

## **God's Patience Pursuit (Easter Sunday)**

**Luke 19:10 NKJV "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."**

A lot of people say, "I found God."

But if we're being honest... we weren't looking that hard for God. We were looking for mammasitas and margaritas.

We weren't chasing Him with clean hearts and pure motives.

Most of us were running.... We were running toward ambition. We were running toward addiction. We were running toward Approval. We were running toward affluence. We were not chasing after God, we were gratifying ourselves.

I have just now reached an age and stage in my life to share this with you.... I have lived the majority of my life discontented. I was baptized at six, filled with the Spirit at eight...

I was delivered from sin.....but not from self.... In a sense I wanted God... I ran a bus route and wiped snotty noses and taught Sunday School... but never completely submitted to Christ.

And even though I grew up in church and had great parents, I wanted to be in God's service, but I also wanted success. I've been so selfish and didn't want to sacrifice. But God kept patiently pursuing me.

While I wonder why it has taken me so long to lay aside myself.... the good news is...He was always there.

**The gospel isn't about us climbing our way up to God. It's about  
God stepping down into our mess.**

God has always been the seeker. Whether you have only known a life of sin, or whether you have been religious all your life, it doesn't matter!!!!

**Romans 5:8 says "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."**

He found us in the valley.

He found us in our addiction.

He found us in our pride.

He found us in our religion.

He found us in the refinery....He came to get us.

Just like the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine.

**“What man of you, having a hundred sheep... does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?” Luke 15:4**

Notice the last part: Until he finds it.

That’s the heart of God. **We didn’t discover Him like a buried treasure.**

**He pursued you like a Father who refuses to lose His children.**

And that changes everything, because if He found you when you were lost...

He won’t abandon you now that you’re found.

If He pursued you when you were running...He won’t stop walking with you now that you’re trying.

We didn’t earn salvation. Look at **Galatians 2:16 “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ..**

Notice that Paul did not say that our justification, that word (means just as if we had never sinned) Paul did not say that our justification came through our faith in Jesus Christ.... We are justified by the faith of Christ...

What does this mean.... It means our faith in the Son of God does not justify us.... Why doesn’t it... simply because we know too much about ourselves and our faith simply cannot believe we could be loved that much.... or that God would reach for us that hard.... So we must have faith in God’s righteous....

We must have faith that He took our sin and gave us His righteousness....because my faith at times still sees me as unworthy, and not good enough.

Ladies and Gentlemen..... The cross is the end of the law of humanly attained righteousness... Therefore, it is not about what you do, but what He has done for you. We didn’t find God, He found Us...

We responded to His pursuit.

Understand this: **Our story isn't "I got my life together."**

**Our story is "God refused to give up on me."**

It should produce humility, it should produce gratitude.

It should produce surrender.

I've heard a couple sermons on why Jesus had to go to the cross. It is a broad subject and so much could be said. But since I don't have a semester to teach on it, give me three minutes to talk about it.

At a place called Shiloh in the OT sacrifices for sins happened for 369 years, the burnt offering, the flour offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering. Sheep, goat, grain, bull, dove— all the Old Testament sacrifices of God's people...

**The primary reason Jews made sacrifices to Jehovah was to foster a relationship and "draw near" to God, often providing atonement for sins.**

In Hebrew the word for sacrifice is korban, (kor-bond) it means to come near, to move into a closer relationship.

This is what I want you to see.... **Jesus' didn't see His sacrifice on the cross as giving up something. He saw it as a way to move closer to us.**

When we say, we are going to sacrifice and fast today what we mean is....we are going to miss out on food.

**Jesus did not see sacrifice as missing out on SOMETHING..... He saw it as missing out on someone.**

***Sacrifice isn't about losing anything — it's about loving Someone!!!***

'Since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus – let us draw near...  
**Hebrews 10:19-23**

Get this.....Christ on the Cross is for more than paying the punishment for all the wrongs we have done -- ***Christ on the Cross is ultimately about paving the way for Christ to get close to us...***

**The Cross is more than justice satisfied, and the book of wrongs closed — the Cross is about Christ not being satisfied until our names are written in the Book of Life, and all distance between us is closed.**

The Cross is where we are given more than forgiveness; we are ultimately given nearness.

**“But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:13....**

The gospel good news is more than getting forgiveness, and getting a ticket to heaven –

**It is Jesus doing whatever it takes for us to draw nearer.** Why does Jesus want to draw near because He knows success will never satisfy you.... Living for yourself will never satisfy you... Sin will never satisfy you. Only Jesus can satisfy your soul.

Stand with Me.

Let's pray this prayer together....

**Father, Thank You that WE didn't have to climb our way to You. Thank You that when we were lost, distracted, stubborn, and running, You came after us. Thank You that salvation is not about our strength but about Your pursuit.**

**Because Your Love for me is so Great.... I want to surrender myself to your purpose for me.**

**I ask You to Forgive me of all my sin, so that I may come near to you....Take my sin and Cover me in your righteousness, take my sin and fill me with your Spirit,**

**Transform my life through your love. Heal me from the inside out. My greatest need is to be forgiven, washed and cleanse.....Make Me Whole.... Draw me close to you....**