

THIS IS YOUR GOD!

Luke 15:1-7

Int: Pharisees criticized Jesus for hanging out with “undesirable” people. In reply he told this story of a shepherd who, having found and brought home a lost sheep, called his friends to rejoice with him. His point? “God is pleased that I am finding his lost sheep. If you knew him and were in step with him, you would rejoice and not criticize.” His parable opened a window on God, showing some amazing things about him. Your God is a

CARING GOD

Preachers often make the story about a sheep in great peril, lost and in danger, but that is a mistake. It is a story about a shepherd who cared for all his sheep. He could not bear to lose even one. Only ninety-nine safe were far too few; only one missing was far too many.

But it is not about just any shepherd. It is about the Good, Great, and Chief Shepherd, God himself! When a person goes astray like a lost sheep, God loses more than the person does. He has invested too much to take the loss and write him off the books. He cares!!

This is your God. He cares about lost people. Even one! Even the least! Even the worst! Even you! Your God is a caring God!

SEARCHING GOD

No matter how trivial the thing lost may seem to others, a person will search over and over again before he gives up something as gone for good. So the shepherd searched. And kept at it. He did not quit until he found his sheep.

Strict Jews never quite got this. They thought God might accept a repentant sinner if he came crawling back on his hands and knees. But no Jew ever dreamed of a God who went out to look for the lost. That was a figure entirely unheard of in Judaism.

A lost sheep never comes home. It will just lay down. God knows if he leaves a lost man alone he will never come home. So he takes the initiative. He seeks lost men like the shepherd in the story sought his lost sheep.

This is your God. He is on the go. His search for lost sheep has brought him here today. Are you the missing lamb? The one lost sheep? Maybe you did not come looking for God but he came looking for you! Your God is a searching God!

REJOICING GOD

When the shepherd found his sheep he lifted it to his shoulders and set out for home, rejoicing all the way. Then he called in his friends to share his joy.

God knows the joy of finding things that have gone lost. “Joy in heaven” is Jewish for “joy in the heart of God”

This is your God! He is not a stern judge with an eternal frown. He smiles, laughs, sings and dances. Your God is a rejoicing God!

Con: If people had half the Shepherd’s heart for lost sheep it would change their lives and revolutionize their churches! Ask God for a heart like his!