

Home Group study: week beginning 13th April 2020

The Good Shepherd

Do you ever lose anything? What lengths do you go to to find something you've lost? Have you ever lost anything and found it again under remarkable circumstances?

Read: Luke 15 1-23

Jesus tells three different stories here. What are the similar elements of all three? Verse 2 tells us that Jesus told these stories in response to the Pharisees and teachers of the law. What lesson was Jesus trying to get over to them? What lesson is Jesus giving to us here?

Understanding

On Sunday Tim preached from the first seven verses of this chapter. Who does the sheep represent? Isaiah 53:6 makes the connection for us. Isaiah likens us to the sheep. In what way? How does Isaiah's description of us relate to 21st century mankind?

Have a look at John 10: 1-5. Jesus is again speaking to the Pharisees. He makes it clear who 'the shepherd' is. What do we learn about the nature of the shepherd in this passage? And what do we learn about the sheep's relationship with him? What does Luke 15: 5 tell us about the shepherd's relationship with the sheep?

How wise do you think the shepherd is, leaving the 99 sheep to go and search for the lost one? What does it say for the shepherd's care of each individual? Is there a way in which Jesus actually differs from the shepherd depicted here?

Application

Hopefully you've already picked up that one of the common themes running through all three of the parables in Luke 15 is the reaction of the person who has lost something to finding them. In the story of the sheep, when we link it with the Isaiah verse, it is clear that there has been a wilful intent on the part of the sheep to run away. In the Parable of the Lost Son it is all too clear that the son has very deliberately gone off to do his own thing, and the way he treats the inheritance his father has generously given him is shameful. Do you think he was truly repentant, or was he driven back to the father by selfish motive? Yet in both these cases the reaction of the shepherd and the father is remarkably similar, as is the reaction to the woman who has found her coin.

What does this say about the way God treats us? Is this how we would expect God to react to us when we've deliberately turned against him and done our own thing?

Tim talked about the perseverance of Jesus in chasing after us, and all that he went through to redeem ungrateful people. Think of ways we too can practise perseverance, especially in these strange times.