

# The DAILY JESUS NEWS #207

## Jesus' Ministry in Perea Jesus' Parable of the Lost, Then Found Sheep LK 15.1-7 (Repeated Text: MT 18.12-14)

1 Now the tax collectors and “sinful people” were all gathering around to listen carefully to Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law grumbled among themselves, “This man makes a practice of welcoming sinners and sharing meals with them.”

3 So Jesus told them this parable: 4 *"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go searching after the lost sheep until he finds it?"*

5 *"And because he found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and carries it home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'You have to rejoice with me; I have found my sheep that was totally lost.'*

7 *"I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Somewhere in Perea
Timeline	January or February (Months 36 & 37)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	A. Jesus' Ministers Throughout Perea
Title	6. Jesus' Parable of the Lost, Then Found Sheep

### COMMENT:

In the months since leaving Galilee in early September, Jesus had been consistently teaching discipleship lessons to the roughly 120 people who were following him full-time while he was on the road, visiting the towns and villages of Judea, and now Perea. It was his goal to complete his evangelization of the nation of Israel before ending his earthly life ministry in Jerusalem during Passion Week.

We have seen that Jesus was constantly reinforcing the key discipleship principle of adjusting everything in our lives to HIS standard through learning his thoughts, attitudes, and behavior patterns, and then agreeing with him. LK Chapter 15 applies this principle to our attitude toward people who are not yet believers.

Three parables identify God's attitude toward “sinful people.” The fourth and final part of the story applied directly to the wrong attitude of the Pharisees, who precipitated this series of parables in the first place by their totally wrong thinking.

Today's reading established the setting for these famous parables. Jesus was continuing to make a practice of welcoming “tax collectors” and “sinful people” into his fellowship, to the degree of sharing meals with them. The Pharisees considered these to be utterly despicable people who ought to be shunned, and put to shame. This was also the common view of the culture. They were highly judgmental of Jesus for fellowshiping with people that "spiritual" and "righteous" persons should disdain.

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Why did Jesus welcome “sinners?” He saw hearts that were seeking to change—to repent—when they came to him. They were approaching him to find out if there was really hope for them with God, when society around them ostracized and condemned them as evil. They came to Jesus with open, seeking hearts, and total honesty about themselves.

Jesus demonstrated God's loving attitude toward them by fellowshiping with them. The parables were designed to explain that attitude in more detail. What does God really think and feel about sinful people who are honest about their sins and failures, and seeking to change?

Jesus gave a Trinitarian cluster of three parables, that described himself as the good Shepherd, the Holy Spirit as a person who searches with light, and the Father who loves and welcomes his repentant children. The parables describe God's joy in re-connecting with sinful people who have strayed from their relationship with him.

Today's reading focuses on God's joy in searching for and re-connecting with one individual sinner. Jesus is the Shepherd who temporarily leaves ninety-nine sheep in a safe place, so that he can go find and recover just one sheep that has strayed far away and is as good as dead in their lost, helpless condition.

The Shepherd is overjoyed to find his lost sheep. He does not condemn or blame the sheep, he throws a party to celebrate the restoration of their relationship.

Jesus fellowshiped with “sinful people” because he loved them enough to create them, know them, and die for them...just so that they could have an intimate relationship with him forever. It is not that we love God, it is that God loves us enough to throw an eternal banquet for us, and then HE goes out and finds us so that we can respond to his invitation.

This is God's JOY. We are that valuable and precious to him.

### APPLICATION:

Understanding this parable makes us realize how much our God loves us, and therefore treasures fellowship with us. He wants us to be his bond-slave so that we can have the full benefit of living in the glory of his perfect love—not so that he can use us for his own pleasure. It is the other way around.

So, our attitude toward those who have not yet believed in Jesus ought to be the same as his.

We should take great joy in going out to find his lost sheep and share the message of his salvation with them.

We should welcome all people into fellowship and love, even as he does.

We should never consider ourselves to be superior to those who are yet to believe in Jesus. Rather, we should rejoice that the same Jesus who found us in our sinful condition is also seeking to find and restore them!

*Are you judgmental toward non-believers, or do you joyfully welcome them, and make a point of going to them with Jesus' message of hope for them?*

*What do you need to adjust to Jesus' attitude toward his lost sheep?*