

“SEARCHING SHEPHERDS”

Luke 15:3-7

Jesus uses the image of a shepherd to show the heart of God – and to teach His disciples about what makes you effective in ministry.

I. A SHEPHERD’S HEART

A. This parable was spoken in response to the Pharisees – concerned about doing things right

1. This is a mistake disciples make: They think it’s enough to know things/be able to do things right
 - a. Jesus gets to the heart of God – what is supposed to be our heart: The Lost

B. **We can miss the logic of seeking the lost**

1. The Pharisees want people to be with God and do right: *How will that happen?*
2. Pioneering/no one is there: *How do you think people come?*
 - a. **Romans 10:14** *How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

1. This is not something you want to start thinking about after you get sent out

C. **We can miss the heart of seeking the lost**

1. Jesus tells this parable to show God’s heart: *He cares! It bothers him that sheep are lost*
 - a. **V4** *he leaves the 99 and search for the one who is lost...* b. **Matt 14:14** *Jesus saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.*
2. Without this – ministry doesn’t work
 - a. You will be ineffective: *People can tell* b. You won’t continue: *Ministry is draining without love!*
2. Nothing brings greater joy than the lost being found: **V5-7** *rejoicing/rejoice/joy*
 - a. *That is a challenge: Is salvation a joy to us?* b. *It is a promise: There is nothing more rewarding than salvation*

II. A SHEPHERD’S EYE

A. A part of being a shepherd involves our eyes: **V4** *go and search...* looks for lost sheep

1. This speaks of having eyes for opportunities:

a. **Outreach:** Identifying outreach opportunities

1. Where are lost sheep at (to witness)? Where could we draw them to (*outreach – so we can preach*)?
 - a. Men who don’t do well usually don’t have eyes for outreach opportunity
 1. *I preached for a guy years ago: I saw Beaches/parks/weather... Have you ever done a concert there? Street preached there? Crusade there? No. This city is hard – no one wants to come.*

b. **Personal evangelism:** Men who share God’s heart see people – the way God sees them!

1. People they could speak to about Jesus: In the wilderness – in the normal course of life
 - a. *Not just food/shopping/recreation – lost people we could witness to!*
 2. People who are in need...the lost: Seeing or sensing their condition
 - a. There are people who are especially lost/endangered – or open to salvation
 1. This involves sensitivity/prompts of the Holy Spirit: ***We must pray for it***

III. A SHEPHERD’S HANDS

A. It’s not enough to see/search – you have to be personally involved

1. **Luke 15:5** *And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders.*

2. This shows us the work involved after locating a lost sheep: Caring until they can make it on their own

- a. This of course speaks of follow up: Working with converts to establish them in the faith

B. But this is essential for the development of shepherds

1. This is where you learn the skills needed to be effective
 - a. You can’t just say anything/deal with things too soon/you learn what to avoid
 2. This is where you learn to touch God for a spiritual dimension
 - a. Contending for miracles of revelation: *Flesh and blood has not revealed this, but my father in heaven*
 - b. Fighting the enemy off your converts: *Abraham fought the birds of prey off of the sacrifice/promise*