

JESUS' MISSION

WEEK 9

16. 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 the one which is lost until he finds it? Luke 15:4-7; Matt. 18:12-14
17. Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? (NKJV)

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

¹ All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to Him. ² And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them!"

³ So He told them this parable: ⁴ **"What man among you, who has 100 sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the 99 in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it?"** ⁵ When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, ⁶ and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!' ⁷ I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who don't need repentance.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

⁸ **"Or what woman who has 10 silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?"** ⁹ When she finds it, she calls her women friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found the silver coin I lost!' ¹⁰ I tell you, in the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents."

Luke 15:1-10 (HCSB)

By this time a lot of men and women of doubtful reputation were hanging around Jesus, listening intently. The Pharisees and religion scholars were not pleased, not at all pleased. They growled, "He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends." Their grumbling triggered this story. Suppose one of you had a hundred sheep and lost one. **Wouldn't you leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the lost one until you found it?** When found, you can be sure you would put it across your shoulders, rejoicing, and when you got home call in your friends and neighbors, saying, "Celebrate with me? I've found my lost sheep?" Count on it—there's more joy in heaven over one sinner's rescued life than over ninety-nine good people in no need of rescue. Or imagine a woman who has ten coins and loses one. **Won't she light a lamp and scour the house, looking in every nook and cranny until she finds it?** And when she finds it you can be sure she'll call her friends and neighbors: 'Celebrate with me! I found my lost coin!' Count on it—that's the kind of party God's angels throw every time one lost soul turns to God." Luke 15:1-10 (The Message)

Reflections:

I can't tell you the number of times that I have misplace an important "something" that I've been looking for and hunted for minutes-hours-days trying to find it. I think this happens fairly often because I'm a "pack-rat" and have a hard time throwing away stuff. Somehow I think that I might always have a use for it "later." Take a look at my office and you'll understand my situation.

Jesus told these simply stories (parables) to make a spiritual point. He wanted us to understand how God responds to His children. God cares for all with unconditional love. If one of His children strays from the flock, He pursues them. Back in Biblical times, many of the flocks were communal flocks that belonged to the entire village. If a sheep was lost and then found, the whole village would celebrate.

It reminds me of our church rolls. Most churches only average one-third to one-half of their total enrollment. Yet we don't seem to be overly concerned about members who don't darken the doors of the church. And what about those people who have nothing to do with church? Do we love our stuff and buildings more than we love people? God's love is boundless, measureless, and has no biases. Maybe we should be a little more like that.

Questions to Ponder:

- a. Why are we afraid to love as God loves?
- b. How would your life change if you practiced unconditional love?
- c. What can we do to have the compassion of a shepherd as we seek those "lost" sheep?

Prayer

Lord, teach me to love as You love; to give as You give; to live as You live. Amen.