

The Lost Sheep

by Welcome Detweiler

The parable of the Lost Sheep teaches us that God's interest is in those who know they are lost and undone, and that the good shepherd's love is kind and gentle, rejoicing in saving lost sinners.

Duration: 14:24

Scripture: Psalm 69:1, Matthew 6:33, Luke 15:4-7, John 3:16, John 10:11, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8-9

Topics: "Christ's Redemption", "God's Forgiveness"

Description

The video is a sermon centered around the parable of the lost sheep. The speaker emphasizes the depth of Christ's suffering on the cross for the redemption of humanity. Despite the anguish, there is a bright side as Christ's sacrifice satisfied God's justice and opened the door for forgiveness and salvation. The speaker compares Christ to a shepherd who tirelessly seeks out and saves lost sinners, rejoicing in their redemption rather than scolding them. The sermon is based on Luke 15:4-7 and is given in response to the murmuring of the religious Pharisees who were surprised and disgusted by Christ's association with sinners.

Transcript

Perhaps you have noticed that the general theme of this program is centered in the rather familiar parable of the Lost Sheep, and I guess you would almost expect my brief message to follow that theme. Since you are expecting that, I have no good reason to disappoint you, so the story of the Lost Sheep it shall be. I hope you were listening earlier while I read the four verses from Luke's Gospel, chapter 15, verse 4 through 7. Perhaps you will understand the parable better if I give you the settings.

In the opening verses, the ultra-religious people, known as Pharisees and Scribes, are murmuring because the Lord Jesus Christ has refused to confine himself to their religious society, and he is found receiving and dining with publicans and sinners. The religious Pharisees had no dealings with these common people, and they seemed rather surprised and disgusted that Christ would associate himself with these irreligious, despised people. To answer their murmuring, Christ gives his reasons in the threefold parable of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son.

Time will not permit me to speak on these three, but let's think of the explanation that he gives in the parable of the Lost Sheep. He likens the self-righteous Pharisees to the ninety-and-nine sheep somewhere in the wilderness who, in their own estimation, need no repentance, and he likens the publicans and sinners to the one lost sheep who is conscious of being lost. He raises the logical question,

What man of you Pharisees, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety-and-nine and go after the one that is lost? In other words, he is saying, When you see me eating and receiving publicans and sinners, I am going after lost souls, and at the same time I am leaving the society of you religious Pharisees.

The writer of one of the hymns that were used early in this program, entitled The Ninety-and-Nine, has caused a little confusion when she wrote, There were ninety-and-nine that safely lay in the shelter of the foals, for the Bible says they were in the wilderness. There is no suggestion that they were in the foals. But perhaps Elizabeth Clepane, the writer of the hymn, had this in mind, that in their own estimation, the Pharisees thought they were safely within the foals.

In their own estimation, they thought they were beyond the need of repentance. In all the dealings that Christ had with these scribes and Pharisees, he was able to do very little for them, because they seemed to be able to take care of themselves without any outside help. Their standard of morality and general conduct was above reproach and very commendable, but they were not interested in lost souls.

They did not seem to realize that they were themselves lost in the sight of God. There's not very much that God can do for self-righteous people, so he leaves them to themselves, as a shepherd would leave the ninety-and-nine and go out in search for lost souls. On this ground, Christ justified himself for eating with publicans and sinners.

In like manner, God is still more interested in those who know they are lost and undone than he is in self-sufficient ones who are trying to work their way to heaven. God has nothing to offer to the man who thinks that he can save himself by his good works. Nothing but condemnation.

I suppose that I have in my listening audience a few who still belong to the ancient order of the ninety-niners. Good people, too, so far as the standards of men are concerned. But you have never seen yourself as lost and in need of being saved by grace.

It will be a good day for you when you abandon the idea that you can save yourself. Then it will not be difficult for you to admit, I am lost and need to be saved. All who are eligible to be in heaven have at some time experienced what it means to be lost and helpless.

The Savior's interest is keen when he meets one who acknowledges he is a lost sinner, for it is the lost sinners that Christ came to seek and to save. Have you ever been lost? If not, then you have never been saved, for only lost people can be saved. In the parable we are considering, we have no difficulty in discerning who is the shepherd, for Christ said, I am the good shepherd.

The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The shepherd who goes out to find the lost sheep is prepared to suffer hardships, for he has one ambition, and that to find the one that is lost. In the hymn that I refer to again, the Night and Nines, there is one verse that expresses it in these words, But none of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed, nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through, ere he found his sheep that was lost.

This would remind us of the deep waters of death that Christ passed through. In the 69th Psalm we have the prophetic references which apply to Christ and his sufferings, reading from verse 1. Save me, O God, for the waters are coming unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing.

I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Let not the water flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up. These are just a few of the many heartthrobs of Christ that are expressed in God's word.

Our finite mind cannot grasp the depth of the anguish and the sorrow through which Christ passed when he suffered for our sins on that old rugged cross. But there seems to be a bright side to nearly every story, and it is even so with the sufferings of Christ. For when the six hours were expired, Christ cried with a triumphant voice, It is finished! and bowed his head and dismissed his spirit.

The price for my redemption and yours was paid, and God's throne of justice was satisfied. And since that day, God is offering forgiveness and pardon to lost sinners through the person and work of his dear Son. The shepherd will not be stopped in his purposes.

He will not give up until he finds the lost sheep. In like manner, Christ will visit every sinner in the world and offer his salvation. Some will not receive it, but the offer stands just the same.

It seems unbelievable that a lost sheep would refuse the shepherd's help. But some do. I must charge you, lost sinners, who are ignoring the tender pleadings of the Lord Jesus Christ, a day will surely come when you will reap for such deliberate rejecting of the shepherd who desires to rescue you from the dreadful danger of perishing in your sins.

It is utter folly to try to convince yourself that you have not gone astray. For in Isaiah 53 we are told that all we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way.

Some may have gone farther astray than others, but we have all gone astray. And, like sheep, we have no way of finding the fold without the aid of a shepherd. Shepherds tell us that sheep are somewhat different from many other animals in that they seem to have no special instinct to guide them home when they are lost.

It is rather common to hear stories of cats or dogs that seem to find their way home, regardless of the distance. But when did you hear a true story of a lost sheep finding its way home? Never. The Spirit of God selected the right animal when he said, All we like sheep have gone astray.

Sinners remain lost until they are found by the Good Shepherd, and when he finds the lost, according to our parable, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. When he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. The kindness that the Shepherd shows to the lost sheep expresses the gracious dealings of Christ with the lost sinner.

He wins the sinner's heart by his love and by his grace. An hireling might find the lost sheep and whip the disobedient animal all the way home, but not so with the Good Shepherd. He never scolds the sinner.

He rather rejoices that he has been able to save a soul that would otherwise have perished. There is not a word mentioned of the rejoicing of the found sheep, but the rejoicing of the Shepherd is mentioned twice, suggesting that Christ receives a greater joy when a sinner is saved. He delights in the fact that his sufferings and death for sinners were not in vain.

My unsaved friends, have you ever considered this, that you have the privilege of causing the heart of Christ to rejoice when you acknowledge that you are a lost sinner and turn to him for salvation? He cannot

rejoice in that life of sin and disobedience. He is rather grieved that you should turn down his opportunities of being saved. But all heaven rejoices when a sinner trusts Christ and is fully born again.

That patient Shepherd is standing by your side right now, and he offers to become your Shepherd, your Savior, the moment you will put your faith in him. What more can he do than ask you to trust him? Although the rejoicing of the sheep is not mentioned, we do know that lost sinners are made happy when they are saved. The awful prospect of facing a lost eternity keeps unsaved people in a very unhappy condition, and the moment they trust Christ, their prospect is altogether different.

The heavy burden of their sins is removed. They are heaven-bound and rejoice in it. I covet this joy for you, my unsaved listeners.

If you are unhappy, the remedy lies altogether in your own hands. Receiving Christ as your Lord and Savior will bring joy to you and to him. Rejecting Christ will bring more sorrow and heartache.

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