

# Parable of the Lost Sheep

## I. Introduction

A. The “parable of the lost sheep” is one of three (or four) parables in Luke 15, each of which shows the value of lost souls being found. The lost sheep and loving shepherd in the chapter’s first parable demonstrate key spiritual truths related to the chapter’s theme. **Luke 15:1-7**

## II. The Parable’s Setting

A. The parable is spoken in response to the murmuring of scribes and Pharisees against Jesus. This murmuring was a reaction to Jesus spending time with “publicans and sinners.” **Luke 15:1-2**

B. While the scribes and Pharisees often avoided people they considered less righteous than themselves, Jesus lovingly sought to *rescue* those in sin. He never *condoned* sin, but He sought to lead people *out* of sin. His attitude is proven wise through the parables of Luke 15. His love for sinners is cause for gratitude and imitation. **Luke 19:10**

## III. The “Lostness” of the Lost

A. A point to reflect on that is connected to the parable of the lost sheep is the utterly *destitute* condition of those who are lost. Literal sheep are in grave danger if they are not in the care of a trustworthy shepherd. The same is true from a spiritual perspective for those who are lost. **Luke 15:4**

B. The spiritually endangered, malnourished, and unsafe condition of those who are lost involves being separated from the perfect Shepherd. Those in this condition face the prospect of *eternal* torment away from His protection. **Romans 6:23a; Mark 9:48**

## IV. God’s Love for Each Soul

A. God gives “sheep” (mankind) the free will to choose whether or not to wander from His fold. Those who are outside of His fold are displeasing God, but they are still deeply *loved* by Him. Like the shepherd in Jesus’ parable, God loves *each* soul that is lost, no matter how grossly any have mistreated Him. **2 Peter 3:9; Luke 15:4-5**

## V. The Lengths God Has Gone To...

A. The shepherd in Jesus’ parable not only cared deeply for the lost sheep, but he *did* something to *rescue* this sheep. God likewise has *acted* out of love in remarkable ways to allow lost “sheep” to be found. **Luke 15:4-5; Romans 5:8; Philippians 2:5-8**

## VI. The Joy When One Who is Lost is Found

A. Upon his beloved sheep being rescued from danger, the shepherd in Jesus’ parable was overjoyed. Such *joy* is likened to the joy in heaven when *any* lost soul is spiritually found. **Luke 15:5-7**

B. This joy illustrates the genuine care of God for each of us, and the beauty of choosing to let God “find” us by submitting to His terms for forgiveness. **Acts 8:39**

## VII. Conclusion

A. Those who wander from God are spiritually lost, but have the chance to be found. May we *choose* the latter, *appreciate* what God has done to give us this choice, and have Christ-like *attitudes* toward those in sin. **Luke 15:7**