

May 2nd , 2017 Deacon Meeting

Prayer:

Review of Biblical Mandate: Ezekiel 34:16 “I will *search* for the lost and *bring back* the strays. I will *bind up* the injured and *strengthen* the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will *watch over* and shepherd with justice.” **RSV.**

Agenda Review:

- Survey from Last Month on Evangelism Comfort?
- Lesson on **How Stray Sheep are Restored.**
- Housekeeping:
 - Reporting to Session?
 - Update on Rayma Werle for Financial Aid. Coordinate a financial advisor.
 - Report from Shepherds: Susan Rosseau?
 - Issues between conflicting databases. Shepherds vs. Directory?
- **Health Concerns to be aware of:**
 - Jim Hill Sr. passed away. Patti Miller
 - Sara Swindoll Millers
 - Ken Klein Lindy Cardinale
 - Lou Tudor Carolyn Herman
 - Pat Stuart Joan Sheldon
 - Krista Rosendahl Tom Rosendahl
 - Tom Rosendahl Tom Rosendahl
 - Ron Berg Debbie Artman
 - Bill Kurt Carolyn Hermann
 - Charles McGreary, non member.
 - Susan Holley Millers
- **Request from Session**
 - Concerns over financial giving and attendance at 11:00.
 - Can Deacons give some feedback as to where people have wandered at the 11:00 service?
 - Do they give a reason for their attendance or lack thereof?

- Can we focus on our sheep who are specially 11:00 attendees and find out what's going on?
- **Question/Answers**

How Stray Sheep are Restored...

Luke 15:3-6 ³ Then 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 after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ 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.

This is an odd passage because what shepherd in his right mind would leave 99 sheep unprotected and vulnerable to simply search for a lost lamb. Maybe the lost lamb isn’t significant because if it’s lost it may be too sickly or too weak to keep up and thereby isn’t worth much.

This is a good example of over analyzing parables. Look for the one main point.

What is it?

- God chooses what is valuable to him.
- The celebration is often exaggerated.

I. The Identity of Stray Sheep

We’ve talked about this some already. Stray sheep are people who have been part of the church, part of ministry, and somehow wandered off. This seems to be prominent in recent decades than before.

Sometimes the reason is simply false belief or doctrine as was the case in Galatia.

Galatians 1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel.

Sometimes it’s for love of the world rather than church.

Another priority like kids sports interferes and church gets the back seat.

For some, church is the last thing on the priority list. If nothing else is happening, go to church.

2 Timothy 4:10 for Demas, because he loved this world has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica.

Two Types of Stray Sheep

- a. Those whose wandering is temporary
- b. Those whose wandering is permanent.

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

Our own Confessions talk about people who fall into grievous and serious sin, but it's for a time. In other words, they eventually repent and turn back. It may be with their very last breath, but sooner or later it happens.

Those who never repent simply show that they were never really part of the program.

Jesus warns about these types in Matthew 7

Matthew 7:22 Many will come to me on that day saying, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers.'

To me, that's the most frightening verse in the bible.

How do you know the difference between a stray sheep that's temporary and one that's permanent? You don't.

Since we don't know, we should assume their "straying" is temporary.

It's similar to what we discussed when we talked about seeing Lost Sheep.

Since we don't know who is among the Elect, we should evangelize as though everyone we meet is.

Takeaways:

1. Don't give up on your sheep.
2. God knows the Chosen, not us.