

The Lost Sheep

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Luke 15:3-7

The parable of the lost sheep is one of the more well-known parables of Jesus. It teaches us of God's love for us, even if/when we wander away from Him. It also shows us what our attitude should be with those who wander off and are restored. It is good to be reminded of parables like this one, and also to make the proper application(s).

Explaining the Parable

- Occasion – tax collectors and sinners were coming to Jesus and listening to Him (Luke 15:1)
- Audience – Jesus directed the parable to the Pharisees and scribes who grumbled against Jesus over this (Luke 15:2)
- Parable – man with 100 sheep; one wanders off; he leaves to find it; he returns with it; he rejoices with his friends and neighbors
- Symbols – the sheep are God's people; those who are/were in His fold

Stating the Point of the Parable

- “More joy in heaven over one sinner who repents” – Why?
- Every soul is important and equally valuable to God (cf. Genesis 9:6; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27) – this includes those who are with the shepherd and those who have wandered off
- Those who wander off are in danger – Jesus is the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls (1 Peter 2:25); they are in danger of “death” (James 5:20), which is spiritual death
- It is harder to save one who has wandered off than to keep the other sheep safe (2 Peter 2:20-21)

Overstating the Point of the Parable

- “More joy” over one who repents does not mean that one is more important – in our zeal to restore one who has fallen away, we must not neglect the ones who are faithful; otherwise, they may also wander off
- The one who wandered off is not an innocent victim – it is true that they are helpless and hopeless without Christ (cf. Romans 5:6; Ephesians 2:12); but this one chose to sin and needs to repent (James 1:14-16, 21-22)
- The “ninety-nine” cannot be neglected – it is tempting to spend all of our time and energy on rescue missions; but the “ninety-nine” need to be kept safe and receive the provisions they need (cf. Acts 20:28-30)

Making Some Applications

- We need to restore those who have wandered away from the Lord – we do this by turning them from their sin (James 5:19-20); yet this is only possible if that one is willing to turn back to the Lord (Hebrews 6:4-6); they have to come to their senses (Luke 15:17) and experience “godly sorrow” (2 Corinthians 7:10-11)
- We need to welcome back those who return to the Lord – this is a cause for rejoicing (Luke 15:6-7, 8-10, 20-24); failure to forgive a penitent brother can drive him back into the world (2 Corinthians 2:6-8)
- We need to continue to care for those who are faithful – encourage one another (Hebrews 3:12-13); assemble together (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Conclusion

- Jesus is the good shepherd – He provides us with all we need and protects us from harm; we wander away from Him when we are led astray by sin
- Those who go astray need to be restored
- Those who are following Christ need to continue
- All of us need to be following the Lord and helping one another to stay on the right path