

St. Luke Lutheran Church – WELS

Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz  
Pentecost 17. September 15, 2013  
Luke 15:1-7 NASB



### Lost Sheep

**15.1** Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. **2** Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” **3** So He told them this parable, saying, **4** “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? **5** When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. **6** And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ **7** I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

A man named Raul is from Uruguay. Raul is 58 years old. Raul was going to ride his motorcycle over the mountains from Chile’ to Argentina – when his motorcycle broke down. That’s ok! Raul was tough. He was not a quitter. He would walk until he found help! Well Raul walked and walked into a snow storm. He got lost – completely turned around. He had no idea where he was and he didn’t find anybody. Nobody found him, either! Months later – after losing some 44 pounds – living off large

rodents and raisins – Raul was found. Some guys who had gone up into the mountains to measure the snow fall stumbled upon him. He was saved. He was rescued – *sort of!* The rescuers weren't looking for him – they bumped into him. People asked Raul – did he believe – was he a believer? He said not before – but he was now. *What does that mean?* If someone asked you – are you a believer – what would you say? Would you seize that opportunity to simply, powerfully – rightly confess your faith? Would you tell anyone and everyone who asked, “I am a poor and wretched sinner – dead in trespasses and sin. I am saved by grace through faith in Jesus who lived a life without any sin – then died on the cross to wash away all my sins. On Easter morning Jesus rose from the dead. By grace through faith in His sacrifice for me I am forgiven and an heir of eternal life – for sure!” Today God's Word is familiar – the Parable – the earthly story with the heavenly meaning

### **Jesus Loves Lost Sheep!**

#### **I. We all like sheep have wandered**

#### **II. Jesus regains the straying.**

**15.1 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. <sup>2</sup> Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” <sup>3</sup> So He told them this parable, saying, <sup>4</sup> “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? In John chapter 10 Jesus said, 10.1 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> To him the doorkeeper opens, and**

the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup> This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. <sup>7</sup> So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. <sup>9</sup> I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and <sup>[a]</sup>have *it* abundantly. <sup>11</sup> “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup> He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. <sup>13</sup> *He flees* because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. <sup>14</sup> I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, <sup>15</sup> even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd. How can you add to that? This is what Jesus said.

The fact is – the concept of the LORD being the shepherd of his people his sheep – is not a new one. “The LORD is my shepherd I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. Even in the valley of the shadow of death the LORD is with his sheep!” Ezekiel chapter 34 says, <sup>11</sup> ““For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and

look after them. <sup>12</sup> As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. <sup>13</sup> I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. <sup>14</sup> I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup> I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. <sup>16</sup> I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

Perhaps the most familiar of all – Isaiah chapter 53. Every Lenten season we read: <sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. <sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.

People are like sheep – who love to wander and stray. It's tempting to listen to the news and think – now these people are

really bad. The bride who within 8 days of her wedding pushes her new husband over a cliff – then waits 5 days before telling authorities where they can find the body. And then says – he started it – he grabbed my arm – he pushed me first! The young men who pounded the 88 year old grandpa to death – using flashlights! Those are bad people! Professional football players who crash into someone who doesn't even see them coming – someone completely out of the play – in an effort to injure their knees – and perhaps end their career! Those are the really bad people – repeat offenders – the guy who steals a liquor truck and leads police on a high speed chase – endangering other people on the road! Now that's bad stuff – and so? The fact is we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We grumble and complain – “I don't want to get up! I don't want to go to school. I don't want to go to work. I don't want to change diapers and scrub floors and go to the grocery store and make the beds and do the laundry and nobody appreciates me!” We have all sinned if we can't remember the last time we read our Bible. Can't remember when we came to Lord's Supper. Can't remember the last time we actually sacrificed – actually literally did without something – anything – in order to give a thank-offering to help someone in genuine need. We have sinned if we are cheap and stingy – thinking only of ourselves! We all like sheep have gone astray. And our Heavenly Father has placed on Jesus all my sins and mistakes.

**Does (he) not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' Reclaim the straying! That's what we do every**

time we talk to someone that hasn't been to Church lately! We don't need to scold them. We don't need to shame or embarrass them. That's not what Gospel motivation is all about. We can invite and encourage them. We can talk about the sweet blessings that come from public worship. We hear God's Word read and explained and applied. We pray, praise and give thanks. We bring our thank-offerings. We worship. We give glory to our Heavenly Father who has made us who we are and has blessed us beyond all understanding! **"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!"** Live your faith! Share your faith! I was eating my breakfast the other morning – watching the news – when they showed a young man in a wheel-chair. The wheel-chair had tank track-treads on the sides. The man in the wheel-chair had been wounded in the war in Afghanistan. He said when he woke up both his legs and one of his arms had been blown off. His hearing was gone – but now he has implants. He lost one of his eyes – and he can't smell any more – and almost all the bones in his face were broken. After all that – he said – he was a little depressed. But now he has this wheel-chair so he can get around his wooded property and so now most days he's pretty good! Really? If you suffered all that – would you only be a little depressed? Again and again I am reminded – I have so much to be thankful for – and so do you! It is a shame on us – when we grumble and complain and feel frustrated with our life – because of our problems – when there are others – by the grace of God – who are thankful and content – in the face of sometimes horrible difficulties. Jesus is our Savior and our Good Shepherd who takes very good care of his sheep! Jesus is our reason to rejoice as he reclaims the straying!

**<sup>7</sup>I tell you that in the same way, there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.** Lost and found! I like that – lost and found. I love Vincent Van Gogh paintings. There is a copy of Van Gogh’s painting of the Bible – open to the book of Isaiah in the Church library. I was interested to read this week – that a Van Gogh painting was just discovered – painted in 1888 it has just been found. Where? In somebody’s attic. A painting of brush and twisted oaks and wheat some 37” by 29” in an attic. Why? Because the painting wasn’t signed by Van Gogh – the owner took it to a museum and was told – it’s a fake! Embarrassed – for almost a century it’s been stashed in an attic? Back in 1991 another museum looked at it and was still not impressed – back to the attic! Really? According to the news – it’s a myth that Van Gogh cut off his ear! Really! And the idea that Van Gogh shot himself – suicide? They said that wasn’t true. Just look at the trajectory of the bullet?! They say he had lunch – went out to paint – and 5 hours later--came back wounded. That he said, “Don’t blame anyone!” But you could say that – if you were trying to protect the young man that shot you – and so? Before he was a painter – Vincent Van Gogh was an evangelist – someone who shared the Gospel. The essential Gospel is what? Christ crucified and risen to save us! This is the truth that saves our immortal soul. We are saved by grace through faith for Jesus’ sake. We were lost sheep – found and rescued and returned by Jesus – the Good Shepherd – who laid down his life for his sheep. Amen

*To God alone all glory!*