

A devotion given by Annie Ching in the Prayer Meeting on April 18, 2018

Lost and Wandering Sheep

Devotional Library - Scripture Reading — Luke 15:1-7; Matthew 18:10-14

“He calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’”—Luke 15:6 —



Today’s parable is found in both Matthew and Luke. The contexts are different, so each has a different perspective. In Luke we find tax collectors and sinners described as lost sheep, while in Matthew we find that people who struggle with obedience and stumble into sin are described as wandering sheep.

The parable in Luke reveals God’s heart for lost sinners. The Pharisees totally excluded and refused to associate with certain groups of people, including Jesus. But Jesus cared about everyone. There is great joy in heaven over each sinner who repents. Are there people in your neighborhood that you have never thought of inviting to church? Jesus treasures them, and he wants the Christian community to value them too. The most exciting times should be when a lost soul is found. Ninety-nine is not enough; we need that one more.

The parable in Matthew reveals God’s care for the stumbling believers. Disciples can get distracted and lose interest, struggle with commitment, or be worn down by tragedy and pain. We are called to nurture all who are in the church and to follow up with any who is struggling. Not only must we open the front doors of the church wider, we must be mindful not to lose people by the back door.

Like the Good Shepherd, we seek out the lost and nurture the wandering. They are both precious in His sight!

Prayer

Father, fill us with your love and concern for all who are lost and wandering, and may we all grow together in faith. In Jesus name, Amen.

Luke 15:1-7 New International Version (NIV)

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

^{15:1} 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.

Matthew 18:10-14 New International Version (NIV)

The Parable of the Wandering Sheep

^{18:10} “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. ¹² “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? ¹³ And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴ In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.