

The Good Shepherd in Three Positions

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. Luke 15:4-6

THE love of Jesus is not mere sentiment; it is active and energetic.

It is prevenient love, going after sheep that have no notion of returning to the fold from which they have wandered.

It is engrossing, making him leave all else: making one lost one to be of more present importance than ninety and nine.

It sets him upon resolute, determined, persevering search.

Let us behold our great Shepherd—

I. IN THE SEARCH. "Until he find it."

Mark him well, as, with his eyes, and heart, and all faculties, he goes "after that which is lost. "

1. No rejoicing is on his countenance. He is anxious for the lost.
2. No hesitation is in his mind. Despite the roughness of the way, or the length of the time, or the darkness of the night, he still pursues his lost one.
3. No anger is in his heart. The many wanderings of the sheep cost him dear, but he counts them as nothing, so that he may but find it.
4. No pausing because of weariness. Love makes him forget himself, and causes him to renew his strength.
5. No giving up the search. His varied non-successes do not compel him to return defeated.

Such must our searches after others be.

We must labor after each soul until we find it.

II. AT THE CAPTURE. "When he hath found it."

Mark the Shepherd when the sheep is at last within reach.

1. Wanderer held. How firm the grip! How hearty! How entire!
2. Weight borne. No chiding, smiting, driving; but a lift, a self-loading, an easing of the wanderer.
3. Distance traveled. Every step is for the Shepherd.
 - He must tread painfully all that length of road over which the sheep had wandered so wantonly.
 - The sheep is carried back with no suffering on its own part.

4. Shepherd rejoicing to bear the burden.

- The sheep is so dear that its weight is a load of love.
- The Shepherd is so good that he finds joy in his own toil.

5. Sheep rejoicing, too. Surely it is glad to be found of the Shepherd, and so to have its wanderings ended, its weariness rested, its distance removed, its perfect restoration secured.

III. IN THE HOME-BRINGING. "When he cometh home."

Mark well the end of the Shepherd's toil and care: he does not end his care till he has brought the stray one "home?"

1. Heaven is home to Christ.

2. Jesus must carry us all the way there.

3. The Shepherd's mission for lost souls is known in glory, and watched with holy sympathy: in this all heavenly ones are "his friends and neighbors.

4. Jesus loves others to rejoice with him over the accomplishment of his design.

"He calleth together his friends." See how they crowd around him! What a meeting!

5. Repentance is also regarded as our being brought home (verse 7). "I have found" refers to the repenting sinner, and it is a finding which secures salvation, or angels would not rejoice over it.

6. One sinner can make all heaven glad (verses 7 and 10.)

Let us learn a lesson from each of the three pictures which we have looked upon—

Of perseverance till souls are saved.

Of patience with souls who are newly found.

Of encouragement in expectation of the gathering into glory of those for whom we labor on behalf of Jesus.