

The Lost Sheep

Luke 15:1-7

Matthew 18:11-14

Luke 19:10

Key Thought

“As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own” *Christ's Object Lessons*, 187.

Important Insight

The accusation leveled against Jesus by the religious leaders, “This man receiveth sinners,” contained the very explanation that revealed why sinners of all types and classes were so attracted to the Savior.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What was implied in the accusation against Jesus, “This man receiveth sinners”?
- 2) Discuss why Publicans and sinners were attracted to Jesus when the religious leaders were not.
- 3) Why did Jesus say the Shepherd goes out in search of *one* lost sheep...the least that can be numbered?
- 4) Jesus speaks only of success, but does the Shepherd ever fail in bringing the lost sheep back? Discuss.
- 5) What further insights are revealed in 1 John 4:19?

For Further Discussion

Psalm 23 – “*The Shepherd's Psalm*”

Quotes for Reflection

“By this accusation they insinuated that Christ liked to associate with the sinful and vile, and was insensible to their wickedness.” *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 185

“Heaven and its holy inhabitants welcomed the penitent; only his fellow-sinners kept him proudly aloof, as though there had been defilement for them in his touch; as though they were wronged, if he were freely forgiven. Richard Chenevix Trench, *Notes on the Parables of our Lord*, p. 375

“One soul is of more value to heaven than a whole world of property, houses, lands, money. For the conversion of one soul we should tax our resources to the utmost. One soul won to Christ will flash heaven's light all around him, penetrating the moral darkness, and saving other souls.” F.M. Wilcox, *Day by Day*, 212.

“The souls who came to Jesus felt in His presence that even for them there was escape from the pit of sin. [...] And their very misery and sin made them only the more the objects of His compassion. The farther they had wandered from Him, the more earnest the longing and the greater the sacrifice for their rescue.” *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 186.

“The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God's own image in the souls whom He has made.” *Christ's Object Lessons*, 190

God, “continues his care of the sheep that did not go astray; they are *safe in the wilderness*. But there is a particular care to be taken of this lost sheep; and though he has a hundred sheep, [...] yet he will not *lose* that *one*, but he goes after it, and shows abundance of care.” *Matthew Henry's Commentary*

When you turn from those who seem unpromising and unattractive, do you realize that you are neglecting the souls for whom Christ is seeking? *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 191

For Further Reading

Ellen G. White. “This Man Receiveth Sinners”, *Christ's Object Lessons*, Chapter 15.