



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Matthew 18:12-14 (KJV)

- 12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?
- 13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.
- 14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

- “ **All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**”

(Isaiah 53:6)

- Romans 3:10

There is none righteous,
no, not one:

- 3:11 There is none
that understandeth,
there is none that
seeketh after God.

- Our Lord's parable regarding lost sheep is one of the simplest.
- For it is indeed a simple story.

- Our Lord now transitions from a small child to wandering sheep to illustrate his mission on earth.
- Matthew 18:11
For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

- One of the amazing features of God's character is that God is, by nature, a Savior.
- This alone sets Him apart from all the gods of men and demons that the world has ever manufactured.

- He is, by nature,
- compassionate,
- tenderhearted,
- kind, patient,
- forbearing, merciful,
- gracious, loving,
- forgiving.

- Let us not question that God is a Savior because even in the birth of His Son, His parents were told to name Him Jesus,

- *For He shall save His people from their sins.*
(**Matthew 1:21**)

- The name Jesus being a New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament Hebrew name “*Jehovah saves.*”

- God is no reluctant Savior.
- God is a relentless Savior.
- He weeps over the lost.
(Luke 19:41)
 - He weeps through the eyes of the Old Testament prophets.
(Jeremiah 9:1)
 - He weeps through the eyes of His own Son.
(Luke 19:41)

- *He has no pleasure
in the death
of the wicked,*
(Ezekiel 33:11)

- But He does rejoice
in the salvation of sinners.

- This is heaven's joy.

- We are told by the apostle Paul concerning the character of God, these words:

- ***"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."***
(1 timothy 2:3)

- In Titus, God is called,
"God, our Savior,"
in chapter 1,
- "God, our Savior,"
in chapter 2,
- "God, our Savior,"
in chapter 3.

- This is true to His nature.
 - And why does He save?
 - Because it brings Him joy,
 - Because it makes all of heaven celebrate.
- (Luke 15:7)

- **This is the reason**
the Son of man came.
- He came **in search of** the lost;
 - He **found** them;
 - He **redeemed** them.
 - It was the great
purpose of his life.

- And though the **“lost sheep”** may be **”despised”** in the eye of the world,
 - **Yet, are not** **objects of contempt** whom the Son of God died to redeem.

- Notice Jesus' opening words.
 - Formed as a rhetorical question.
- **"What do you think?"**
- He asks that question in order to **focus us on the matter at hand.**

- The idea of God as a shepherd is not a unique theme in the Scriptures.

- **The Old Testament**
is filled with imagery
of God as a shepherd.
- In our lesson for today,
Jesus uses the illustration of
a shepherd looking after
a lost sheep
to show us
the heart of God
and to teach us
about how we ought
to relate to one another.

- Everyone listening to Jesus would have been familiar with the idea that the Lord God is like a shepherd.
- David sings of this in Psalm 23.

- The book of Ezekiel charges the shepherds of God's people with neglecting their work.

- To paraphrase

He basically says,

'You've been very bad shepherds of My people so I, Myself, will become My people's shepherd.'

- That theme of God as shepherd runs throughout the Old Testament.

- **This parable bothers some**
because it looked like
God cared a lot more
about that one lost sheep
than He did the other ninety-nine.
- After all, doesn't the story say
that He rejoiced over
the one that He found
more than the ninety-nine
that He had not lost?

- Is God saying that He plays favorites?
- That's not Jesus' point in the story.
- Jesus is using an illustration that we can all identify with in order to emphasize to us not, that God loves all of His children; and each of them, individually.

- He shows special concern
and care for
 - Those who are
 - lost,
 - weak,
 - marginalized,
 - straying.

- He is concerned to regain them.
- He has a specific and special concern for each one of us.
- That is the point of this passage.

- Case in point:
 - A child is lost.
 - You search and search.
- Finally finding the lost child.
 - You rejoice!
 - We mourn over that which we've lost and when we regain it, it causes us great joy.

- Jesus is not saying that God the Father loves some more than others,
- But that He loves each of us like that, even if we look insignificant in the eyes of the world or in the eyes of other Christians.

- He's showing us **the heart of the Father.**
- The Father has a concern for each one of His sheep and He's disclosing to us **good news about God.**

- We know that God is a mighty God, He's a great God. He's sovereign and He's just.
- Then we read the following.

- **Hebrews 10:31**

***It is a fearful thing
to fall into
the hands
of the living God.***

- And when we realize that we are sinners and when we realize that we deserve condemnation, we, trembling, think about approaching Him.
 - Why?
- Because we know He is just.
 - We know that He ought to condemn us.

- And the Lord Jesus is saying this:
 - That is true.
 - God is just and He ought to condemn you,
- But you need to know this:
 - He loves to recover lost sheep.

- It delights the heart of the Father."
- The Lord Jesus says you need to know two things about God:
 - # 1 He is just,
 - # 2 But He is also a merciful God who delights when sinners are saved and turned to Him.

- **Nehemiah 9:17**
"You are a God
of forgiveness,
 - **gracious**
and
compassionate,
- **slow to anger,**
 - **and rich in**
gracious love;

- So Jesus shows a picture of what God's heart is like to His disciples.
- And then, He tells us that He wants us to emulate God's heart as we deal with one another.
- These disciples had been arguing as to which one was greatest and Jesus says,

- 'Let Me tell you about the greatest one of all.

He's My Father.

- And let me tell you what He's like.'

- Now, if you want to be great in His kingdom,
what's the wise thing to do?

- **Emulate Him.**
- By emulating His heart for those who are **weak** and **despised** and **lost.**
- For caring about those **who are young and immature** in the faith.
- By caring for those **who have gone astray.**

- Paul picks up on this
at least twice in his letters.

- In Romans
he talks with Christians
very frankly about how
we ought to relate
to those disciples
who are weaker in the faith.

- In Romans 14
Paul is talking about the problem meat offered to idols.
- It was a big problem in his day and time, because there were many pagan sacrifices and one of the normal things to do in the market place was to sell left over meat from those pagan sacrifices.

- Some Christians did not think that it was right to eat that meat because it had been devoted to another god.
- Other Christians said, "Who cares? It's meat. It's cheap. We'll buy it. We'll eat it."

- The apostle Paul knew that that was a point of tension between some Christians,
- He's teaching us not simply to think about ourselves, but think about the impact of our actions on one another.

- In Judea it was tragically easy for sheep to go astray.
- The pasture land is often hill country.
- There are no restraining walls.
 - And, therefore, the sheep are ever liable to wander.

- In the time of Jesus
the flocks were

often

communal flocks;

they belonged,
not to an individual,
but to a village.

- There weren't a lot of rules about shepherding,
- But there was one very dominant rule and that is, you don't lose sheep.
- That was the big one.

- And if one goes away,
you find it
and you bring it back
dead or alive.
- But you don't come back
without a sheep.
 - Everybody
knew that.

- The shepherds always made the most strenuous and the most sacrificial efforts to find a lost sheep.

- Lost sheep get the attention of the shepherd.
- Lost sheep are in grave danger.
- They have almost no self-defense mechanism?
- They may butt or kick.

- Here we have what was Jesus' favorite picture of God and of God's love.

- This parable teaches us many things about that love.

- (# 1) The love of God is an individual love.
- The ninety-and-nine were not enough;
- One sheep was out on the hillside and the shepherd could not rest until he had brought it home.
- God cannot be happy until the last wanderer is gathered in.

- (# 2) The love of God is a patient love.
- Sheep are proverbially foolish creatures.
 - The sheep has no one but itself
to blame for
the danger it
had got itself into.

- Men are apt to have so little patience with the foolish ones.

- When they get into trouble, we are apt to say, "It's their own fault; they brought it on themselves; don't waste any sympathy on fools."

- God is not like that.
- The sheep might be foolish but the shepherd would still risk his life to save it.
- Men may be fools but God loves even the foolish man who has no one to blame but himself for his sin and his sorrow.

- (# 3) The love of God is a seeking love.
- The shepherd was not content to wait for the sheep to come back; he went out to search for it.

- **That is what the Jew could not understand**
about the Christian
idea Of God.
 - The Jew would
gladly agree that,
if the sinner
came crawling
wretchedly home,
God would forgive.

- The Pharisees and the scribes wanted nothing to do with sinners.
- Jesus wanted everything to do with sinners.

- But we know
that God is
far more wonderful
than that,
for in Jesus Christ,
he came to seek
for those who wander away.

- God is not content
to wait until men come home;
he goes out
to search for them
no matter what it costs him.

- (# 4) The love of God is a rejoicing love.
 - Here there is nothing but joy.
 - No receiving back with a grudge and a sense of superior contempt;
 - It is all joy.

- So often we accept a man who is penitent with a moral lecture and a clear indication that he must regard himself as contemptible,
 - That we have no further use for him and do not propose to trust him ever again.

- **It is human**
never to forget
a man's past
and always to remember
his sins against him.
- God puts our sins
behind his back;
and when we
return to him,
it is all joy.
(**Isaiah 38:17**)

- (# 5) The love of God is a protecting love.
 - It is the love which saves us from ourselves..

- The love of God
is a love which:
- Makes the wanderer wise,
 - The weak strong,
 - The sinner pure,
 - The slave to sin free.
- The defeated a conqueror.

- The Father loves all of his little ones.
- He doesn't want any of them to perish,
to be lost,
or even to be in danger.

- So he is willing to risk the 99 to find the one.

- Why?

- Because

He is Immanuel...

- God with us!

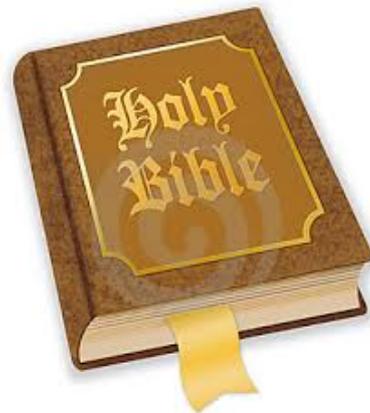
- He left the safety of heaven
- To find the lost one,
- To find you and me.
- Now he looks to us and asks us to find the other lost little ones.

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say**

“Come”.

Revelation 22:17



- 06-24-2017 Tryon, NC