

HANDOUT REACHING THE LOST LUKE 15 PART ONE The Parable of the Lost Sheep

In the Gospel of Luke chapter 15, Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem, and there A hurricane of hatred from the Pharisees and Scribes will hit Him with its full force as He speaks to sinners and Tax collectors.

- The Pharisees and the Scribes began to Murmur or Grumble, "saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'" which was an outrage to them. In their judgment Jesus was doing what No person who represents God would ever do, hanging around the unrighteous, and the wicked.
- Jesus Answers their Murmurings with Three Stories. The story of the Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin and The Parodical Son.

Luke 15:1-7 Parable of the Lost Sheep *1 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.*

The Point of the Parable: The Kingdom of God is like a *Good Shepherd* who the Other 99 and Goes after the One that is Lost Until he Finds it and Brings it Back to the Fold. It Helps Us Understand, What We Need to Know About the Nature of God...And It Also Defines Our Relationship to Each Other?

- First, Verse 4 of this Parable *Strikes at the Heart of Our Value System and Confronts Us* with the Magnitude of God's Infinite Mercy, Forgiveness and Love.
- Vs 4 asks *"Which of you men, if you had one hundred sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it?"*
- **Question: How Often is that Our Position on the Lost?**

The Parable's First Lesson: WITH GOD NOTHING IS LOST!

- All Too Often, We Give Up Too Easily. When Others Fall Through the Cracks, We're Quick to Write Them Off: Saying...*"You Can't Win 'em All."* **But...Not With God!**

Our Parables Second Point is: *"With God, We Live In Community With Each Other"*

- *To Talk about Being Lost is Really to Talk About Being Separated From Each Other.*
- POINT...The Sheep Was Lost Because it Was Part of the Flock to Begin With. When the Shepherd Counted Heads, it Was Obvious, One Was Missing.
- Being Lost has to Do with Our Connection to Each Other...As A Member Of the Flock...We're Interrelated. We Are A Body of One.

This Has Great Application for Us At LifePoint Church:

- Meeting Only on Sunday for 75 minutes isn't enough to Live, in Community, for Christ.
- It is Life Groups, Prayer Groups, Various Ministries Together which allow Us to Use our Spiritual Gifts and encourage each other to Live in Community for Christ!
- So When a Brother or Sister in Christ is going through an Adversity We Come to the Rescue!!!

The Kingdom of God Is a Family! Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Joined in Unity to Him. *And Because We Belong to the Body of Christ, When Even Just One is Missing, Something About Us is Missing, As Well.*

- Our Body Isn't Complete Until Everyone is Safe and Secure and Accounted For.
- It's So Important for Us Not to Give Up on Those Who've Dropped Out of the Church or Fallen by the Wayside or Gone Astray. God Wants Us to Understand that It's Not Simply that They're Lost, But a Part of Us (The Flock) is Lost, as Well.

There are a Lot of Reasons Why People Wander Away from the Body.

- Some get angry and upset...Others get their feelings hurt over something said. *Sometimes people wander away because of something they've said or done to alienate themselves from others.*
- And Sometimes People Drop Out Because they Just Get Out of the Habit.

One Bible Commentator said “*Sheep Tend to Nibble Themselves Lost*” –They Graze from one tuft of grass to the next all day long with their heads down and, when they finally look up, they don't know where they are or how they got there, and they certainly don't know how to get back to the flock.

- *Simply the Sheep's Nature is to Stray and, When They Do...They Get Lost.*

The Good News is this...The Shepherd Comes Looking for Them, and He Searches until he Finds them, and, When He Does, He Brings them Back to the Fold.

This is the Model...The Mission...We are to Follow at LifePoint Church!

- Not Just to be Content with those who Show Up on Sunday Morning...*But to Focus on Reaching Out to those Who Don't...And Those Who Never Have.*

The Parable Ends, “When the Shepherd has Found the Lost Sheep, He Carries it On His Shoulders, Rejoicing! He Calls Together his Friends and Neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with Me, for I have Found My Sheep Which Was Lost!’

Questions Each of Us Need to Answer...Do I Have This Passion for the Lost?

- Like the Good Shepherd...Do I Passionately...Seek the Lost?
- Do I Put MY Agenda Aside and Make Building God's Kingdom MY 1st Priority?
- Do I Really Care About Where People Will Spend Eternity...More than Just Enjoying MY Fellowship with the Body at LifePoint?

Answering these questions are Vital if We Are To Please God! Verse 7 says that the Shepherd and All of His Friends and Neighbors REJOICED *when The One that was Lost Was Found!*

The Parable of the Lost Sheep Speaks to Us Best when we Hear it in the context of the M-I-A's – *Those Individuals and Families We Know and Love...Yet with Whom We have, for Whatever Reason, Become Disconnected.*

Jesus Reminds Us: Each Person Counts...NO ONE IS TO BE LOST! Because...As Long as They're Missing...Part of Us is Missing, as Well.

Jesus Makes it Clear...It Really Does Not Matter What They've Done or Why They've Strayed. *All that Matters is that We Go to Whatever Lengths are Necessary to Reach Them and Bring Them Home!*

This is the Nature of the Good Shepherd...This is the Great Mission of the Church, and this is to Be the Nature of LifePoint Church!

“LIFE” POINT: GOD'S HEART IS TO BE OUR HEART...NO ONE IS TO BE LOST!