

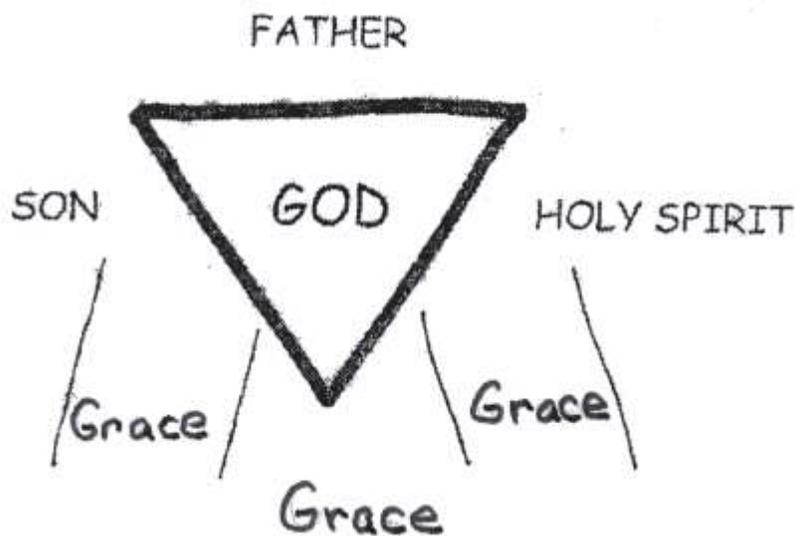
**It's What God Does That Counts
Not
What We Do**

The Lost Sheep - Luke 15:1-7

(Revised: 4/8/2013)

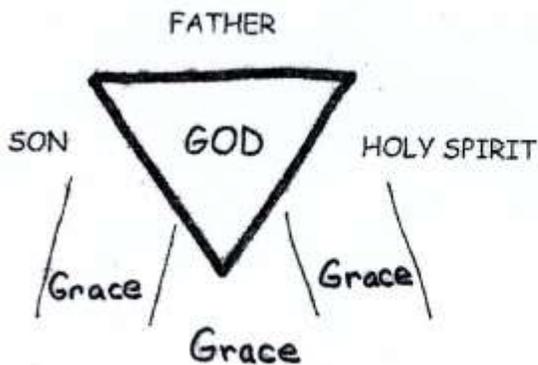
God has a plan for all of His creatures. It's that He might be glorified by the grace* which He gives to undeserving creatures. God wants to show His infinite love by giving super abounding grace! Isn't that fantastic? God gives; we receive! This plan started with the angels and goes all the way through the Millennium! God has limitless grace; He never runs out of it. He has enough grace to meet all of our needs while we're here on earth, and then tons more! God wants us to trust Him and His super abundant grace! **It's what God does and not what we do!**

*Grace: favor, kindness and mercy from God.



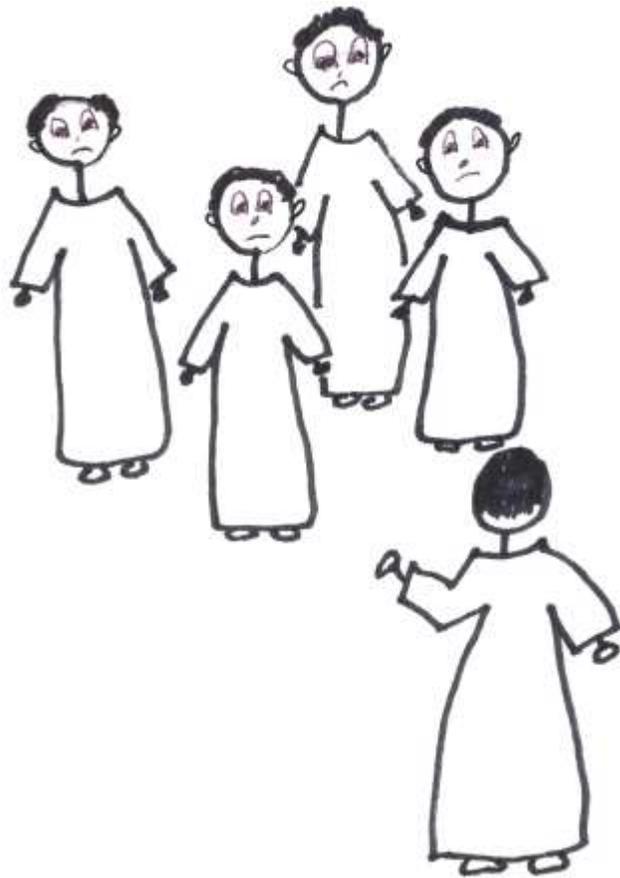
2 Timothy 1:9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity...

In the book of Luke in the Bible, there is a series of three parables or stories, "The Lost Sheep", "The Lost Coin" and "The Prodigal Son". We are going to look at the first parable to see how God treats us with grace. We're going to see how He wants to restore our souls or bring us back to His plan after we go away from it. We never lose our salvation but we can get out of God's plan for our lives on earth. Because of His love for us and because of His reputation or His good name, God will do everything He can to restore us back to the spiritual life. **It's what God does that counts, not what we do!**



Psalm 23:3 He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness [goodness] for His name's sake [for His reputation].

All three stories have the same audience - the Pharisees and scribes, the same conflict - need for repentance or change of thinking for the better, and the same response to the problem - joy in heaven over one sinner repenting. Jesus wants the Pharisees and the scribes to repent, change their thinking for the better, and return to Him. So, He tells them three stories, hoping that by the third story they will get the picture and repent or change their minds! God cares what we think; He wants us to think like Him!



Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.
Romans 12:2b But be transformed by the renewing of your mind....

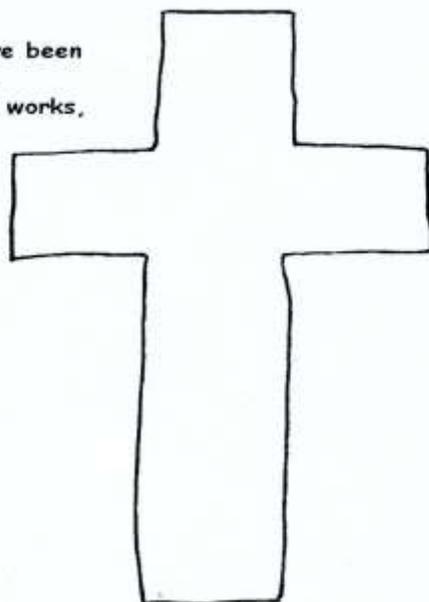
In the first story, "The Lost Sheep", Luke 15:1-7, the tax collectors and sinners were gathering around Jesus to listen to Him. The Pharisees and scribes were there also, grumbling and judging the sinners. They also judged Jesus because He was teaching sinners and eating with them. So Jesus told them this story.

Luke 15:4-7 "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture [wilderness] and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 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 which was lost?' I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."



In the story, the Pharisees and scribes who lived in Israel didn't see the love, grace and mercy of God. They thought they had to follow exactly the Mosaic Law to find favor with God. The Pharisees and scribes were teaching human good not the grace of God. The Mosaic Law was meant to show people of Israel their sinful nature. It was to teach them to lean back on God's grace, not on their own human good! It was the way of turning people to God for His mercy and grace. **It's what God does that counts, not what we do!**

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.

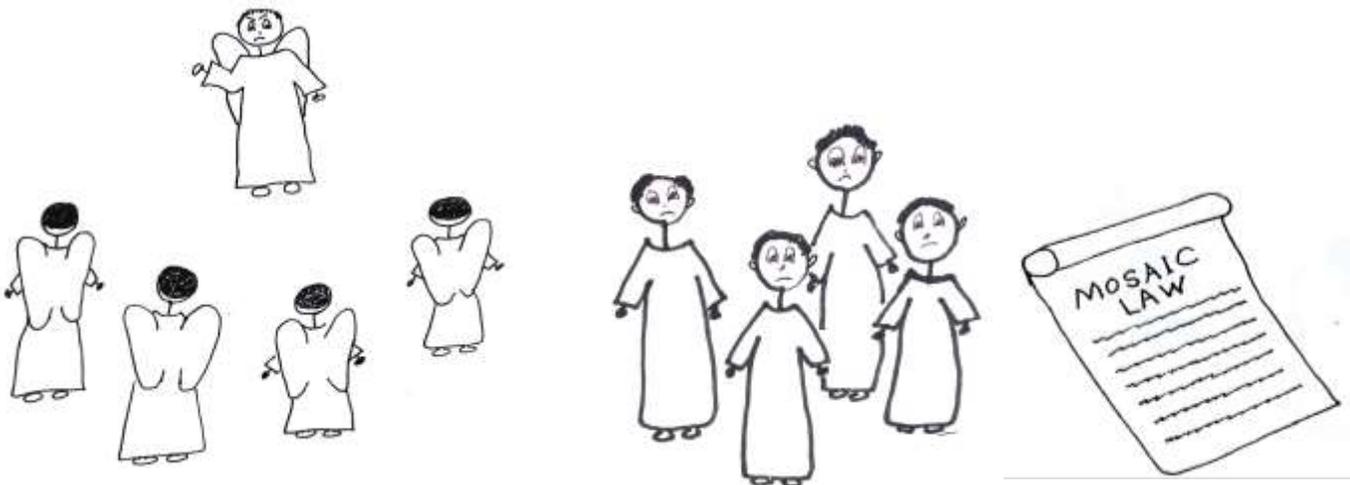


Romans 7:7 What shall we say then, or what shall we conclude, is the law sin? God forbid, on the contrary I had no known sin, but by the law. [The law pointed out the sinful nature, but that was it. It couldn't be the cause of someone losing his/her salvation.]

John 1:17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

The Pharisees and scribes were judging others rather than listening to Jesus' teaching. The kingdom of darkness wants to prevent people from being saved and coming to the truth. So, Satan and his angels lie to us and use any strategy that works to get us away from the grace of God. The Pharisees and scribes fell for the lie that they were better than the tax collectors and sinners! They were distracted! They hung on to the Mosaic Law and their works instead of God's love and grace!

It's What God Does That Counts, Not What We Do!



Romans 2:4 Or do you think lightly [and therefore judge others] of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance [change of thinking for the better]?

The Pharisees and scribes thought too highly of themselves. They were self-righteous. They didn't see themselves as lost! They lived in legalism or strict following of the Mosaic Law. In fact, they were soaked up in self-righteousness and legalism. They didn't see the Mosaic Law as a teaching tool but as a way to live! They were arrogant and didn't realize it. They were unwilling to change! If a person is arrogant, it is difficult to depend on grace. Jesus was trying to change their attitude.

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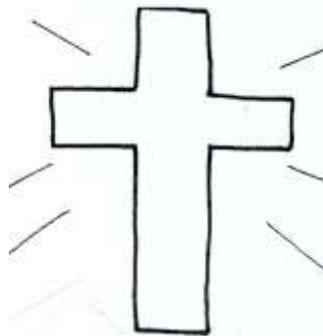


Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

In real life, the Pharisees and scribes were upset with Jesus talking to the tax collectors and sinners. They didn't get the message that Jesus was trying to tell them: Jesus Christ was there to restore or bring back to Him all mankind! They didn't realize that He was trying to change their attitudes.

Sometimes we are like the Pharisees and scribes; we think more highly of ourselves than we should! We need to let the Lord restore our attitudes and thinking. We do that by learning, believing and using Bible doctrine daily! God does the work!

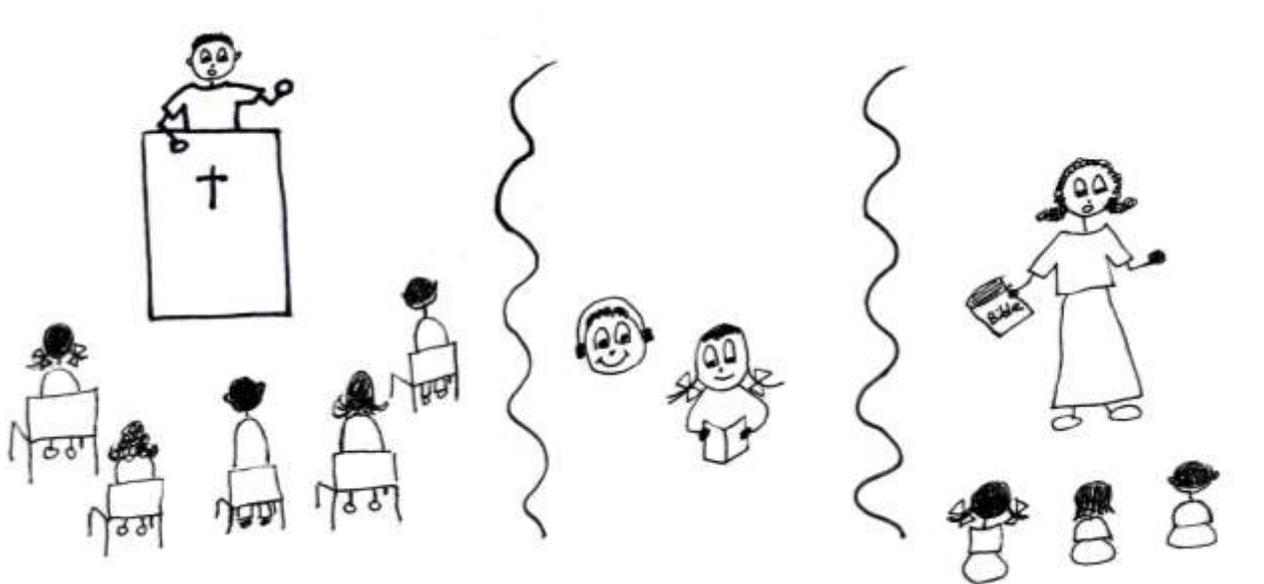
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Luke 15:1-2 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

If you are trying to do things perfectly and then put yourself down if you don't, you are being like a Pharisee! You are doing human works to please God. It is an exhausting way to live! God is not pleased with human works. He was pleased with the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. On the other hand, if you lean on God and use His abundant grace, you will have lots of energy. All God wants you to do is to learn His word and let the Holy Spirit grow you into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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Luke 15:10 "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents [changes his thinking for the better]."

The other parts of the story are Luke 15:8-10 *The Lost Coin* and Luke 15:11-32 *The Prodigal Son*. Remember, the audience is the same - the Pharisees and scribes, the message is the same - repentance or change of mind for the better, and the response is the same - joy in heaven over one sinner repenting. **It's what God does that counts, not what we do! It's God's grace that counts, not our works.**

