

Luke 15:1-10

“Searching for the Lost”

September 11, 2016

We need to look at our Gospel text from several viewpoints. The first viewpoint is the perspective of the Pharisee. The Pharisee considers himself to be a righteous man. This means that the Pharisee considers himself to be in a right relationship with God. After all the Pharisee has this large book of rules that he has made up and he keeps every one of those rules. The Pharisee then looks at those around him and he sees failures. The Pharisee sees people unable to keep the large book of rules that the Pharisee has prepared. For example those shepherds were sinners because they failed to meet the religious requirement that they come to worship at the temple on holy days. The Pharisees find it unacceptable when the shepherds use the excuse that they have to look after their flocks to keep them alive and healthy.

The next perspective is to look at the tax collectors and sinners. All of their lives the religious leaders had been putting them down because they fail to live up to the expectations of those leaders. In our society we have people like those religious leaders. They are quick to put others down because they do not live up to their expectations. They tell us that we are dumb. They tell us that we will never succeed. They tell us that we are not fit to appear in polite society. Maybe we

stink. Maybe we don't wear proper clothes. Maybe we have all kinds of tattoos. The reasons for putting others down are unending. The reasons for putting others down always lead to the same result. We are better than you are! All sinners fall short of the glory of God.

When I studied our text, I ran across the phrase that referred to the Pharisees. We are told that they "muttered." There are those that like to mutter behind other people's backs rather than openly go to them and share their concerns. After all if I share my concern I might get an earful back from them because they are upset that I said anything to them. Maybe we are muttering because inside we think that we are better than others. The Pharisees thought that they were perfect in the eyes of God. Yes, God calls us to speak the truth in love. Sometimes the most loving thing we can do is not to say anything especially to others. Just as we appreciate people not gossiping behind our backs. Likewise the most loving thing we can do is reexamine our viewpoint from God's perspective. Then we can see souls in need of a Savior or we can see souls in need of encouragement because the world beats them down.

The final perspective is to look at God. God is the shepherd. He is the all-knowing God who is present everywhere. God desires all souls to share eternity with Him. Christ paid for the failure of each and every one of us to meet His expectations. None of us are right in the eyes of God. We truly are poor miserable

sinners. The Pharisees consider themselves righteous because they live up to their expectations rather than God expectations of them. God is looking for the humble spirit. God is looking for the repentant spirit. God is looking for those willing to look at their lives and see that they do not measure up to God's expectations. Then we need to allow God to live up to those expectations for us through Christ. Then we need to allow God to pay for our failures through Christ on the Cross at Calvary.

Notice in our text that the shepherd has 100 sheep in his flock. A shepherd of that time could handle a flock of around 40. Therefore the shepherd of such a large flock would have had at least one or two other shepherds to look after the flock while he went in search of the missing sheep. Our God is the all-knowing and present everywhere God. He knows the sheep who have strayed and He cares for them. Our God is the all-knowing a present everywhere God and He will have under-shepherds to reach out with Him to call the lost back to the flock. Our God depends on us all to step forward and help those leaders among us to reach out to the lost and invite them back to the flock. However we reach out with a humble spirit rather than a prideful spirit that says "I am better than you are!" Yes, our God can work best through the humble spirit. Amen.