



## WEEKLY STUDY

### ***God Loves Lost Things - Week One***

It's the season of Advent which will lead us right up to Christmas. Together, we will spend several weeks preparing our hearts to celebrate God coming to us in the form of a baby born in Bethlehem. God came to us because we were lost without him. That's a theme that we've seen throughout the gospel of Luke and especially in Luke chapter 15. This week, we learned about the lost sheep and the kind of shepherd Jesus is as he seeks those who are lost.

Peace of Christ,  
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit [prov.church/smallgroups](http://prov.church/smallgroups).

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## DAILY STUDY

### **MONDAY: LUKE 15.1-7 (ESV)**

*Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."*

<sup>3</sup> *So he told them this parable: <sup>4</sup> "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? <sup>5</sup> And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his 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.*

- Jesus seemed to be shifting from all of the warnings in the previous chapters. This is not, "Woe to you who are lost..." but a hopeful message that God cares for the lost. His Son seeks them. Both messages from Jesus point to the truth. We need to see the error of our ways. (Jesus knows how to get our attention.) And we also need God's grace and forgiveness when we repent and change

directions. When have you experienced God's merciful grace? When has God seemed to be pursuing you?

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- **Prayer Prompt:** Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." (John 3.14-15 NIV)
- *God, I confess my own brokenness. I have often failed to be obedient and have wandered away. Come after me, pursue me with your holy love. Amen.*

### TUESDAY: LUKE 15.1-7 (ESV)

- The Pharisees of Jesus' day were guilty of overlooking the irreligious people around them. They preferred to glory in their own ability to keep the law. They were very good at keeping the rules intact, but not so good at looking after those who strayed. The rules of religion became a false god to them, while their Creator God was out pursuing the ones who had wandered. What is the common attitude towards irreligious people in society today? Who are the ones who seem to be leaving the 99 in order to find them?

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- **Prayer Prompt:** *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3.16 NIV)*
- *Jesus, as you have come after me, change my heart towards those whom you would have me see and reach out to today. Amen.*

### WEDNESDAY: LUKE 15.1-7 (ESV)

- Isn't it interesting that tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Jesus? What was it about Him that led to this? He was a rare teacher who made time for them and welcomed them into his presence. In fact, his entire ministry was geared towards outsiders. We were the outsiders. For those who have now received his grace, it is our calling to carry on the work of our Good Shepherd. It would be tempting to turn inwards and associate only with others brought into the fold, but we are called to more. Who are the outsiders that you might be called to welcome in?

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- **Prayer Prompt:** *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3.17 NIV)*
  - *God, thank you for this gift of salvation through your Son Jesus. Help me to become more like him in every way. Amen.*

#### **THURSDAY: LUKE 15.1-7 (ESV)**

- Were it not for [King David](#), a shepherd would never have been considered the hero in a story told by Jesus. The dirty, smelly, unclean job of shepherd had become an acceptable image of good. The parable begins with an aspirational assumption that anyone hearing this story would agree that it is right to leave the 99 in pursuit of the 1. Of course his audience would do the same, right? Right? In what ways can you see yourself as the shepherd who goes after the lost one? Or do you relate more to the lost sheep? The 99?
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- **Prayer Prompt:** *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10.11 NIV)*
- *Jesus, you have truly laid down your life for me and for the whole world. Thank you for taking on a role that required getting dirty. I owe my life to you, my Good Shepherd. Amen.*

#### **FRIDAY: LUKE 15.1-7 (ESV)**

- God is in the recovery business. Have you ever felt like you have become separated from “the flock” in a way that left you cold and vulnerable? What did that feel like? Have you ever been on the receiving end of a recovery project? What were you saved from? What were you saved for?
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- **Prayer Prompt:** *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. (Psalm 23.1 NIV)*
  - *God, come and find me here. Reveal the parts of my story that need redemption and rescue. Recover me, your lost sheep. Amen.*

## SATURDAY: LUKE 15.1-7 (ESV)

- This parable ends with great rejoicing. The shepherd invites others to share in the party for a sheep who is now back in the fold. He's not angry, and he's not counting the cost of either his recovery mission or the party to celebrate its completion. Who or what, if lost and found, would be cause for great rejoicing, no matter the cost? Is there someone whose return you need to celebrate today?
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- **Prayer Prompt:** *Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,<sup>21</sup> equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13.20-21 NIV)*
- *God, I want to help to throw the parties for many more who will be found by you and brought back to flock. I pray for them now. Amen.*

## GROUP DISCUSSION

Pastor Jacob left us with these questions to pray about this week. Share your responses and reflections.

- What do you need recovered in your life?
- What parts of you feel lost?
- What people do you feel in danger of losing?