

In Tenderness He Sought Me, Luke 15:3-7

- I. Wanted
 - A. We all want to be wanted
 - B. We desire to feel worth and acceptance
 - 1. We have all heard of the young school child who was shunned and went on to commit some horrible act of violence
 - i. There was an active shooting at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville on Sunday
 - ii. The shooter was arrested Monday
 - iii. "Father of UVa shooting suspect says son told him people were 'picking on him,' seemed 'paranoid'" (NBCnews.com)
 - 2. "Low self-esteem [*or worth*] is when someone lacks confidence about who they are and what they can do... A major factor of low self-esteem, however, comes from your own mental state. Your inner voice, or the thoughts in your head, can be constantly telling you that you are not good enough or worth anything" ¹
 - C. This parable should cure all our low self-esteem issues
- II. One
 - A. Out of 100 sheep, one gets lost
 - 1. You have 100 pennies and drop one
 - i. Do you bend down and pick it up, or leave it on the ground?
 - ii. Is it worth the effort of chasing after it as it rolls into the gutter with all the mud and filth
 - iii. Is it worth the effort of picking it up and cleaning it off
 - iv. Many consider a penny worthless and would leave it there on the ground
 - B. Our shepherd has placed a value on you, and it is immense!
 - 1. "In tenderness He sought me, weary and sick with sin. And on His shoulders brought me back to His fold again."
 - 2. I don't think it is a coincidence that Jesus carries the sheep back to the fold on His shoulders, and that all the burden of humanity's sin was placed on His shoulders
 - 3. In Matthew 23:4 Jesus chastises the religious elite saying that they tie heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders
 - 4. Jesus removed that burden from our shoulders and took it on Himself
 - C. Christianity is a very personal thing
 - 1. Yes, we meet together and worship God
 - 2. Yes, we rely on one another for encouragement
 - 3. Yes, we gather together and share our lives with each other
 - 4. But it is my choice. I have to believe, I have to die to myself, I have to be raised to walk in newness of life, I have to live for Christ; no one can do that for me
 - D. John 3:16 says that God love the world (all humanity), but God knows me by name

¹ WebMD Editorial Contributors. (n.d.). *Low self-esteem: What are the signs to look for and how to deal with it*. WebMD. Retrieved November 15, 2022, from <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/signs-low-self-esteem>

1. John 10:3 (ESV) ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
2. He knows the number of my days, the purpose for which He created me
3. Psalm 139:1-16
4. Jeremiah 1:5 (ESV) ⁵ “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”
5. God knows us intimately... and still loves us!
6. Romans 5:6 (ESV) ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
7. Romans 5:8 (ESV) ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
8. Ephesians 2:1–6 (ESV) ¹ And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
9. Paul is talking to each person in the churches in Rome and Ephesus
10. God is talking to each of us

E. Not only does God save us, He celebrates over our salvation!

III. Celebrate

- A. “While angels in His presence sang until the courts of heaven rang”
- B. Luke 15:6–7 (ESV) ⁶ 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 that was lost.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.
- C. Put that picture in your mind, God singing and rejoicing at your decision to be washed
 1. Jim Thompson would often say at baptisms, “angels are rejoicing in heaven”
 2. Imagine the sound from Jones Stadium as the Red Raiders score the go-ahead touchdown with only seconds left to play; 61,000 people cheering and yelling; it would be deafening
 3. I saw a video of very successful rock group from the 70’s playing at a stadium in 2009 (36 years of playing together); it looked like the stadium was moving, but it was all the people jumping up and down
 4. That is the picture that plays through my mind every time someone makes the decision to let Christ rule in their lives
 5. That is the picture that goes through my mind when I made the decision (as I look back and reflect on my immersion)
 6. Zephaniah 3:14–17 (ESV) ¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel,

the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. ¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. ¹⁷ The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

7. Nathaniel, in John's Gospel, tells us exactly who the King of Israel is
8. John 1:49 (ESV) ⁴⁹ Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"
9. God rejoices over us with singing. What a beautiful picture of a loving God who values us so much that He would sacrifice His only unique 'Son' for His creation
- D. Even though His Son had to be sacrificed, God still rejoices at our salvation!

IV. God Seeks Us

- A. He died for me while I was sinning, needy and poor and blind. He whispered to assure me, "I've found thee thou art Mine." I'd never heard a sweeter voice; it made my aching heart rejoice"
- B. God has fixed our value (the blood of His Son, more precious than gold)
- C. God wants us
- D. God celebrates at our decision to choose Him