

**Parable of the Lost Sheep**  
**Luke 15:3-8**

**Prepare to hear the word:**

- This is a parable, it is a teaching story with a twist.
- It is about God's unconditional love
- Shepherds were not very important in society and no one would have liked to be compared to them.
- A responsible shepherd would never have left 'ninety nine' sheep defenseless while he searched for the 'one' that was lost.

**You will need:**

- Good Shepherd figure, 5 sheep
- green felt underlay,
- patches of dark brown felt for rocks and places of danger
- Bible

*When children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story, place the gold box/bag, containing the materials you will need, carefully beside you.*

*Place class Bible in front of you with your hand on it.*

**This story comes from our special book which we call the Bible.**

**This is a parable that Jesus told about a Lost Sheep.**

*Hold your hand over the shepherd as you say:*

**If a shepherd has one hundred sheep**

*Move one sheep away from the group to wander then put it behind a rock.*

**And one of those sheep goes off by itself and gets lost.**

*Move shepherd away from the flock*

**Then the shepherd will leave the other ninety nine sheep in the wilderness.**

*Move shepherd away to look for lost one.*

**And he will go looking for the one that is lost.**

**He will keep searching and calling out until he has found the lost sheep.**

*Put lost sheep on the shepherd's shoulder and take it back to the other sheep.*

**When he finds the sheep, he put will put it on his shoulders and carry it home.**

*Move the shepherd and the lost sheep back to the flock.*

**He will call his friends and neighbours saying "rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost."**

**And Jesus said, "there is more joy in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to."**

**The Gospel of the Lord**

**Response: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

### I Wonder:

- Why the shepherd works so hard to protect his sheep?
- How does the shepherd know when one of his sheep is missing?
- How the lost sheep feels when it hears the shepherds voice?
- Why the shepherd called all his neighbours and friends to rejoice with him?
- If you have ever been lost?
- If you have ever lost something very special?

### Parable of the Lost Sheep

Luke 15:3-7

Then Jesus told them this story:

If any of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won't you leave the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it? And when you find it, you will be so glad that you will put it on your shoulder and carry it home. Then you will call in your friends and neighbours and say, "Let's celebrate! I've found my lost sheep."

Jesus said, "In the same way there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to."

### Prepare to hear the Word: Teacher

The construction of this parable invited listeners to identify themselves with the *shepherd*. To see themselves as *shepherds* would have made his audience of Pharisees choke. There lay the "sting" of the parable. They could never have spontaneously identified themselves with a *shepherd*. In the estimation of the time, *shepherds* were *unclean*, they were regarded as violent and dishonest. They were the scum of society. Jesus' suggestion was offensive.

Besides, for the shepherd to abandon ninety-nine sheep, without fences and without a sheep dog, and to leave them defenceless while he went off looking for one lost one would have been the height of irresponsibility. To then let all his friends and neighbours know of his foolishness (even though in this case it paid off), and invite them to rejoice with him, would have been seen simply as compounding his stupidity.

Jesus was talking about God. *Joy in heaven* was another way of referring to God's joy. Jesus was effectively saying that when confronted with sinners God abandoned all sense of personal honour. God was stupid. Forgiveness was idiocy. But God was like that. In the mind of God every sinner was of infinite worth, and reconciliation was cause for unbounded *joy*.

Whether intending to do so or not, the parable also challenges those Christians who fear that emphasis on God's unconditional forgiveness, rather than on punishment, is dangerous, serving to leave sinners undisturbed and unrepentant. Jesus spoke of a God apparently reckless enough to take the risk.

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