

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

September 11, 2022

Adam, Mona Lisa, and Lost Sheep

Living the Liturgical Year

Luke 15:1-7

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

REFLECTION

This parable opens with the Pharisees grumbling over Jesus eating with sinners. In response, Jesus tells them the parable of the one lost sheep. This parable might seem simple, but Jesus' teaching goes beyond the obvious rescuing of the one lost sheep. **What teacher in your life altered the way you looked at a subject and changed you forever?**

To realize the true power of Jesus' teaching, we need to consider how our own wandering relates to each group:

- 1) **Pharisees:** rule-followers. They assume they are among the 99. Embody a "lost-ness" and smug removal from humanity that is incredibly toxic. Most subtle yet dangerous category – the folks who end up killing Jesus.
- 2) **Tax-collectors:** universally hated, steal from neighbors who are already oppressed. Openly take whatever they need to make their own lives right.
- 3) **Sinners:** broad category. They alter life so that they can live it on their own terms.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). This parable is ultimately not about sheep, but about the heart of the shepherd who always comes looking for the sheep he loves. The job of the church is to celebrate the love of the shepherd – this is the gospel, and where our hope lies. **In which category do you find yourself with the most need for repentance this week? What do you need to do to realize your value, and to receive the worth that Jesus places on you?**