

Introduction:

- On this Fourth of July weekend, Celebrations happened all over the country as Americans celebrated and enjoyed the reality of the freedoms we have.
- We are reminded, the freedoms we have were purchased since the founding with sacrifice, toil, and blood by our Founding Fathers, patriots, and military men and women over the generations!
- When freedom was in jeopardy around the world, courageous young men and women stepped up to the plate in self-sacrifice to fight and RESCUE enslaved continents. Many of them did not come home, they're buried in places like **Gettysburg Pennsylvania, Normandy France and Islands like Iwo Jima and Tarawa.**
- Today, however, my message is not about our American Freedoms, which I deeply appreciate.
- Today I want to share about **the heart of the greatest freedom fighter** who brought about the greatest **RESCUE** to the planet! His name is Jesus.
- Jesus saw the plight of humanity, enslaved to the tyranny of sin, Satan and darkness, with no one with the ability to RESCUE them.
- He stepped out of the ultimate comfort zone – heaven and took on a human body to walk with a broken and sinful humanity. He shed his blood to pay a ransom price to purchase our freedom and **RESCUE** us, so we could live with Him in the Kingdom of God forever.
- The greatest news ever is that He rose again from the dead and conquered sin, death, and the grave. He lives, to offer an eternal inheritance for those who will surrender their lives to him.
- He invites **and calls every one of his followers who claim to know Him to take on His Heart to bring spiritual freedom and RESCUE for mankind.**
- Today I would like to look into the **gospel of Luke chapter 15** and **see the heart of Jesus Himself** about His great desire to **RESCUE** people.
- **In Luke chapter 15** Jesus taught three parables to **communicate His heart for people.**
The Lost Sheep - The Lost Coin - The Lost Son
- Today, we are going to look at the **Parable of the Lost Sheep**

Text: Luke 15:1-10 NIV - The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

1 – Jesus spoke this parable to communicate His Heart to the Pharisees

² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered (complained/criticized), “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Who were the Pharisees? What were they all about?

*They were a large sect of the Leaders of the Jewish religious community. They were the Bible believing (Torah) followers of Yahweh at the time of Jesus.

***Pharisee means “Separated one.”** They viewed themselves as the ones who were the most separated to God, the most devoted, most holy and ceremonially clean of the Jewish population.

*They loved the Law of God and created many man-made rules to ensure the Law of God was kept.

*They often displayed a self-righteous attitude and looked down on others.

*They were the rule-keepers of the day. They often placed following man-made rules above the redemption of lost people.

*They considered Jesus an illegitimate Rabbi, unqualified because He didn’t have the formal education most Rabbi’s had.

*In the Gospels, the Pharisees opposed Jesus, questioned Him sharply, and doubted his miracles.

*They would often try to trap Him with questions, spied on Him and spoke out to discredit Him.

*Ultimately, they were the ones who falsely accused Him and conducted an illegal trial in the middle of the night and had the Romans execute Him.

***But the biggest problem with the Pharisees is that they were opposed to Jesus and His teaching. They didn’t believe His miracles showing He was the Messiah or His teaching about love and grace.**

***That is why Jesus told three parables about the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin and Lost son – to the Pharisees.**

***Jesus was trying to communicate His heart for people - to the Pharisees.**

- *It is so important as followers of Jesus, that we understand His heart towards people.
- *It is so important as followers of Jesus, that we allow Him to place His heart in us for people.

2 – Jesus spoke of the Value of a lost sheep - as lost people

*Vs 4 Suppose one of you has a **hundred sheep** and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?"*

Jesus viewed people as sheep - VALUABLE, lost sheep

Matthew 9:36 NLT *"When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."*

John 10:11,27,28 NLT *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. 27 My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me."*

****You can see that Jesus VALUES individual PEOPLE – Enough to die for them!**

***Whenever Jesus spoke about Sheep in His parables, the Pharisees understood that He was talking about God's people.** They understood this from knowing the **Prophet Ezekiel's** writings, where God clearly says that **He is the Shepherd of Israel** and that **His people are sheep**.

***Whenever Jesus spoke of Himself as the Good Shepherd, He was telling them that He was God – The Shepherd of Israel**

Psalms 80:1 NIV *"Hear us, **Shepherd of Israel**, you who lead Joseph like a flock, **You who sit enthroned between the cherubim**, shine forth"*

***People are as VALUABLE to God – As a Sheep is valuable to a real Shepherd**

***Even people you may despise - are VALUABLE to God**

***The Lord spoke of the VALUE of a SINGLE LOST SHEEP**

***The Lord saw us as VALUABLE to Him, BEFORE we knew Him. The Lord sees YOU as VALUABLE to Him!**

Listen to the heart of God – speaking through the Prophet Ezekiel hundreds of years before Jesus came

Ezekiel 34:1-12,15,16,31 *"Then this message came to me from the Lord: 2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? 3 You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. 4 **You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with harshness and cruelty.** 5 **So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd, and they are easy prey for any wild animal.** 6 They have wandered through all the mountains and all the hills, across the face of the earth,*

yet no one has gone to search for them. 7 Therefore you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: 8 As surely as I live says the Sovereign Lord, you abandoned my flock and left them to be attacked by every wild animal. And though **you were my Shepherds, you didn't search for my sheep when they were lost.** You took care of yourselves and left the sheep to starve. 9 Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. 10 **This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I now consider these shepherds my enemies, and I will hold them responsible for what has happened to my flock. I will take away their right to feed the flock, and I will stop them from feeding themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths:** the sheep will no longer be their prey. 11 For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: **I myself will search and find my sheep. 12 I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them for all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day.** 15 **I myself will tend my sheep and give them a place to lie down in peace,** says the Sovereign Lord. 16 **I will search for my lost ones who strayed away, and I will bring them safely home again. I will bandage the injured and strengthen the weak.** But I will destroy the fat and the powerful. I will feed them, yes – with justice! 31 **You are my flock, the sheep of my pasture. You are my people, and I am your God. I the Sovereign Lord, have spoken.**

***Going after the ONE and leaving the ninety nine is a value to Jesus.**

Jesus sought out Matthew - **Matthew 9:9** "...he saw a man named **Matthew** sitting at the tax booth..."
Jesus sought out Zaccheus - **Luke 19:5** "...**Zaccheus**, come down immediately, I must stay at your house today."

Jesus sought out the Samaritan Woman – **John 4:7** "...Jesus **said to her**, will you give me a drink?"

***Jesus doesn't just see a crowd of people, He sees INDIVIDUALS, YOU and ME!**

***The Lord burned this into my heart as a new believer – that He VALUES the individual! And that He called Me to join Him in seeking out the lost!**

Carla and I's history of ministry to 'the one sheep'

Story: Charlie M.

Photo: General William Booth- Vision - (Everyone in the world is in this Picture)

Story: (6/22/25) **Man recently jumped off cruise ship to rescue his drowning daughter**

Jesus sees people as sheep – either saved or lost – and need to be from RESCUED from sin and Satan!

Not rich or poor, black or white or Hispanic, young or old or cool or uncool, religious or secular, conservative or liberal, Antifa or Proud Boys! In His eyes people are either saved or lost

3 – Jesus valued Rescuing Lost people so much, He put Himself at risk

John 10:11 NLT “*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices (lays down) his life for the sheep.*”

- *Jesus was willing to sacrifice His **time** for lost sheep
- *Jesus was willing to sacrifice His **sleep** in praying for lost sheep
- *Jesus was willing to sacrifice His **comfort & convenience** for lost sheep
- *Jesus was willing to be **criticized and ostracized** by the Pharisees and religious people
- *Jesus was willing to **place Himself in danger** to rescue lost sheep
- *Jesus ultimately **died a criminal’s death** in order to **purchase us with His blood**, back to God

***Luke 19:10** “*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the Lost*”

***Jesus Communicates His Heart to us through His Word, His Holy Spirit and what He does.**

4 – Jesus calls us to join Him in RESCUING the lost around us.

John 20:21 NIV “*...Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.*”

After rising from the dead, Jesus appeared to His Apostles in the upper room and told them that He was sending them out into a hostile world to reach people, just like the Father had sent Him.

They would have the same Kingdom message, the same power and the same authority to Rescue people.

Isaiah 6:8 – Isaiah’s Call “*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I, send me!”*”

The theme of RESCUE is ALL THROUGH THE BIBLE

In all reality we really can’t Rescue the Lost! Only the Holy Spirit can bring people to Jesus.
But, He wants to use each of us!

All through the Bible – God raised up RESCUERS

Genesis 14 -Abraham Rescued Lot

Exodus 3:8-10- Moses Rescued Israelites

1 Sam 30 - David Rescued his Family

Esther 4:14- Esther Rescued her people

Everyone of them allowed God to Anoint them and placed their lives on the line to do it

The Greatest Rescuer of ALL TIME is JESUS!

John 15:13 NIV “*Greater love has no one than this; to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*”

Conclusion:

Jesus communicated His Heart for Lost Sheep

Will we allow Jesus to open our eyes to see people as He sees them?

Will we allow Jesus to change our hearts to rescue those whom He places in our path?

Will we allow God to use to RESCUE others?

Will we be willing to be LIVING SACRIFICES to obey the Great Commission and make it personal?

God desires to bring FREEDOM to RESCUE lives that are in Bondage to Sin and Darkness.

Will we be willing to be FREEDOM FIGHTERS in the Spirit, like Jesus to Rescue the Lost around us?

