



Rescue The Lost

“Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish” (Matthew 18:14).

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Many are spiritually lost in this generation without realising it or nor of their need for rescue. Would you be part of God's rescue service?

When considering the parable of the lost sheep, it is possible to wonder the rationale or wisdom in leaving 99 sheep in the wilderness in search of only one lost sheep whose whereabouts is not known. A closer look at this teaching reveals how God values one individual soul. **“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”** (Mark 8:36-37). It is also a reflection of divine love that made Jesus to leave all the glories of heaven to come down and die for sinful man (John 3:16).

“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. 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” (Matthew 18:11-14).

“And he spake this parable unto them, saying, 4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance” (Luke 15:3-7).

We learn from this story that:

- 1) Jesus remained faithful to His purpose in life - that of saving the lost (vs11). That is why He overcame the devil's temptations (Matthew 4:1-11) and turned down the prospect of being made an earthly king (John 6:15).
- 2) The good shepherd in the story was diligent to know the state of his flock (Proverbs 27:23)

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- this is what made him to identify that one sheep is missing from a flock of 100. He was also faithful to his call by seeking the recovery and wellbeing of the lost rather than focusing on his convenience and interests.

- 3) Leaving the 99 sheep in the wilderness does not imply abandoning them. Obviously, he would have put some measures in place to ensure their safety, while away.
- 4) He went into the mountains (note the plural!) seeking the lost. Climbing mountains would not have been an easy task especially after a long period of feeding the flock; but compassion for the wellbeing of the lost made him willing to pay the price in rescuing the lost.
- 5) At the start, there was no certainty of finding the lost, but a diligent systematic search **“until he find it”** (vs 7) was key to success. This was not a shallow, superficial work of the fainthearted, in view of dangers.
- 6) Diligence in business (Proverbs 22:29), faithfulness in little (Luke 19:17) and not despising days of small things (Zechariah 4:10) combined to produce the success.
- 7) On finding the lost sheep, he did not beat it for going astray and making him to waste so much time looking for it, neither did he drag it along the mountains, but rather with tender love and value he gently carried it **“on his shoulders, rejoicing”** (vs 5).
- 8) He celebrated with his friends and neighbours for finding the lost sheep. In the same way, heaven rejoices for every sinner that repents (Luke 15:7,10).
- 9) Determine to make God glad by diligently labouring constantly to rescue the lost.