

THE LOST SHEEP

Text: Luke 15:1-7

Key Word: Lost

Key Thought: Jesus Came to Seek and Save Lost Sheep

I'm going to look over the next few weeks at the **Parable of Lost Possessions**. Luke 15 gives us one parable that has three aspects to it. Verse three makes it clear that it is one parable.

"Then Jesus told them this parable . . ."

Luke 15:3

Each phase of the parable centres around a main truth. It is like a 3-sided diamond, with each side offering the observer a wealth of beauty. Jesus had an important truth to reveal to the tax collectors, sinners, scribes, and Pharisees as they gathered around him. He had just finished rebuking the scribes and Pharisees for their pious attitudes. Now He was about to show the contrast of His heart with theirs.

It has been rightly said,

"The key of the parable hangs on the front door."

The key to this parable is found in response to the condemning statement in verse two (the front door).

"This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Luke 15:2

Therefore, this parable is given to emphasize the truth that came out again in Luke as Jesus ministered to Zacchaeus which said,

"the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Luke 19:10

The tax collectors and sinners were neglected by society. Unlike the Pharisees, most sinners know they are sinners and need to be saved. These lost ones continued to be **attracted to Jesus and distracted by the Pharisees.**

I Would like to Approach this Parable by Considering the Four Verbs That Are Used.

I. LOST (Luke 15:4)
II. SEEK (Luke 15:4)
III. FIND (Luke 15:5)
IV. REJOICE (Luke 15:6)

I. LOST (Luke 15:4)

It's interesting that Jesus begins with the relationship of the shepherd and his sheep. A shepherd was considered as one in the low-class of society. They raised sheep for food as well as the numerable temple sacrifices. They lived, slept and ate with their sheep. A true shepherd would place his own life in jeopardy for the sake of a disobedient sheep or lamb or for the entire flock that was in danger.

During the daytime the sheep would be allowed to graze upon the hillside. Due to the danger of predators (i.e., wolves), they would be called into a place of shelter in the early evening. The sheep pen would not have a door upon it. The shepherd would stand at the opening after the calling the sheep and count them as well as call them by name them as they passed into safety. A hundred sheep would be a fairly normal size for a small farmer.

The first phase of this parable gives us a disheartening feeling. One of the sheep is lost. But How? This was a shepherd - not a hireling! He represents our Lord who stated,

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

John 10:11

Was this sheep lost through its own foolishness? Probably it never realized that it had strayed away. Perhaps something caught its attention. It is vaguely possible that it was determined to be lost.

In mathematics it would appear as insignificant - a mere 1/100th. Why should anyone be concerned or any efforts be made to recuse it? It could return on its own. So what if it went without food as it entered into danger.

The answer is simple. The Psalmist said,

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want."

Psalm 23:1

Any true shepherd would be on the job seeking out the lost sheep even if it was only one.

II. SEEK (Luke 15:4)

The shepherd would never leave 99 sheep unattended to save one. John 10:3 tells us that there were watchmen who could be in charge to guard the sheep left in the field. Time would be of the essence. A moment lost could mean the death of such a lost one.

Not much emphasis is placed upon searching in this portion of the 3-part parable. It is rather stressed in the "lost coin" section.

There is only one goal on the shepherd's mind - go after and find the lost sheep. In Luke the shepherd "seeks" for the lost sheep while in John he "dies" for His sheep.

Isaiah the prophet wrote,

*"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, Each of us
has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid
on him the iniquity of us all."*

Isaiah 53:6

THE ONE-EYED DOE

*** There is an old fable that a doe who had but one eye used to graze near the sea. In order to be safe, she kept her blind eye toward the water, from which side she expected no danger, while with the good eye she watched the country.

Some men noticing this, took a boat and came upon her from the sea and shot her. With her dying breath she said,

*"Oh! hard Fate! That I should receive my death wound
from the side which I expected no harm, and be safe in the part
where I looked for most danger."*

III. FIND (Luke 15:5)

Oh, the joy that must have come to the shepherd as he found the lost sheep. There's no doubt that a plan was adopted and followed. Perhaps this sheep had tendencies known only to the watchful shepherd. There is no indication of chastisement. Rather the lost one is placed upon the shoulder of the shepherd. It was a position of protection and care.

III. FIND (Luke 15:5) (Contd.)

CARRYING OR CARRIED?

*** "Friends, you have all known me as a devout Roman Catholic" said the Belgian who was converted recently.

"I used to go to confession and communion, but I had to acknowledge that after all I had no peace. I found a God whom I could carry."

"In order to be helped I needed a God who could carry me, and such a God I have found in the Person of my blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." ***

Sunday School Times

Once the sheep was found the shepherd quickly headed for the safety of home. Thankfully he had found that no harm had come to the sheep.

It's because of the efforts of the Chief Shepherd that we return. He seeks out and saves us.

"For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

I Peter 2:25

IV. REJOICE (Luke 15:6)

There is no doubt that finding the lost sheep would bring about great joy.

"he joyfully puts it on his shoulders"

Luke 15:5

"Rejoice with me, I have found my sheep"

Luke 15:6

"more rejoicing in heaven"

Luke 15:7

IV. REJOICE (Luke 15:6) (Contd.)

So the shepherd, the friends and the angels rejoiced together. What a beautiful reason for rejoicing. The Lost had been found.

What began as a simple wandering into the wilderness could have ended in disaster/tragedy. The poor shepherd did not make an elaborate banquet because he couldn't afford it. He simply invited his friends to rejoice with him. The shepherd probably suffered much more than the sheep did as it wandered off. A great burden was lifted.

Who could this lost sheep represent? It would first of all have to be one of the fold that wandered off. Can you think of someone of our flock that has wandered off and is unattended?

If we know where they are, shouldn't we want to invite them back? Perhaps we need to do more to help them recognize that they're missed.

People leave for many different reasons.

1. They don't fit in/can't fit in
2. They've felt hurt or abused (some create their own)
3. They've been rejected due to sinful tendencies
4. They are harbouring unforgiveness
5. They don't like the shepherd and food (greener on the other side)
6. They feel the flock is being misled
7. They were fearful of a predator
8. They misunderstood some communication
9. They were unattended to
10. They were immature and rebellious

No matter what the reason we can all be involved in the rejoicing times if we do our part to find these lost ones. Most of our churches have too many people with too many complicated problems for one shepherd to minister effectively.

As the process of help takes place, the sheep can be very effective by simply developing an atmosphere of love and affection toward each other . . . especially to those who need to be ministered to.

Ask the Lord to help you minister to just one person in need this week. Lift that person up in prayer to the Great Shepherd of the sheep. As these hurt ones are brought back to the fold, heaven will rejoice with us.

Perhaps you are one of the sheep who has gone astray and wish to return to God today. If so, God's arms are open wide ready for your return.

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Date: Jan 15/17

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30Am

Place: My Saviour's Love (I Stand Amazed in the Presence) - F

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INTRODUCTION: *Luke 15:3; Luke 15:2; Luke 19:10*

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IV. REJOICE (Luke 15:6) - *Luke 15:5; Luke 15:6; Luke 15:7*