

THE FIRST 15

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Today is Wednesday, June 12 and we are studying what the Bible says about shepherds and sheep.

OPENING PRAYER

In the morning, I come to this quiet place and listen for the voice of my Shepherd. I calm my scattered thoughts and slow my breath. I dwell in safety under the Shepherd's thoughtful eye and loving care. He watches over my comings and goings, guides me to places of peace in a busy day, and leads me to discover the joy of a Sabbath heart. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Then Jesus told them this parable: 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? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep. 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.
Luke 15:3-7

REFLECTION

Jesus paints a beautiful illustration of God's love for us. A shepherd wandering in the wind and rain to find one lost sheep. Followed by the image of a woman turning the house upside down to find one small coin (Luke 15:8-10). This is the essence of God's relentless pursuit for his beloved children. He is persistent in looking for us and finding us. When we can't find our way home, God looks for us. He seeks us. He searches for us.

The sheep had great value to the owner and the shepherd searched diligently for the missing sheep. Great effort was extended to find what was lost. The shepherd focused all his effort and attention on the one lost sheep, leaving the rest of the flock unattended. Shepherds were experts at tracking and could follow a straying sheep's footprints for miles across the hills. The work was dangerous because wolves were prowling and looking for prey. The shepherd risked his life to find the stray sheep.

God has deep concern for those who lack the ability to find him. We are all prone to wander. Each of us can stray away from the right path and find ourselves lost. We don't know the way home. We can't find our way back to God. A lost sheep is helpless. A lost sheep needs a savior to find him and rescue him. God desires to find every lost soul and reach every sinner. God sent his Son Jesus into the world to be the Good Shepherd to relentlessly and tirelessly seek the lost. In Luke, Jesus said, the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

I consider how God might want to speak to me today through this parable of Jesus. Who is the one person I could pray for to be found by the Good Shepherd? How could God use me to reach one individual for Christ? Maybe God wants me to apply this parable to myself. Have I gone astray and become lost? Maybe I do not consider myself "lost" from God, but perhaps there is a part of me that is "lost." Is there a part of me that has wandered off and gone missing from God?

Ask: How does the image of the searching shepherd speak to my soul this morning? What might God want me to do today in response to His Word?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy and loving Lord, thank you for your diligence in going, seeking and saving lost souls including mine. I pray for those who remain lost and separated from your love. I rejoice along with the angels in heaven for the souls who have been redeemed. I praise you for my own salvation and the joy of being brought home from my dangerous wanderings. I give you all of myself Lord. Work in my heart with the power of your sanctifying grace and let no part of me remain separated from your love.

Amen.