

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

and Other Sermons

by

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SERMON SEVEN

LOST — SOUGHT — SAVED

(Luke 19:10)

LUKE 19: 10 is my text: “**The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**”

I am going to preach to you tonight on (1) LOST; (2) SOUGHT; (3) SAVED.

Originally the Lord Jesus Christ spoke this word as an apology. You remember in the nineteenth chapter of Luke, the first ten verses, that there is the record of the experience of Jesus with the chief of publicans, Zacchaeus. He went with Zacchaeus to his home. The hypocritical Jews found fault with Him for going with this sinful man. Jesus turned and said, “**Why, that is MY business. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**” For nineteen hundred years Jesus has been in that business. That is the only business He has. That is the only purpose for which He came into the world, for which He died on the cross, was raised from the dead, is interceding in glory and is coming again to make the kingdoms of the world the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Men and women have found Him and have been found of Him. He has never turned anyone down. “**Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no case cast out.**” For nineteen hundred years He has kept that promise. No matter how they may have come, if they had as much faith as a grain of mustard seed, enough to make them come to Christ, Jesus has been ready and eager and willing to save them from their lost condition, to rescue them from the toils of Satan, to redeem them from the punishment and the curse and the wages of sin and the law, to make them children of God, to start them on their way to heaven rejoicing, never to finish until they drop their crosses at His feet to receive their crowns of reward. These nineteen hundred years have proved that Jesus Christ is able, eager, anxious to save every man, woman, and child in this world, every sinner to the ends of the earth.

But, you know, nobody will come to Christ, no man will come to Christ, no woman will come to Christ, no child will come to Christ, Jew or Gentile, who does not realize that he or she is lost. We are not going to send for a doctor until we know we are sick. We will not take any medicine until we feel the need of it. Surely we will not permit ourselves to be taken to a hospital unless we appreciate the fact that our bodies need hospital care. Even in the same manner, no souls will come to Christ until they face the fearful implication of the word lost.

Before we go any farther, before we talk about salvation, about the saving power of Jesus, it behooves us to understand what it means to be lost.

What does it mean to be lost? How is a person lost? What are the consequences of being lost? Why is being lost such a terrible thing that preachers are ordained, missionaries sent out, churches built, revivals held, Sunday schools organized, people drawn from the ends of the earth to come to hear the Word of God? What is there about that word “lost” that should cause so much fearful expenditure of money, energy, blood, tears, and lives?

When Jesus said “lost” He meant just one thing— the loss of the soul. We have many things that we may lose. It is sad to lose your money, your property— especially when it happens through no fault of your own, more especially when it occurs at a time of life or under circumstances that prohibit your ever bending down and rebuilding the estate, accumulating the money, or establishing the property that you had before the loss. It is infinitely worse to lose your health. I am sure everyone in this congregation who understands the difference between money and health would gladly give every penny in the world rather than to be stricken by some affliction that will take health away. It is tragic to lose our loved ones; to follow some beloved form out to the cemetery, to see the cruel maw that we call the grave, to hear the terrible thud of the tons of earth as they bury beyond sight the body of one who has entwined himself about our hearts in such manner and fashion that to the longest day we live we shall never stop missing him. It is heart-breaking.

We may lose our reputations, our influence, our character, our homes, but the worst loss that can befall us is the loss of the soul.

Suppose a man should lose all his money and the rest of his life be a beggar depending on charity. If he is a Christian, he dies and goes to heaven, and in heaven the treasures of God are at his beck and call. On the other hand, if a man should accumulate all the money there is in the world, become richer than any man who has ever lived, and die unsaved, tell me, what good will that man’s money do him in the burning torment, in the fiery, endless anguish of a devil’s hell?

I have known many Christians— and so have you—who were broken on the wheel of sickness, who were tormented with ill health, who never had a day’s quietness, who never were free from the twinges, from the aches, from the pain of some dread physical affliction. They die; they go to heaven. In heaven there is no tuberculosis, no pneumonia, no diphtheria, no blindness, no deafness, no cancer, no tumor or anything else to which the human flesh is heir in this world. What if a man should go through life strong as Jack Dempsey, or Joe Louis, or Samson, and die unsaved, die as a tree dies, chopped down by the woodman’s axe in the prime of its vigor. What good will that mans health do him in the burning torment of an eternal bottomless pit?

Suppose we do lose our loved ones. I have a father and a mother, four brothers, and a sister alive. I have one little brother who died in Russia between the ages of five and six. I can praise God tonight that he did die at that age, because if not a single one of my people are ever saved, thank God, that boy is waiting for me in glory. Glory to God, he and I at least out of our family will sing the praises of Jesus before the throne.

Gladly would I be willing to give my father, my mother, my brothers, my sister to any kind of death, gladly would I die for them, if that is the price that God wants for their souls' salvation. The most terrible thing that can happen to any of us is to lose our souls. It is so endless. The grave is the finish of any kind of sickness. The grave is the end of any kind of earthly trouble. The grave is the quietus of any kind of mundane trial or tribulation. When you die unsaved, the grave is not the end. It is the beginning, and what a fearful beginning! To burn forever, beyond the power of God, beyond the ability of Christ, beyond the grace of the Spirit, beyond the blood, beyond the gospel, beyond repentance, beyond faith, beyond prayers, beyond tears, beyond hope, beyond time, beyond eternity!

But, how is a person lost? What must a person do to be lost? Some years ago in a town of one of the Carolinas a great evangelist received an idea from God. He took tens of thousands of cards about the size of a census card. On one side of the card he had printed, "**What must I do to be saved?**" and underneath, "**Believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.**" On the other side appeared the question: "What must I do to be lost?" In a box with black mourning border was just one word — "NOTHING!" That is right. Just don't do anything.

You are not a Christian. You have never accepted Christ as your Saviour. You are a good man, a good woman, a good child. You have never been in jail. Your reputation and character are as clean as that of any member of anybody's church, but you are not a Christian. Just remain in that condition. Don't be a big drinker, don't gamble, don't commit adultery or engage in any other gross sins. Just remain in your present condition, just don't do anything about the invitation, the gospel or Christ. One of these days you will wake up in the fires of hell.

How is a person lost? If I were to tell you out of my own mind you would have a right to say, "Preacher, you are a just man, and a mighty small, weak man, and a mighty poor man at that. We cannot, we will not, we do not have to take your word for it." You would be right. I am not going to give you my word. I am going to give you God's Word. There are three things that are charged against the sinner—three counts in the indictment of the sinner, of every unsaved soul in this presence, three charges that will stand facing you at the judgment-bar of God.

The first thing is: *we were all born in sin, born lost.*

God's Word says, "**Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.**"

"The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray speaking lies as soon as they be born."

You say, "Preacher, wait a minute. You don't mean to tell me that you believe your little boy, the one you are always talking about, that three weeks old girl you have been bragging about—that they were born lost?" It doesn't make any difference what I believe; it is what God says that counts. God says, "**The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray speaking lies as soon as they be born.**" I don't want you to misunderstand or misquote me. Don't go out and say this preacher says every child who dies goes to hell.

I believe every child God calls out of the world before it reaches the age of accountability is taken care of somehow by the blood of Jesus Christ. I don't believe that child is saved. You cannot be saved except in one way—that is by believing in Christ. But the child is safe, S-A-F-E, because Jesus on the cross bore away any original sin. But still that true indictment, that true bill, that true record of God declares that every soul born of woman is born in sin.

Beloved, that is why Jesus had to be immaculately conceived. Had He been born of the ordinary generation of the flesh, of any other than a virgin, He would have been just as much a sinner as Hyman Appelman. He had to be without sin of His own before He could atone for your sins and mine.

But, suppose for argument's sake that were not so. Suppose every child came into the world with inclinations toward God and heaven instead of toward the devil and hell. The second fact still holds true.

God's Word teaches that every one of us has definitely, consciously, viciously, knowingly, deliberately broken the law of God.

- **“There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”**
- **“There is none righteous; no not one.”**
- **“There is no man that sinneth not.”**
- **“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”**
- **“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”**

That is right. God has declared, and our own consciences only too bitterly attest it, that every one of us who knows the difference between right and wrong, who has reached the age of reasoning ability, has in one form or another broken, violated, and transgressed the requirements, the decrees, the statutes, the program, the plan of God Almighty for our lives and for the life of the world.

According to God's Word there is only one punishment for sin, and that is death and hell fire. According to God's Word, one of two things has to happen to our sins—either they are pardoned in Christ or punished in hell.

The third reason a sinner is lost is that *everyone who is not a blood-washed Christian, every soul to the ends of the earth not in Christ, is guilty of rejecting the only way of escape, the only remedy provided by God—the Lord Jesus Christ*, for it is written,

“He that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

“He that believeth not shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” “Again it is written, **“There is none other name under heaven, given among men by which we must be saved.”** And again it is written, **“I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”**

There you have the Word of God; not the word of the preacher; not the word of the church; not the word of the theologian. The Word of God plainly proclaims that the sinner is lost because he is born in sin; because he is practicing sin; because of the rejection of the Lamb of God **“that taketh away the sin of the world.”**

Let us not stop there. When is a person lost? When is a sinner lost? Some people have an idea that a sinner is lost when he faces God at the judgment-bar and the sentence of doom is pronounced upon him. That is but a part of the truth. The real truth is that a sinner is lost in life. He is lost in death. He is lost at the judgment-bar. He is lost through an endless eternity.

When I say he is lost in life, I mean this. Every unsaved soul is a total loss to God. You are on the red side of God’s ledger. You are a liability to God and not an asset. You have taken the blessings, the bounties, the benefits of God. You have taken the health, strength, wisdom, a chance to make a living, your loved ones, your homes, and everything that God has given you. Because you are not a Christian, you have been using those things for the world, the flesh, and the devil. If you will have it, every unsaved soul is an embezzler. You have taken the things with which God has entrusted you and have used them against God. Don’t forget that. You have used them against God. You are a loss to God.

The sinner is a loss to his family. Surely you can see that. Instead of pointing his or her loved ones to God, to Christ, to the Spirit, to the church, to salvation, to heaven, the sinner is, consciously or unconsciously, deliberately or without any thought of it, leading these dear ones to Satan, to sin, to the world, and perhaps to the endless agony of Tophet.

The sinner is lost to the church. The church has no profit, no usury, no percentage, no help from the sinner’s life. Some of you will say, “Why, man, I pay the preacher; I give money to the church; I go to Sunday school and give almost as much money or more than any member of my class. But your influence; your life; your reputation; your character; your consecration; your service to God is on the wrong side of the fence and militates against the church.

You are a loss, if you are unsaved, to the community, to the community where you live. You are a loss to your neighborhood; to your business associates; to your schoolmates; to your social companions; because instead of helping them to God you are hindering them, and may be even directing them to Satan and destruction.

But that is not all. A sinner is lost in the hour of death. You know people have queer ideas about us preachers. They say we like to tell death-bed stories. I don’t know about Gentile preachers. I have never been a Gentile preacher. I don’t know how it is with you other brethren in the ministry, but as for me (maybe it is the Jew in me) I would rather go to fifty socials or one hundred weddings or parties than to one funeral. I will make you a proposition. I promise you for myself, and for every other preacher, that if you will stop dying we will stop talking about death. You stop dying, and we will never mention death. But you are going to die just the same, and you must be warned of it.

What would you think if you came to a doctor with a cancer eating out your life and the doctor said, “That is just a boil and I will fix it up,” but you died with cancer?

What if you had tuberculosis and the doctor said, “That is all right. You have a little touch of fatigue. Drink plenty of milk, get plenty of fresh air, take a little more exercise, and you will be all right,” and so on—and you died of tuberculosis?

What would you think of a preacher who knew you were going to die and never spoke of it. I don't know what these other brethren will do, but every time I preach I am going to have something to say about death, because you are going to die. Picture yourself then, if you are unsaved, stretched out on your deathbed. The end of the journey is come; the doctor is there with his hand on your pulse. Bit by bit your heart grows slower and heavier. Your breath begins to come in gasps. You hear the voice of some loved one saying to the doctor, “Is he dead yet?” You try to turn, to speak, to ask for help. Perhaps you are thirsty, but you can't move, you can't make yourself understood. The granite stillness of death has already begun to cover you up. Second by second, you lose every sound. Your ears grow deaf with the approach of death. You cannot open your eyes any more. They are heavy with the weight of the death angel upon them. Your heart begins to miss its beats. The death rattle is in your throat. You know you have got to die.

In those last precious seconds, you remember every opportunity you had to accept Christ, every time you came to church, every gospel sermon you heard, every invitation you turned down, every personal worker who came to you, in whose face you shook your head. You have rejected Christ. You have turned down the blood. You have done despite to the Spirit of grace. You die a lost soul.

Every sinner is lost at the judgment-bar of God. God has not left us without warning. He told us over and over again that **“it is appointed once unto man to die and after that the judgment.”** The description is in the twentieth chapter of Revelation.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

I want you to picture that scene tonight. It doesn't take much of a stretch of the imagination to see it. The end of time has come. The thousand years of the millennium are past. The angel of God steps out of heaven, raises the trumpet to his lips, and blows a blast that shakes the universe. Time comes to an end. The heavens depart as a scroll when it is rolled together. The earth goes up in the cataclysm of the final visitation of God's wrath.

The graves open and the dead out of Christ rise to march in single file to hear their judgment, their condemnation, their doom.

The dead in Russia where so many of my people are buried; the dead in Palestine where those who crucified Christ have returned to dust; the dead from Oklahoma, the dead from Texas, from the ends of the earth—all who rejected Christ rise up in that second resurrection to meet Jesus at the judgment of the great white throne.

If you die in that lost condition, you are going to meet God in that hour. See yourself standing there. Christ is there, and the devil, too. For the last time, the accuser of the brethren appears, ready to act as prosecuting attorney against those who are his slaves. Your name is called. You step out of the ranks. You can't hide. You can't escape. You can't make an alibi. You can't excuse yourself. You can't argue. You can't ask for a change of venue. There is no other court. Your name is called. You answer, and you stand before the throne naked with your naked soul exposed to the scrutiny of the Lord. God looks at the angel with the Book of Life.

The angel shakes his head. Your name is not in it. God turns to Christ. Christ lifts the end of His cloak to cover His face that He might not see your agony. God faces the devil. The devil points to himself and to you and gnashes his teeth until the froth spues out of his mouth, as if to say, "That soul is mine. It served me on earth, and I claim it in hell." God questions you. "Why did you reject Christ?" With quaking heart and fear-torn soul, you try excuses. You say, "Lord, give me a chance. I have an alibi."

God says, "All right. You have all eternity in which to speak."

You say, "Lord, it was like this: there were so many hypocrites in that church that . . ."

"Yes, I know all about those hypocrites. Son, daughter, I know all about them, but I didn't tell you to believe in those hypocrites. I told you to believe in Jesus." That argument is blasted out from under you.

"Lord, you must listen. O God, there were so many different churches—Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Christian, and all kinds. Of those I couldn't tell which one to join to be saved."

"I didn't tell you to join the church to be saved, but to believe in Jesus. He is the same Jesus for every one of them."

"Lord, please hear me. Don't send me back to hell."

"Lord, it was like this. It was 1938. There was the depression. I had to work so hard to make a living. If a man didn't take care of his family you said he was worse than a heathen. I didn't have time for religion."

God will not even answer. He will pass His hand across the skies. Like on the silver screen of a movie will appear this service tonight. You will see this poor preacher, his swinging hands, his sweating face. You will hear his poor hoarse voice. You will see yourself sitting in that crowd. You will be shown that you had your chance. Tonight you can be saved.

Fighting against the terribly inevitable, you cry, "Lord, one more excuse. God, you have got to listen to me. Hell is such a terrible place."

"All right, speak."

"Well, Lord, it was like this. I didn't have any feeling. I just didn't have the feeling."

God will say, "Son, daughter, let Me ask you some questions. Did you know that you were lost?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you know My Son died for you on the cross?" "Yes, I did."

"Did you know that I loved you? Did you know that My Son would save you?" "Yes, I did."

"Well, son, daughter, you had plenty of feeling. That is all you needed, just faith in My love and in My Son's blood."

One by one every argument, every alibi, every excuse, will be driven out from under you. You will fall on your face before God in an agony of remorse and repentance, but, alas, too late! God will turn to the recording angel and say, "Write."

The angel will say, "What shall I write?"

God will look at Christ, and Christ will shake His head. He told you, "**Whosoever denieth Me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.**"

God will look at Satan. Again the devil will point to himself and point to you, claiming you because you served him here against Christ. His brand, his stamp, his mark, his sign are upon you forever if you reject Christ. God will turn to the angel again and say, "Write."

"What shall I write?"

"Write, LOST." The angel will dip his pen in the same blood that would save you from your sins now and will write on your record, "LOST!"

Mayhap your father, or your mother, or your wife, or your husband, or your child, or your sister, or your preacher friend, or someone else will take up that awful word "LOST!" The angels in heaven, covering their faces with their wings, will join that mournful lament. The demons in hell will lift up their filthy arms to drag you down into the pit of brimstone and flame, and the ghoulish, shrieking sing-song of those unholy souls will be "Lost!" The last sound tearing from your poor, tormented heart, the last cry uttered by your agony-driven soul, will be "Lost!" Forever lost! Lost beyond hope! Lost beyond Christ! Lost beyond help! Lost beyond time! Lost beyond eternity! Lost! FOREVER LOST!

O, brother Christian, sister Christian, if you believed that, you wouldn't have to be begged to come to prayer-meeting. If you believed that, every one of you would go out to become a flaming evangelist. Every last one of you would sacrifice your home, your business, your health, your ease, your pleasure, your lives— even as Jesus sacrificed His—if you believed that this Book teaches that what I said tonight is true. You know it is.

You say, “Preacher, that is exaggerated.”

Would to God it were. But hear me. You come with me to Calvary. Stand in the shadow of that cross; behold the shed blood of Jesus! Recognize once more those hours of agony and anguish. Remember through time and eternity what this preacher told you, that every particle of His blood, that every tear, that every drop of His sweat, that every second of His agony was a warning to lost sinners, that there is a burning, endless hell, into which God will be obliged to consign them if they reject Christ.

O beloved, if I were to multiply the terrors of hell, of being lost, in language ten thousand times ten thousand times worse than my poor descriptions, I wouldn't even have begun to approach the awfulness of the condition of a lost soul who died without God and without Christ.

But, thank God, I don't have to stop there. There is a way out. There is a way out! God, for the love wherewith He loved us, sent His Son into the world that while we were yet sinners He might seek for us, and find us, and save us. Yes, He came into the world. He struggled, He prayed, He worked, He preached, He wept, He agonized, He bled out His life that you and I might have a way of escape from the burning torment of an eternal prison. Yes, Jesus Christ says to us what He said to Nicodemus: **“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, [let me change it] even so was the Son of Man lifted up that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”**

Yes, there is a way of escape for every sinner in this congregation from the toils of sin, from the entanglements of Satan, from the curse of the law, from the wages of sin, from the judgment of God, from the inevitable doom of a bottomless hell. It is to be found by coming to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches that Christ died for every one of us, for every man, woman, and child here, and to the ends of the earth. The Bible teaches that God invites every soul in this presence regardless of age, regardless of nationality, regardless of condition, to come and accept this blood-stained, blood-bought way of salvation which He offers in love, free, by His grace, through the broken body and shed blood of His only begotten Son.

God is ready, God is willing, God is eager, God is anxious, God is pleading for the privilege of washing away the sins of every soul in the precious blood of His Son and heir. But His hands are tied, His power is limited, His grace is constrained by you. If you want to be saved, God is willing to save you. If you don't want to be saved, there isn't anything that even God can do to rescue you from that pit of eternal burning.

You are standing at the crossroads tonight. If you are an unsaved man or woman or child, you cannot walk out of here neutral.

On the one hand is God and His Christ, the cross, the gospel, the blood, the Holy Spirit, the way to heaven.

On the other hand is Satan, the world, the flesh, sin, corruption, death, and eternal destruction.

The choice is yours. Which way will you walk?

Will you walk arm in arm with Jesus Christ, accepting Him as your Saviour, having confessed Him before men that He may raise you at the first resurrection and confess you before His Father? Or will you walk an enemy of God and an enemy of Christ, of the Spirit, a friend of Satan, a sinner lost, following the inclinations of the devil and the flesh? The choice is yours.

O brethren, O sisters, make the right choice now. Do the right thing now. Follow the leadership of the Spirit as He pleads with your hearts. Come now, accepting this Christ as your Saviour and His blood for your salvation. May God in His infinite mercy lead you into the way of the cross and salvation. In Jesus' name. Amen.

~ end of sermon 7 ~

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