

Saved or Lost?

by

William Bell Riley, A. M., D. D.,
Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

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SERMON FOUR

WHO, THEN, WILL BE LOST?

Luke 19:10

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

MODERNISM in the form of New Theology has had its influence on both the use and the meaning of language, rendering some of the most meaningful words quite unpopular and others meaningless.

Sin is a word so often employed in Scripture that it takes seven columns in Young's large concordance to print the lines in which it appears.

“SIN” was a term often employed in the 19th Century, and it conveyed no uncertain meaning. It was “the transgression of the law,” especially the law of God. As Joseph Parker of The City Temple once put it, “It was a blow in the face of God.”

“LOST” was in equally common use fifty years ago, and men feared and shuddered at its employment, for it hinted at eternal doom for the soul.

“HELL” suggested a place of torment, and was not supposed to be over-symbolized by “**a lake of fire.**” Revelation 20:10, 14, 15.

Now the average man smiles at each of them.

- “Sin” is a misstep in the upward climb.
- “Lost” is a temporary bewilderment,
- “Hell” a domestic disagreement.

On my last trip South I was told a story of a girl who, as a Bible believer, was uncertain about her sweetheart, because he did not accept all that she received as true, and so she said to her mother: “I don't think I will marry him. You know he doesn't believe in hell.” To which her mother replied: “Don't turn him down on that account, dear. Go ahead and marry him and he soon will believe in it!”

That is just about as much hell as most people now think possible,—a slight domestic difference, a reason for a residence in Reno, a plausible excuse for easy divorce.

These milk-and-water definitions of “sin,” “lost,” and “hell” have their influence also on their opposites,—“holiness,” “salvation,” and “heaven,”—making each of them in turn matters of no moment; for if “sin” is of no concern, “holiness” is of no value. If “lost” is not to be feared, “salvation” is not to be craved: and if “hell” is only a domestic difference, the only heaven there is, is a home of fair contentment here on earth.

However, there are yet many who believe that Bible terms are not subject to such fluctuations; that **“till heaven and earth pass one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.”** And since we agree with that company, our theme is justified and our question becomes important—“Who Then Will Be Lost?”

This question we propose to answer by raising two other questions, paradoxical as that proposition may sound. Those two questions are,—Who Are the Lost?—Why Are They Lost?

I. WHO ARE THE LOST?

In looking through the Scriptures we find this question fairly and, as we believe, clearly answered. According to their teaching, the House of Israel is lost, the willful sinner is lost, the unbeliever—whether Jew or Gentile—is lost.

The House of Israel Is Lost!

In answer to the appeal of the woman of Canaan for her daughter, grievously vexed with a devil, Jesus said: **“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel”** (Matthew 15:24).

When Jesus sent forth the twelve He commanded them, saying, **“Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”** (Matthew 10:6).

The following text brings out the same thought, “. . . **This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,**” i. e.,—the Jew. (Luke 19:9, 10). Zacchaeus was regarded as lost before he came to Christ.

There are a great many people in these days, modernist ministers being leaders, who are trying to impress the public to the contrary. Christ’s estimate of the Jew’s condition is not their estimate. They think the Jew is safe, and they are quite disposed to defend him against all critics, and to fellowship him on the ground that he has as much right to his religion as Christians have to theirs; that he is, doubtless, just as safe in believing the same as are Christians.

This position by liberal ministers is most natural. Lewis Browne, author of *“This Believing World,”* contributed to *“The American Jewish World”* an article on the controversy then raging in Minnesota, over the teaching of evolution in tax-supported schools.

Among other things, he said: “My advice to the Jews of Minnesota is to join with the Christian liberals in their opposition to this Bill. The Jew, by nature, is a liberal.”

No one who knows the Jew will call that statement in question, and it is doubtless on this account that in recent years rabbis have exchanged pulpits with Unitarians, and just as often been fraternized with by ministers occupying evangelical pulpits whose liberal leanings lead them to doubt, if they do not deny, the Deity of Jesus Christ, the Blood Atonement, and all the other Christian fundamentals.

And when those of us who still stand with John the apostle and “**abide in the doctrine of Christ,**” do not “**receive them into our house nor bid them God speed**” thereby becoming partakers of their antipathies to Christianity, we are denounced as “Anti-Semites,” and spoken of as “narrow,” “bigoted” and “unbrotherly.”

However, the fact remains that Christ, coming into the world by the way of a Jewish woman’s womb, counted them a nation lost to God and lost in sin; and the atheism which is sweeping their youth, and the political Communism that is capturing their maturity are clear indications that here again Christ was not mistaken. With the rare exception of the converted Jew, Israel is “lost”; and by that we do not mean that she is hid away among the nations; we do mean that she is divorced from God.

“**Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father**” (I John 2:23).

It may be a shock to certain liberals to say it, but if so we leave them to quarrel with the apostle John rather than with us:

“**Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son**” (I John 2:22).

The Willful Sinner Is Also Lost.

Among the parables of the New Testament, no one is more suggestive than the parable of the Prodigal Son, recorded in Luke 15:11-32. It will be remembered that when he came home, the father, speaking of his former condition, said:

“**It was meet that we should be merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again: and was lost, and is found**” (vs. 32).

All will concede that the main point of this great parable is made up of four words—“**dead,**” “**lost,**” “**alive,**” “**found.**”

When was he dead? When was he lost? While away from the father in the far country, in sinful associations— on a swinish level.

Where, then, will you find the lost, tonight, save in the same place and condition?

The roadhouses of this beautiful country about our metropolis are filled tonight with the lost; your multiplied saloons number into the thousands in Minneapolis and St. Paul and they are being patronized by the lost, and by the lost only. Your gambling holes, your picture shows, your vile theatres, are jammed with dead men and women; with men and women who are lost; lost to God; lost to morality; lost to a sense of right and wrong; lost in the maelstrom of sin.

A few years ago we had certain intellectuals who started in writing books on psychoanalysis, which was only a new name for sexuality. At the same time they secured, among the professors of the country, intellectual perverts, who took particular pleasure in this branch of learning; and who, in order to satisfy their personal curiosity, under the guise of “scientific research,” submitted practically every college girl in the country to a questionnaire dealing with subjects that would have brought a blush to the face of a nineteenth century harlot, and have excited the violent resentment of and earned a slap in the face by any virtuous woman of our mothers’ day!

We begin now to have the product of such propaganda in a flood of books that put sexuality in tempting perspective, and in theatres and picture shows they take its most flagrant features, put them on display; and when the newspapers refuse to carry their ads—and even the godless government seeks to censure them—they sow the town with yellow sheets that would stink in hell. Those Minneapolitans who have been treated to this advertisement under their front doors recently know of what I am talking; and those who have not, I shall not besmirch by further enlightenment.

It is little wonder that modern education is filling our penitentiaries with its products, and that our schools are becoming increasingly sinks of vice. More and more they belong to the underworld; they are “lost!” God is not in them! Satan—hell’s manager—administers them! But, as I have said:

The Unbeliever—Jew or Gentile—Is Lost.

The Word is:

“He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

The liberals of the land have been rather pleased with and proud of the fact that Einstein is placed among the saints over the doorway of the Fosdick-Rockefeller Church of New York City.

That fact is a fit symbol of the theological doubts emanating from that pulpit.

E. C. Crocker, sympathetically reviewing Einstein’s book, tells us: “To one who accepts the law of cause and effect as governing all that happens, a being who interferes with that law is absolutely impossible. Neither a religion of fear nor a moral-social religion can have any hold upon him; a God Who rewards and punishes is to him unthinkable.”

And yet this advocate of uncertain science and practical atheism is given a place among the saints! It is a good thing those saints are only iron figures and lifeless, else they would be justified in putting their fingers over their noses while they quit the enforced company—John, the apostle, leading in the departure!

If there is some way of salvation besides the way of faith in Jesus Christ, the world has sought it in vain—even until now. Millions there are who will testify to having engaged long and earnestly in that search, but, failing, turned to Him and instantly discovered what their souls longed for. While looking to others, they were lost; when they looked to Him they were saved!

This leads naturally, then, to the question—

II. WHY ARE THEY LOST?

If it be true, as Jesus Himself taught, that the great multitudes are on the broad way that leadeth to destruction (Matthew 7:13), what placed them there? What keeps them there? Here again the Scriptures are clear:

Men Are Lost Because They Love Sin.

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world” (I John 2:15).

Sin beguiles men to deeds of sinfulness! The companion of harlots loses interest in his wife! It is a strange fact, but a natural effect, that sin makes men and women callous, indifferent even, to all the domestic and social amenities of life.

Only this very week, my wife and I have been in prayer with one of the most godly women I know in the world, whose soul agonizes over her irreligious children. Are they disturbed about their mother’s sorrow? Not a whit! Does sleep go from their eyes because hers are wet with tears? No!

There are godly women—members of this church—whose husbands will use even the Lord’s Day for sinful dissipations, notwithstanding the sacred pledge made at the marriage altar to “forsake all for her sake, to cleave to her and her only while life shall last.”

They trample her affections under indifferent feet for lust of liquor or love of harlots, and are in no way moved by the tears of the one woman who risked herself—body and soul—to their care and keeping. Sin is an awful thing!

Kagawa, in his *Religion of Jesus*, teaches that Jesus “apologized to God” for man’s sin. That is certainly a milk and water theology; but even that is better than some men do to their wives.

Intellectuals like Sir Oliver Lodge have told the deceived of this generation that “sin is the futile concern of undeveloped intellects.” The man who loves it, and who proposes to be both body and soul in the same, is much obliged to the professor for his destructive definition, but against that definition the Word of God still righteously thunders,—“**The soul that sinneth, it shall die**” (Ezekiel 18:20).

Men Are Lost Because They Are Haters of Holiness.

I went, one day, to the window of a railroad office, presented my certificate to secure a clergy ticket for travel, and as the man went about to make out the same, he was cursing between his teeth. I turned to a bystander and asked: “What is the matter with him?”

He smiled and said: “You are a minister, aren’t you?”

“Yes,” I answered, “I am.”

“Well, he hates ministers so much that he curses every time one of their number comes around.”

That is a bad state of mind, but not so bad as to hate holiness. A man might dislike ministers and be saved; I don’t know; but we have the Word for it that—

“**Without holiness no man shall see the Lord**” (Hebrews 12:14).

The true Christian hates sin and longs to be rid of it, and cheers his soul with the prospect of a spiritual body— not subject to temptation, sin, sickness and death.

But the unregenerate hate holiness instead, have no use for the companionship of those who practice it, and no desire for a personal experience of the same.

Little wonder, then, that one of the tests of a man’s regeneracy is at this point:

“**We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren . . .**” (I John 3:14).

There is no proof of salvation that exceeds that of finding oneself in love with good people, with good things, yea, in love with the character of a Holy God and a Savior Who “**was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin**” (Hebrews 4:15).

Men Are Lost Because They Reject Christ.

“**He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him**” (John 3:36).

The eternally paramount question is: **“What, then, will ye do with Jesus which is called Christ?”**

That is the eternal question. You must settle it, and there are only two things you can do. One is to accept Him; the other, to reject Him: the first is salvation; the second is damnation.

My friend, Dr. J. C. Masee, is given credit for this remarkable illustration from history:

He says that the Confederate General J. B. Gordon was wounded seven times in the face. Great scars were ploughed in the flesh. After the Civil War was over he lectured up and down the land, urging the people to forget the past hostilities and become one nation.

There served upon his staff a Colonel Smith who was also wounded at Gettysburg. General Gordon got down from his horse and bore Smith off the field to the emergency hospital, where he was so successfully treated that he could join the command as it returned from the engagement.

Smith was so full of hatred for the North that he opposed his old Commander in his reconciliation speeches. In those days the Legislatures of the States selected the Senators, and Smith was in the Georgia Legislature at the time General Gordon became a candidate for the United States Senate.

The vote in the House was a tie when Smith entered the room, and it was known that his vote would settle the question. He made out his ballot against Gordon, and started up to the platform to place the decisive vote thereon and defeat his General of Civil War days.

But just as he came, he looked up on Gordon’s face, and he saw those deep scars—seven of them—that had furrowed the otherwise handsome countenance. He stopped; he looked for a minute, earnestly. Then he dropped his head; the tears started from his eyes. He tore up the ballot and made out another, saying,—

“I cannot vote against the scars!”

My wavering friend, look upon the face of Jesus; study the scars on His hands and feet and side and bleeding brow; then—can you vote against the scars?

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