

The Lost Stradivarius



After a concert Peter Stumpf, the principle cellist for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, went to a friends house. He inadvertently left his cello in its case on the doorstep while he entered to have a chat with the friend. A young man riding his bike down the city street saw an opportunity for an easy theft. He grabbed the case and rapidly pedaled down the street. In his hurry to escape he knocked into pedestrians and light poles with the cumbersome case. The thief rode what he judged a safe distance away. He stopped to examine the contents of the case. He was so disappointed with what he found that he tossed it into a garbage dumpster.

Little did the thief know that the cello was a rare Stradivarius valued at over 3.5 million dollars.

When Peter Stumpf discovered his cello missing his heart sunk. He couldnt believe he had been so careless as to lose the irreplaceable instrument. He had no idea that the nearly priceless cello was lying in a trash dumpster with discarded table scraps and other refuse.

That cello was extremely valuable but you have something far more valuable in your possession, you have a soul, and like the Stradivarius, your soul can be lost. The Lord Jesus said, For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Mk.8:36)

A soul is lost in this life when it seeks to find its pleasure in the trash heaps of lust, sin, pride and moral corruption that so abound in this world. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. (Isa.53:6) There isnt a person alive who

hasnt visited those trash heaps and contracted the defilement of sin. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Ro.3:23) Because we all have sinned, each one of us needs the Savior. The only way to be cleansed from sin is to believe on the Lord Jesus and the great work he did on Calvarys cross. It was there that he gave his life for sinners. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Ro.5:6) The blood which flowed from his wounds while he hung on the cross is able to cleanse the vilest sinner if they only will look to him in faith.

Because of Christs death on the cross the good news of the gospel can go out to all the world, telling them to Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. (Acts 16:37) What a truly priceless gift God gave to mankind when he sent his Son into this world that lost souls might be saved!

Peter Strumfs Stradivarius lay in a garbage dumpster and soon a truck would come and haul it away to a landfill where it would be lost forever. Fortunately the cello was rescued before that truck arrived. A young lady spotted it in the dumpster and picked it out of the garbage. She thought she might be able to convert the cello into a CD container. She brought it home, and on closer inspection discovered it was the missing Stradivarius that was being reported about in the news. With a few scratches and dents on it she was able to return it to its rightful owner.

The Stradivarius was recovered but it came very close to being lost forever. If a soul dies never having come to the Savior they will be lost forever. The Lord Jesus spoke often on the reality of hell. He likened hell to a site called Gehenna in the valley of Hinnom just outside of Jerusalem. In ancient times it was a place where human sacrifices were offered by fire to an idol.

Then for hundreds of years the place became a garbage dump. City dwellers dumped and burned all manner of trash and refuse there. It was a maggot ridden trash heap with fires constantly smoldering in it. The Lord Jesus used this dirty, smoldering site to illustrate what hell was like. *And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* (Mk.9:47,48) Hell is a terrible place where lost souls will suffer forever.

Oh wont you realize that you have a soul that will be lost forever if you dont come to the Savior. In love and grace he is willing to save you the moment you realize your need and turn to him in faith. He knows all about you. He knows where you have been, and he knows what you have done. You cant hide anything from him. The incredible thing about his love is that even when he knows all about us he still loves us anyway. Dont fling your soul away like the thief threw the cello worth 3.5 million dollars away. Instead, come to him who said, *He that cometh to me I shall in no wise cast out.* (Jn.6:37)

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans.6:23)

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