

GOD'S LOVE FOR THE LOST // Luke 19:10

Message from the series, The Gospel of Luke

Each gospel writer has a specific focus and purpose in writing. For Matthew, it is to show that Jesus is king (Matt 1:21); for Mark, it is to show Jesus as a servant (Mark 10:45); and for John, it is to show that Jesus is God (John 1:14). Luke, who wrote more of the New Testament than any other writer (28%), is writing for a gentile audience. His intention is that the reader will understand that God is on a mission to redeem a people for his own possession (Titus 2:11-14). The thesis of Luke's gospel is a fighter verse, a gospel truth to cling to: *The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost* (Luke 19:10).

1. Plan

"The Son of Man came..." Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man more than any other name. The title appears in Daniel 7: 13 and is used a total of 83 times in the New Testament (e.g., Matt 24:27, Acts 7:56). It points to his sonship and eternal glory in the incarnation. The Son of God is both coexistent and coeternal with God—his divine sonship is on display for all eternity. His plan was to come. As an expression of incarnational love, Jesus came in lowliness, humility, and humanity. He was sent by the Father (John 20:21) and the Father gave him (John 3:16). That which Jesus desires to redeem he must assume—he emptied himself, not by subtraction, but by addition, by taking on flesh, in order to be our penal substitute.

2. Purpose

"...to seek and to save..." Although Jesus also came to teach and to serve, his primary purpose was to seek and to save. Jesus wants total authority and claim—he is seeking you out to be conformed to the image of the Son and to be a disciple. Your whole life is to be a redemption project. We are not the chief seekers in our salvation. Jesus, the friend of sinners, sought us out. When Jesus turns his divine affection to seek you out, he will find you every time. "To save" can be a phrase of "Christianese"—a term that is familiar to insiders but is foreign or confusing to outsiders. To save means to take those who are perishing and rescue and recover them—this is what Jesus does for those who know they need it.

3. People

"...the lost." Lostness is a theological category. We are all either lost or found. The lost are those perishing and going to hell. God is good—he knows that people cannot save themselves. For this reason, Jesus will pay for the sins of humanity; he will do what they cannot do. We are all lost without Christ. We need to be saved; we need the blood of Jesus on our account. There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Are you lost? Jesus has a plan and a purpose to save people.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important to have fighter verses like Luke 19:10 hidden in our hearts? What fighter verses have been important in your Christian walk?
2. What was your experience of Jesus seeking you? How can your testimony be an encouragement to yourself and to others?
3. How has the term "saved" been transformed into Christianese? What might this term mean to those who are outside the church? How can we be clear in our gospel presentations to avoid confusing those we are trying to reach?