Heaven rejoices when a child of God in the church goes forward and repents of sin.

Then, the father rejoices when a son who is backslidden “comes to himself” and returns to the Father. The Father does not seek as Jesus does; nor does he sweep as the Holy Ghost does, but he looks off in the distance waiting and hoping for his son to return. In the Father’s house there are many blessings and God rejoices greatly when a backslider repents and returns to him. Heaven rejoices over a son who repents.

As a lesson to us, we need to be like-minded as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. We need to take care not to be like the Pharisees and scribes and murmur that Jesus receives sinners. Our churches ought to be places – like heaven – where we encourage and rejoice when a sinner repents. Let us all learn and do what the Bible shows us to do.

God bless.