

## Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

March 10, 2019

LUKE

*The Shepherd*

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?

### VERSES FOR MEDITATION AND REFLECTION

**15** Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” <sup>3</sup> So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> “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? <sup>5</sup> When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ <sup>7</sup> 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. **Luke 15:1-7**

### DISCUSSION

In this well-known parable, Jesus is eating with tax collectors and sinners – both of whom were excluded from life in the religious community. Tax collectors were Jews who collected taxes on behalf of the Roman government and were considered traitors in their community. Sinners were seen by the religious establishment as having violated a law, or were sick, blind, or disabled—seen as curses from God due to disobedience. The religious leaders accuse Jesus of welcoming and eating with these societal outcasts. The religious leaders’ definition of holiness included being un-welcoming to traitors and sinners.

***Why do you think the tax collectors and sinners wanted to be near Jesus? Why might the “outcasts” of our society today might not be drawn to Christians like the tax collectors and sinners were drawn to Jesus?***

Read verse four. The way Jesus asks the question to the religious leaders indicates that the obvious choice would be to leave the 99 sheep behind in the wilderness to pursue the one lost sheep.

***How does this speak to how the religious leaders might feel about leaving an unattended flock in the wilderness, given their fundamental control issues? In which category do you think you most regularly fall?***

When we attempt to find our own path, and our own way to understand the truth, we represent the one lost sheep. On the other hand, the 99 don’t think they have anything to repent and believe they are better than others. Instead of walking away from the religious leaders when questioned, Jesus carefully addresses their issues through this parable.

***How is this parable really more about a loving shepherd than about sheep? Through Jesus’ response to the leaders, how is He displaying God’s heart by showing care not just for the one lost sheep, but also for the 99?***

The point of this parable is to know we are loved, and have more worth than we can ever know.

***As you journey through Lent, what can help you to pay attention to the love of God in your life – removing or adding something? Consider what you might open yourself up to when you recognize God’s love for yourself.***

**PRAYER:** Heavenly Father, this Lent may we realize that we are more loved than we can imagine. Whether we stay as the one lost sheep or feel no need to repent as the 99, help us to feel the depths of your love and explore new areas of growth with your guidance and with and the support of those with whom you have blessed our lives. **Amen.**