

Joy Because of Repentance

Scripture

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? "And when he has found [it], he lays [it] on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together [his] friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” (Lu 15:4-7 NKJV)

Devotion

I have a praise to share with you all. My son has made a profession of faith. Actually he made it a good while back, but I have been watching him carefully trying to discern the Holy Spirit’s work. It certainly appears to be real, and for that his mother and I rejoice!

My son has always been very respectful and well obeyed, but now he seems to be motivated by love instead of duty. This of course is the main characteristic of a believer. As it is written, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35 NKJV) Again, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love [his] brother abides in death.” (1Jo 3:14 NKJV) And, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.” (1Jo 5:2 NKJV)

The years preceding this joyous decision have caused me to reflect upon evangelism some. While there is abundant evidence that God may save people with little past knowledge, it has been my experience that salvation often comes to those who have been processed by life and repeated exposure to the Gospel message.

That encourages me to continue to share the Gospel when possible even to those who have already heard the message. However, understanding that also allows me to patient, and not to shove the message down someone’s throat. Being too aggressive may cause the hearer to see it as self-serving for the evangelist. It demonstrates a lack of love. Of course all of this is from a human perspective.

Ultimately, “. . . as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13 NKJV) This is true because it is “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” (Tit 3:5 NKJV). After all “. . . the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.’ Where [is] the wise? Where [is] the scribe? Where [is] the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.” (1Co 1:18-21 NKJV)