

THE SHEPHERD'S MISSION

LUKE 15:1-7

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE – APRIL 20, 2025

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 15:1-7 (ESV) – The Parable of the Lost Sheep

1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” 3 So he told them this parable: 4 “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

SERMON RECAP

In The Shepherd's Mission, we are drawn into the heart of God through the Parable of the Lost Sheep. Jesus presents a Shepherd who doesn't just count sheep—He pursues them. This isn't about animal behavior but divine initiative. The three major takeaways:

1. The Shepherd's Pursuit: Jesus actively seeks the lost. The term “lost” means more than misplaced—it implies destruction and peril. This is a rescue mission, not a religious lecture.
2. The Shepherd's Power: When the sheep is found, Jesus carries it. He doesn't demand we walk back on our own. He bore our sin, shame, and burdens on His shoulders.
3. The Shepherd's Party: Heaven rejoices over every sinner who repents. God celebrates, not scolds. There is more joy in heaven for one who turns to Jesus than for many who think they don't need Him.

Jesus' audience included both the “sinners” who were drawn to Him and the “religious” who were appalled by Him. This parable silences the critics and uplifts the broken.

SERMON BIG IDEA

You are never too lost for the Shepherd to find you. And when He does—He doesn't shame you—He celebrates you.

FUN ICEBREAKER QUESTION

What's the silliest or most helpless situation you've ever gotten yourself into—something where you definitely needed someone to help you out?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Grouped by Observation --> Interpretation --> Application)

Observation: What does the passage say?

1. Who is gathered around Jesus in Luke 15:1-2, and how do the religious leaders respond?
2. What does Jesus do in response to the criticism of the Pharisees?
3. According to verses 4-5, how does the shepherd respond when one sheep is lost?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. What does the Greek word *apollymi* (lost) reveal about the condition of the lost sheep—and by extension, the lost person?
2. How does this parable illustrate the heart of God compared to the judgmental spirit of the Pharisees?
3. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents?

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

1. In what ways do you personally identify with the sheep in this parable?
2. Is there an area of your life where you've been trying to walk home alone—carrying your burdens without the Shepherd?

3. Who is “the one” in your life that you can pursue with the same love and grace the Shepherd shows?
4. How can our group reflect the Shepherd’s heart in how we treat people who are struggling, doubting, or wandering?

CLOSING PRAYER- “FOR THE ONE WHO’S LOST”

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for being the Good Shepherd—the One who doesn’t wait for us to find our way back but comes looking for us with relentless love.

We confess that we often act like sheep—wandering, stubborn, and defenseless. But You never give up on us. You pursue, You carry, You rejoice.

Father, we pray now for every person who feels far from You. For those who are lost in shame, in sin, in fear—call them home. Let them hear Your voice louder than their failures. Let them see Your grace stronger than their guilt.

For those of us who know the Shepherd but have wandered, help us return to You with open hearts. And for those still lost—still searching—may they find You today. Because You’re already looking for them.

Jesus, thank You for the cross that carried our sin. For the shoulders that bore our burdens. And for the joy that heaven throws when even one comes home.

Help us reflect Your heart. Help us love the lost like You do. And help us never lose the wonder of salvation.

In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

