

Trinity III
June 20, 2010
Sermon - Christ Church Parish
Father Richard Hobbs
Reading 1 Peter 5:5 and Luke 15:1

In the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. ❀

The running verbal sparring match between Jesus and the Pharisees continues about the "Invitation of God". Just so everyone is on the same page, the "Invitation" that God the Father send's to everyone is Jesus. This is a key point, without which, you will have a hard time understanding the parables of today's Gospel. God also sent a servant, Jesus, to compel people to accept God's "Invitation". Compel in this case does not mean force, but not to accept "excuses" or "No" for an answer, Jesus will be persistent and patient in finding you and making you realize God's Love for you. Accepting or rejecting this offer of Gods Love is a personal choice.

Jesus forced the Pharisees to see their condescending Pride, Self Righteous Pride to be exact, which the Pharisees displayed about anyone they considered beneath them. The Pharisees had twisted God's Law about loving your neighbor, to read, we will only love people like ourselves, and we won't even associate with people not like ourselves. Given that attitude, how could the Pharisees love, or care for that matter, the people who they were supposed to lead. They considered these people to be sinners, people who are not worthy of notice. If the Pharisees would not even speak with these people, let alone meet in their homes, how could they lead, other than as a task master.

Returning to the verbal sparring match recorded in today's Gospel about the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Coin. Please recognize these stories are describing identical events. The point to focus upon is the ninety-nine

sheep and the nine coins are safely with God and God does not loose what He holds. What God, in this case Jesus, is doing is "Inviting" the lost to join God. When the lost responds in a positive manner to this "Invitation" all of Heaven rejoices with God for the repentant sinner.

A positive response is when the realization comes that you have made a mess of your life and need a way out. The realization comes that God is the answer. And if you give Him your troubles to worry about, God will see you through whatever difficulties you made in your life. Now this does not mean instant gratification, where all of your cares are swallowed up and you live happily ever after. The price for digging the hole is to face the issues and fill the hole in, so it is once more firm ground, but you need not do this task alone.

St. Peter says the way to fill in the hole, is to listen to the people who were placed in authority over you. Offer your help to be a sounding board for other people to vent their frustrations. Try to help them understand we are all in the same boat, and if we do not help each other, we loose the opportunity to rejoice with God in Heaven over the return of the lost sheep or the lost coin. In other words talk and show compassion with/for people, and don't think people are beneath you, or that you are better than them, which is a very Pharisaical way of thinking.

Remember this is the same St. Peter, who in the Acts of the Holy Apostles had a dream from God about eating unclean things. St. Peter interpreted this dream correctly, by realizing the "Invitation" of God is for all of Humanity, not just the Jewish people.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen. ❀