

## Matt 18:10-14, Luke 15:1-7 – The Shepherd Seeks His Sheep

### Introduction

1. God seeks His people (**John 4:23**); He pursues, trails, tracks, hunts
2. No man seeks after God (**see Romans 3**)
3. The Good Shepherd tends His flock, gathers His lambs, carries them, and gently leads them (**Isaiah 40:1-11**); God cares for His sheep

**Main Idea** God's love for His people is a preserving love. If one of God's lambs goes astray, He seeks them, finds them, and keeps them. This love is the same grace that sought out the sinner at enmity with God at conversion. Not one sought God, but God the Son in His grace came from Heaven and sought us, bought us, and saved us, and He will keep us.

### God Sides With His Children (Matthew 18:10)

1. The emphasis is on the believer in Matthew 18
  - a. Verses 1-4 – The Kingdom belongs to the Children of God
  - b. Verses 5-9 – God strongly identifies with His children
  - c. Verses 10-14 – God's children are to be cared for
2. Our care for the sheep must match God's care for the sheep
3. Jesus gives a negative command: Do not despise God's little ones
  - a. We cannot be discriminatory/choosy when it comes to our fellow brothers and sisters in the faith; do not despise another believer
  - b. Do not think of a child of God as having little worth or value
  - c. Do not have a condemning attitude (**Philippians 2:3**)
4. Christians have great worth because God views them as having great worth; we each have little means, little influence in the world, but God saved us, and we are co-heirs with Christ
5. We are never to look down on the "quirky" Christian just because their personality is different, or their sin is different
6. Loom at the immature Christian, the struggling Christian, and the disobedient Christian, the straying Christian as valuable in God's eyes
7. The person wandering from the fold of God belongs to God, therefore we are to win them back to the fold of God
8. Love one another, even the misfits in God's Kingdom (We are all misfits); value what God values – He values His children (**Is 43:4-7**)

### God Sends Angels To Minister

1. Jesus gives the rationale for His command – Jesus describes the Heavenly scene of Paradise where angels stand ready to serve God, to serve the saints of God (**Hebrews 1:13-14, Acts 5:17-21, Acts 12:1-11**)
2. Do not look down on God's people for they are valued by Him; even the angels stand ready to serve the saints of God at His bidding
3. We all are to repent, for we are all guilty of thinking, speaking, or behaving toward other Christians in ways that devalue them
4. Do not disdain the child of God who is united to Jesus Christ and who, in the eyes of our Lord is highly cherished

## God Seeks His Sheep (Matthew 18:12-13)

1. The Father seeks His wayward sheep
2. The Good Shepherd guides, leads, directs, teaches, tends to, and feeds His sheep
3. The Shepherd's Sheep
  - a. It is the natural tendency of sheep to go astray – follow people blindly, wander away to dangerous places (**Isaiah 53:6**)
  - b. The Lord is not complimentary of our fallen, sinful human nature – we tend to move away from God, not toward Him
  - c. Left to yourself, you will not want God, to know Him
  - d. Sheep will follow any leader blindly and willfully rebellious
4. The Shepherd's Pursuit
  - a. God does not let His wandering sheep stray, but pursues them when they do not pursue Him
  - b. The one sheep of one hundred matters to God; He knows His sheep by name, their flaws, their sins, and He loves them
  - c. While sinners & enemies, God sent His Son to rescue His sheep
  - d. God rescues His straying sheep through preachers of the Word, friends who challenge them to come back to the fold; God uses instruments (people) to care for His straying sheep
  - e. God celebrates when a straying sheep repents and returns to God, despite their foolish stupidity and sin; He is patient with His sheep
  - f. It is God's grace that seeks out straying sheep; He loves them
  - g. *It is just as much an act of grace to repent as it is not to sin in the first place; it is grace that leads you home*

## God Seeks To Save His Sheep (Luke 15:1-7)

1. The same seeking love that pursues straying sheep is the same seeking love that pursues lost sheep; God pursues with sanctifying grace
2. The same sovereign pursuit of the soul that draws a wayward Christian back to the fold is the same sovereign pursuit that found the lost sheep to begin with
3. The Bible describes the Lost as those who are without Christ
  - a. A possible offensive term, Jesus' term
  - b. The self-righteous, self-assured in need of no Savior
  - c. Sinners: the common Jew to a prostitute, the ritually unclean, Jews not following the oral tradition or walking in God's ways, Gentiles
  - d. Tax Collectors – Jews who collected taxes for Rome; swindlers
  - e. The sick are in need of a physician, not the healthy
4. Jesus came to seek and save the lost; the vilest sinner who recognizes that he is a sinner and needs a great Savior can be saved

## God Keeps His Sheep (Matthew 18:14)

1. God decrees that none of His sheep will be lost – He will save them, and they will persevere by His preserving grace (**John 6:37-40**)
2. God wills to save His sheep – and He keeps them
3. *From Heaven He came and sought her... prone to wander Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love; Here's my heart, take and seal it for Thy courts above*