

Following the Shepherd

Lost and Found

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. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.' ³ So he told them this parable: ⁴'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? ⁵When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." ⁷Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

Luke 15:1-7

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Regardless of any official job titles we might hold, each of us is called to be a leader in our own circles of influence. Leadership expert Max de Pree summed it up well: "The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality, the last is to say thank you; in between, the leader is a servant." Because God intends for us to influence those around us, it's important to understand where we're each called to lead. **Where are you called to lead at this specific point in time? Why do you think why God has placed you in these specific spheres of influence?** Defining reality as a leader involves determining what values and practices are important. **What practices or habits demonstrate some of the ways you have defined reality within your leadership roles (home, work, school, etc)?**

With so many changes this year, it has become more difficult for us to know how to define reality. In the midst of this flux, however, we are provided with the opportunity to consider if the things for which we strive are worthy of our efforts. **Do you feel as if you're defining reality in the way God wants you to? If now is an ideal time to reshape our efforts, what changes might that involve for you?**

C.S. Lewis said that the church exists to draw people into Christ, and to create "little Christs." If the church is not doing this, he said, it is all a waste of time. We exist to serve those outside the confines of our families and congregations, and our actions ultimately represent our values. **Why do you think that Jesus' request that we exhibit the heart of the shepherd – looking outward rather than inward - is as significant today than ever?**

When we allow God to guide the stewardship of our finances and resources, our lives begin to look more as Jesus intends. At our core, we are designed to experience joy when we put others before ourselves. The choice to do so is the most difficult part, but living this way leads to a joyful life. **How has generosity led to joy in your life?** We talk a lot about how Covenant is called to be a love letter to the city of Austin. **How does participation in something greater than ourselves actually embody the heart of the shepherd, not merely celebrate it?**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity during this very unpredictable and unexpected time to evaluate what we hold valuable. Help us to hear your voice and align our values with yours. May we trust you fully as we seek to live joyfully for something larger than ourselves. Amen.