

The Lost Sheep

Part 1

The Shepherd

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say to you that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. (Luk 15:4-7)

Why the Jesus Challenge

Which of you would not leave the 99 sheep.

Many families had sheep, typically they would only have a comparative few sheep, so few in number that the shepherd often knew the sheep by name.

Knowing Each Sheep

Intimate knowledge of the sheep. The shepherd is deeply interested in every single one of his flock. Some of them may be given pet names because of incidents connected with them. They are usually counted each evening as they enter the fold, but sometimes the shepherd dispenses with the counting, for he is able to feel the absence of anyone of his sheep. With one sheep gone, something is felt to be missing from the appearance of the entire flock. One shepherd in the Lebanon district was asked if he always counted his sheep each evening. He replied in the negative, and then was asked how then he knew if all his sheep were present. This was his reply: "Master, if you were to put a cloth over my eyes, and bring me any sheep and only let me put hands on its face, I could tell in a moment if it was mine or not."

When H. R. P. Dickson visited the desert Arabs, he witnessed an event that revealed the amazing knowledge which some of them have of their sheep. One evening, shortly after dark, an Arab shepherd began to call out one by one the names of his fifty-one mother sheep, and was able to pick out each one's lamb, and restore it to its mother to suckle. To do this in the light would be a feat for many shepherds, but this was done in

complete darkness, and in the midst of the noise coming from the ewes crying for their lambs, and the lambs crying for their mothers.

But no Oriental shepherd ever had a more intimate knowledge of his sheep than JESUS our great Shepherd has of those who belong to His flock.

He once said of Himself: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep" (John 10:14)

When a sheep is lost the shepherd has a single thought so seek out the lost sheep he knows because

- The sheep are helpless against predator
- They cannot defend themselves
- They cannot outrun the predator

It has no sense to return home as does a dog or a horse.

Outside the fold and the care of the shepherd it is

- utterly lost to element,
- to crevices and cracks in the landscape,
- unable to tear itself away from briars and thickets
- it is unable to care for itself, it cannot hunt or seek out water
- a lost sheep is lost..

The shepherd comes to seek and to save that which is lost, but why so? why is the shepherds mind so consumed with the sheep?

1 It Is His Property,

The Good shepherd is not a hireling and the sheep are in his care.

When a flock grew to around 100 they became too many to handle and a hireling was brought in. The Hireling looked after the sheep for money and usually did not have the same care as the shepherd for the flock.

For so says the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his scattered sheep, so I will seek out My sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. (Eze 34:11-12)

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. (Joh 17:6)

*And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. **Joh 17:11***

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. (Joh 15:16)

2 His Deep Compassion,

Joh 3:15-16 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Have you seen the despair in a family when a child is missing, mother and father leave no stone unturned, seek out every neighbour, every business, every place imaginable to find the child. Mother is distraught beyond expression, the fathers anguish is palpable knowing his child is missing, he will move heaven and earth for his lost child.

Of how much greater value to your heavenly father and the Good Shepherd of your souls are you to him.

He cannot, he will not lose you.

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. (Joh 17:12)

3 Yet Finally He Is Shepherded To You,

He is bound to you as a shepherd. As an apprentice is bound to his employer so is the shepherd to the sheep. It is quite impossible for him not to shepherd you, it is his purpose, his reason his life and soul of existence that he will look for you, he will seek you out if you go astray.

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. (1Pe 2:24-25)

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luk 19:10)

Who is this shepherd? His name is Jesus. Who is the lost sheep, why the lost sheep is you.

Perhaps as Peter said, you have returned but you were not always in the fold.

Some do not stay in the fold.

The entrapments of sin, worldly pleasure, sometimes foolishness, sometimes good people do bad things, so many issues effect us emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally and so on and we stray. Sometimes far, and sometimes only a little way

But you do not have to go far to be in peril, more car accidents occur within a kilometre of home than further afield.

But the good shepherd is still seeking you out

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (Heb 13:5-6)

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Mat 11:28-30)