



# Orphan Sunday

James 1:26-27 (The Mirror)

26 Meaningless conversation is often disguised in religious eloquence. Just because it sounds sincere, doesn't make it true. If your tongue is not bridled by what your heart knows to be true about you, you cheat yourself.

27 The purest and most uncompromising form of religious expression is found at its source. God is the Father of mankind. He inspires one to take a genuine interest in helping the fatherless and the widows in their plight, and to make sure that one's own life does not become blemished in the process.



# Luke Chapter 15

- Parable of the Shepherd and the Lost Sheep
- Parable of the Woman and the Lost Coin
- Parable of the Father and the Lost Son
  
- All three are mirrors of each other
- Context is everything

# The Parable of the Lost Sheep

<sup>1</sup> Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

<sup>3</sup> So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> “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?

# The Parable of the Lost Sheep

<sup>5</sup> And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'<sup>7</sup> 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.

# Audience

- Pharisees
- Strictly adherent to the law and condemned those who didn't
- Ceremonial cleanliness was their main deal
  - Don't touch dead things
  - Don't touch injured things
  - Don't touch sick people
  - Don't mix with the wrong crowd

# Pharisees

- Jesus always attacks them – no difference here
- Pharisees do not keep sheep – its below them – so an insult
- Pharisees only had the Old Testament so they knew what He was getting at!
- He makes out that they are bad shepherds
  - Refers to Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 34
- There's only one good shepherd – Psalm 23, John 10



# Jeremiah 23:1-4

<sup>1</sup>“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. <sup>4</sup>I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD.

## Ezekiel 34:11-16

<sup>11</sup>“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup> As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup> And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

## Ezekiel 34:11-16

<sup>14</sup> I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup> I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

# Psalm 23

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.<sup>3</sup> He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

# John 10

<sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup> He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

# John 10

- Verses 1-18 Jesus talks about shepherds and sheep
- So he is setting Himself up against the ruling elite – pharisees
- Culturally no one would ever take responsibility for losing a sheep
  - One of my sheep is lost
- Jesus places the responsibility on the shepherds by saying
  - I have lost one of my sheep – makes this the responsibility of the shepherd

# Shepherds

- Shepherds may not always own the sheep.
- Many people in a village would own sheep.
- The shepherds would take the sheep out of the village to graze them.
- Sheep wander off, but it is the shepherd's responsibility
- The shepherd was held responsible for the loss of sheep.
- He would be shamed, and his integrity would be questioned if he lost any.
- He was highly motivated to find lost sheep.

# Shepherds

- It is important to note that all one hundred sheep are out in the wilderness.
- Jesus speaks of leaving the ninety-nine to find the one.
- What happens to the other sheep?
- With such a large flock the shepherd would almost certainly have had at least one assistant.
- If not, he may have taken his sheep to a neighbouring shepherd while he went to search.



# Sheep

- When sheep get lost they become terrified - they collapse in a thicket and bleating.
- When found they are too terrified to even rise to their feet.
- They cannot be herded or led on a rope so they must be carried.
- They weigh up to 70 kilograms
- The terrain where sheep often grazed was probably rocky and rough
- The shepherd would place the sheep around his shoulders and grab his legs in front.

# Return

- The shepherd returns home with his lost sheep and calls for a celebration.
- We think that it is because he loves the sheep and is happy to find it. That likely would be true but is that the only reason?
- If the shepherd loses the sheep he would be shamed.
- The celebration is not **just** about the lost sheep but also about his character as a good shepherd
- **My** sheep hear **my voice**, and I **know** them, and they follow me.

John 10:27

# Celebration

<sup>7</sup> 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.

Reference to Genesis 3:8-9

<sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

# The 99

- So what happened to the ninety-nine?
- We aren't told. The story does not say that they are abandoned.
- It is possible that there is a "quiet joy," about the fact that they are safe.
- They've probably made it home but that is expected and thus there is no call for a celebration

# Parallels

- Parable of the Compassionate Father (Prodigal Son)
- Both the one and the ninety-nine are in the wilderness.
- The main character exhibits costly grace to retrieve the lost.
- There is celebration by the central character over what his done
- What does the parable say about repentance?
- What does the lost sheep do to save himself? At the most, he bleats!
- Salvation comes only from the shepherd.

# Story Telling Style

- **1. YOU** 4 *"Which one of you, having a hundred sheep*
- **2. ONE** *and losing one of them,*
- **3. NINETY-NINE** *does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness*
  - **A. LOST** *and go after the one*
  - **B. FIND** *that is lost until he finds it? 5 When he has found it,*
  - **C. REJOICE** *he places it on his shoulders, rejoicing.*
  - **D. RESTORE** 6 *And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours,*
  - **C. REJOICE** *saying to them, 'Rejoice with me,*
  - **B. FIND** *for I have found my sheep*
  - **A. LOST** *that was lost.'*
- **4. YOU** 7 *Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven*
- **5. ONE** *over one sinner who repents*
- **6. NINETY-NINE** *than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.*

# Lessons Learned

- *Failed leadership.* The parable contains criticism of leaders who lose their sheep and do nothing but complain about others who go after them – judgemental. Religion kills Relationship
- *Freely offered grace.* The sheep offers no service to the shepherd and in no way earns or deserves his rescue. It comes as a gift.
- *The atonement.* The shepherd pays a high price both to find the sheep and to restore it to the home. The heart of the atonement is thus found in this parable.

# Lessons Learned

- *Sin*. Humankind is lost and unable to find its own way home.
- *Joy*. There is joy for the shepherd and the community at the success of the saving event of restoration.
- *Repentance*. Repentance is defined as acceptance of being found. The sheep is lost and helpless. Repentance becomes the act of the shepherd in carrying the sheep back to his home in the village and the sheep's acceptance of that act.



# Lessons Learned - Christology

- Jesus is the good shepherd who restores the sinner to God. This Shepherd must personally make the costly demonstration of love/holiness in order to restore the helpless sheep.
- This OT background strongly hints that the shepherd is the very presence of God Himself among his people seeking his lost sheep.

# Lessons Learned - Us

- Jesus loves us so much he is prepared to come looking for us
- He was prepared to lay down his life for us
- We are in covenant with God whether we like it or not
- Our part of the covenant is to obey Him
- He is looking for us, all we have to do is be found