

**THE LOST SHEEP**



Passages to Study: Luke 15:1-7.

Read with the class: Luke 15:1-7.

Texts for memorization:

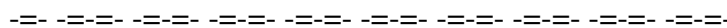
**Younger:** Luke 15:2 "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

**Older** Luke 15:2



**OBJECTIVES:** To teach that:

1. The Lord Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost.
2. Some are ignorant of their true condition of being lost, even though they lead a religious life.
3. The lost can do nothing to help themselves.
4. The Lord Jesus was willing to suffer in order to find the lost.
5. A sinner once rescued is safe and secure in the Father's house for all eternity.



**Note:** Luke 15 starts with a criticism the Pharisees and scribes directed against the Lord Jesus. The key expression is "this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them".

They accused Him of receiving people whom they did not consider worthy of being in His company and having fellowship with Him. The accusation was correct, but what His accusers did not understand was that Christ came to rescue lost sinners and have fellowship with them.

In this parable He shows the activity of the Triune God. The Lord replies to His critics by speaking of a Shepherd, a Woman, and a Father. Each one of these has lost something, but whatsoever its condition was on being found, the lost one was received back with joy.

The Shepherd is a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ; the Woman shows the work of the Holy Spirit; and the Father gives a true picture of the attitude of God the Father towards the sinner.

**SCENE No. 1. VISUAL AIDS.** A field at evening with a sheepfold and sheep, and a shepherd.

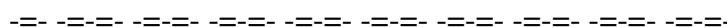
**DEVELOPMENT:**

- In this parable, the Lord is painting a picture that is very familiar to His hearers.
- As the sheep are being counted into the fold at night, the shepherd realizes that one is missing.
- In order to find the lost sheep, the shepherd does not rest but goes out at once to seek it.
- Although he loves every one of his sheep, the lost one receives his special attention at this time of danger.

**Cns.** The Lord Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, is concerned about each and every one of His sheep, none excepted.

**Sug.** Stress the importance the shepherd gives to one lost sheep. Be sure the students understand that they are also lost sheep and thus objects of the love of the Shepherd who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

- The ninety-nine sheep in the fold represent the scribes and Pharisees who thought themselves safe within their religion.
- What the Pharisees did not understand was that they were just as lost as the publicans and sinner, even though they did not believe they were far away from God.



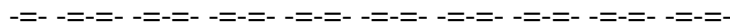
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**SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS.** Countryside at night, where the shepherd seeks the lost sheep, finds it, and puts it on his shoulders.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- This scene consists of two stages:
  1. The shepherd spares no effort until he finds the sheep.
  2. The sheep yields to the shepherd's will when he comes to rescue it.
- The sheep would never be able to understand all that it has cost the shepherd to reach its side.
- Cns.** vs.4 **"UNTIL** he find it". The Shepherd did not give up the search until he found his sheep.
- Apl.** The Lord Jesus is depicted in Scripture as setting His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem, and could say to the Father in His prayer, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4).
- This lack of understanding on the part of the sheep does not diminish the care the good shepherd gives his sheep.
- Apl.** No sinner is ever able to fully understand what it has cost the Lord Jesus Christ to come from Heaven to seek him.
- Cns.** Emphasize that what motivates the shepherd is his love for the sheep.
- Apl.** The Saviour's love continues even today. He seeks the sinner tirelessly through the gospel.
- The search carried out by the Lord Jesus includes His coming to this world, the years of His public ministry, His rejection and suffering, and His death on the cross.



**SCENE No. 3. VISUAL AIDS.** At the city entrance, the shepherd returns with the sheep, heading for home.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- When he finds the lost sheep, the shepherd puts it on his shoulders.
- Cns.** The sheep is not berated by the shepherd nor told to "Get home". It is carried on the shepherd's shoulders.
- The shoulders are used in Scripture as a place of strength, able to bear the burden of a heavy object.
- Cmt.** The sheep in his weakness contributes nothing for the journey to the house of the shepherd. The shepherd does all the necessary work.
- The sheep that has been found is closer now to the shepherd than ever previously, and thus enjoys a privilege it never knew before.
- The sheep is safe on the powerful shoulders of the shepherd.
- Apl.** When the Lord Jesus saves the lost sinner, He puts him into a safe place from which he will never again wander.
- Sug.** It is profitable to emphasize the keeping power of God in the life of a believer, since he/she is eternally secure.
- Apl.** The joy of the shepherd over the one sheep that has been found reveals the joy that the Lord Jesus has when one sinner repents.
- The sheep is not taken back to the fold, but carried to the shepherd's home. It was taken to an environment of warmth and love.
- The Lord wanted the Pharisees to understand that there was joy in heaven not over the 99, but for the repentance of the lost one.
- Cns.** The moment of repentance in the sheep occurs when it does not try to escape from the shepherd, but rather submits to the will of the one who has found him and who will take him home.
- The Pharisees believed that they did not need to repent, for they considered their religion able to provide them all they needed before God.

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- **Cns.** The sheep that stayed in the fold did not feel lost. They are figures of the Pharisees who were so full of their own righteousness that they did not recognize that they were sinners just like the rest.

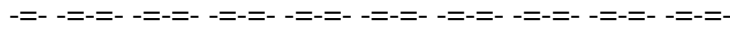
If they heard the parable rightly, they should have concluded they brought no joy to the heart of God.

- Their mistake was in thinking that because they had not wandered away from keeping the Law, they were not lost.

- In fact, they had not drawn near to God. They were equally as lost as were the publicans and sinners.

**Cns.** It is very clear that the Pharisees and scribes, unlike the heavenly hosts, did not rejoice with the Lord over repentant sinners.

- This attitude showed how far away from God they were in their heart.



**SCENE No. 4. VISUAL AIDS:** Figures of people and the things that have taken them away from God, and therefore cause them to be lost.

**DEVELOPMENT:**

**Note.** Based on Isa. 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray", shows that everyone is lost. Then, "we have turned every one to his own way", shows that the way taken is evidence of his/her condition of being lost.

1. Some wander away from God intent on purchasing things they want to acquire and thus are lost as they try to obtain them. This is consumerism.

2. Others wander away along the road of different addictions. Drugs, alcohol, entertainment, games, etc.

**Apl.** Computer games and videos have great attraction for the young. This, too, can become an addiction.

3. When children are belligerent and engage in fighting with their siblings or peers, they are choosing their **OWN** way of handling life. It is not what God expects. Rather we are to love others.

4. Hatred and taking vengeance are man's ways of retaliation, which is the opposite of showing mercy as God requires. The vengeful spirit is a product of anger.

5. Disobedience of God and His will as found in Scripture is another way of pleasing oneself and taking a road that is contrary to the will of God.

6. The young believer starting out into the world should be warned not to adopt the practices of the world which take one far from God.

7. Theft, even of things of little value, is another evidence of behaviour contrary to the mind of God.

**Cns.** In school taking a pencil, money or another's book is stealing and the students should understand that this is sin.

**Sug.** Stress that in offices, shops and the workplace, those who help themselves without permission to what belongs to the owner, are taking a sinful way.

- Since "we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa.53:6), Jesus suffered, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3:18)

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