

"Being Lost"

Have you considered the high price of being lost eternally? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're exploring what it means to be lost.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Lord Jesus is in the saving business. And He came to seek and to save those who are lost (Luke 19 verse 10). He died on the cross so that we might know His love and be forgiven of our sins. Our Father in heaven desires all people to "be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2 and verse 4). Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

I can lose many things and still survive, but I cannot afford to lose my soul. Hebrews 9:27 reminds us that, "it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment." When I die, God will determine whether I'll be with Jesus forever. Whether my soul is right with God matters more than any other thing.

Some preachers think nearly everyone will go to heaven and almost no one will be lost, but the Lord said it differently. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7:13 to 14, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

Later the Lord says in Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." Now many are lost and they don't know it. They may think they know the Lord, but He will reject them. Will God welcome you into heaven or reject you?

This is an important study on being lost; and it's part of a series, "Take Up Your Cross"; and we offer it free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have downloadable materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Ephesians 2:1 to 3, and we'll explore what it means to be lost.

Our reading today comes from Paul's letter to the Ephesians chapter 2 verses 1 to 3. And here Paul talks about the condition of people who are not yet Christians.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Very difficult situation for people who are outside of Christ. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we are thankful for the love of Jesus that He shed His blood so that we might forgiveness. Father help us to live for Him, to love Him and to take up our cross and following Him. In Jesus name, Amen.

My greatest desire is to be saved and to live with the Lord Jesus in heaven forever. Being lost would be the greatest loss; it's the loss of everything for eternity! The wrath of God is not some insignificant thing to be ignored. Those who disbelieve will surely wish they had believed. The Lord Jesus said in John 3 and verse 36 that, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the

Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Those who don’t care will surely wish they had cared enough to prepare for eternity.

The Lord said in Matthew 24:37 to 39, “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. “For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.” We can be so distracted with our present life and ignore what the Lord says, but nobody will doubt when Jesus comes again.

People may think the idea of sin against God is obsolete; but think again. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5:29 to 30, “If your right eye makes you stumble (that is sin and fall away from God), tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.” Sin is your enemy not your friend.

Now if you don’t have the forgiveness of your sins, my friend, as kindly as I know how to say it, you are lost and in darkness. If you’ve forsaken Jesus and the church, as kindly as I know how to say it, you’re lost. If you have this unresolved sin that’s in your life and you refuse to repent, as kindly as I know how to say it, you’re lost. These are clear teachings of the Lord Jesus in scripture. And if you’re unwilling to forgive others, you cannot receive forgiveness yourself. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:14 to 15, “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Some people presume upon the grace of God, thinking they don’t really need to repent. They believe they can continue to sin willfully, and God will save them anyway. Some think they can add to the word of God or take away from it, and God won’t mind. 2 John 9 to 11 speaks clearly of a specific false teaching that, “Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.” But what about the deceivers, what the deceivers said about Jesus Christ. What about that. How He didn’t come in the flesh (2 John verse 7). Well what he’s saying that is an evil thing to teach a falsehood.

When we deceive others by changing another teaching of Christ, we’re also speaking something evil and will cause people not to have God but to be lost. When Ephesians 4:4 to 6 says that “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all,” well there can’t be two bodies or churches, or two Spirits, or two hopes, or two Lords, or two faiths, two baptisms, or two Gods and Fathers. You see that’s going too far beyond the teaching of Christ.

True disciples abide in the words of Jesus. The Lord Jesus said in John 8:31 to 32 to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” When you get away from the words of Jesus, you get away from Jesus Himself. When you fall for man-made doctrines, you get away from the truth. Only the truth can set you free from sin. There is a difference between people who think they’re disciples and what Jesus calls true disciples.

Now the Scriptures describe the person who has not yet come to Christ for the forgiveness of his or her sins. They’re said to be of this world and in darkness. Colossians 1:13 to 14 says about God, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in

whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Now the Lord has no desire for people to remain in the domain of darkness.

The Lord told Saul of Tarsus in Acts 26:16 to 18, ‘But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’ You see people in darkness are also in the dominion of Satan. They’re not forgiven. They are indeed lost and dead in sin.

Many of the things I’m saying were inspired by some points that were preached by my friend and brother, Hugh Fulford. And he talked about if I’m living in sin and lost, I know it in my heart. David, after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and killed Uriah said in Psalm 51:3 to 4, “For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.” You see I can’t plead ignorance about my sins. There are Bibles everywhere that carry the message about sin and salvation, and my conscience also knows.

Even people who don’t know God know when they have sinned. Romans 2:14 to 15 explains, “For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.” You see knowing we have sinned leads to great misery of soul and a feeling of worthlessness. Guilty souls despise what they’ve done. “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked” (Isaiah 57 verse 21).

Now being lost means losing the blessing, grace, and favor of God. Proverbs 15:29 simply says, “The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.” Again, Proverbs 66 verse 18 which says, “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.” That is he wouldn’t hear my prayers. Paul told the Gentiles to remember what their condition was before they became Christians in Ephesians 2 and verse 12 he says, “remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” Wouldn’t it be terrible to have no favor with God, to be alienated and separated from Christ? Wouldn’t it be sad to have no hope? Wouldn’t it be heartbreaking to know that God will not listen to your prayers?

If I am lost, I likely won’t be alone. Likely I’ll drag other souls down with me. I may even drag the people that I love the most down with me, maybe it’s my spouse, or my children, my brothers and sisters, and my whole family. If I choose the world and sin over Jesus, I’ll likely influence others to choose the world and to live in sin. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 9:42 that, “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea.” I tell ya we’re all touching each other’s lives. And our choices may become our family’s choices. I could cause my “little ones” to stumble and fall away from God.

If I am lost and I die lost, I’m lost eternally. The Lord Jesus compared the eternal destiny of the lost to the saved in Matthew 25:46, when He says about the lost, “These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Now there are only two categories for our eternity: punishment and life. The same word that describes “eternal life” describes “eternal punishment.” Each is as long as the other. We sing the words of that beautiful hymn, Amazing Grace: “When we’ve

been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we've first begun." But if I'm lost, I am lost forever; and ten thousand years won't change anything. If I'm lost, there's no hope of my changing my destiny after this life is over.

Thankfully, we can change our destiny in this life. We can be prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus. And by the grace and power of God and the Lord Jesus we can change our hearts and our ways. When we humble ourselves with contrite hearts, God opens the door for us to come to come back to Him or maybe come back to Him. You know you don't have to be lost and you don't have to stay lost; you can be forgiven and begin a new life. The guilty, sinful prodigal son returned home. Yes he was broken and penitent. But his father opened His arms and welcomed him home.

The Lord Jesus tells us the story in Luke 15:17 to 24: "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and he embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate."

You may be lost, but you too can be found. You may be dead in your sins, but God can make you alive with Christ and give you newness of life. God won't refuse those who are penitent and contrite. Psalm 51:17 says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." You can have hope in Christ, a hope that this world cannot give you. You can be forgiven and live eternally with Jesus Christ. And you have the opportunity to come to the Lord. Will you?

Let's pray together. Father we pray that each of us may take our sins seriously. To forsake them. And to come to You for Your grace. Knowing that You love us and Father help us always to do Your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 16:24 to 25, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?" What could you do if you lost your soul eternally? Nothing. That's why you need to act now in this life. The grace of God is abundant for those who love Him and will do His will. You can't earn salvation; but by refusing to accept God's grace and will for your life, you're going to face the wages of sin, which is death.

The Lord calls us to something better than a guilty conscience and losing our souls. He said in Matthew 11:28 to 30, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Christianity is not an impossible way to live. The Lord helps us.

The Lord said in John 8:51, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." We must let the Lord rule in our lives. We must believe and confess He is the Christ, the Son of God, must repent of our sins, and must be baptized in water in His name for the forgiveness of our sins.

Now in baptism God graciously washes away sins by the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 22:16 and Romans 6:3 to 7). And that's when we're born again as children of God.

We pray that today's study about being lost has stirred you consider the Lord's grace and obey the Lord. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message or the booklet "Take Up Your Cross," mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that's in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Just subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." Now when you go to watch them be sure to like the programs, give it a thumbs up; and this helps us to spread the program to those that may want to watch it. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. You see everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us, tell a friend that you watch this program and encourage them too. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.