

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

SEPTEMBER 13

"FOR THE ONE"
THE LOST SHEEP

Scripture References

- Luke 15:1-7
- Luke 19:10
- Philippians 2:5-8
- Matthew 28:19-20
- Matthew 9:12

Quick Re-Cap

When Jesus told the parables in Luke 15, lots of people who didn't know God were crowding around him, and the religious leaders were grumbling that he was hanging out with the "wrong" crowd. So Jesus told a story about a shepherd who leaves his 99 safe sheep to go find the one that's lost, and he doesn't stop looking "until he finds it" (Luke 15:4). **That's exactly what Jesus did for us!** He left heaven, became a human, and came all the way down to where we were (Philippians 2:5-8). He did it because God loves every single person he made, and Jesus came for the people who know they need help, just like a doctor comes for the sick (Matthew 9:12). When the shepherd finds his sheep, he doesn't scold it or walk away. He scoops it up, puts it on his shoulders, carries it all the way home, and throws a party! And here's the best part: we're not the shepherd, Jesus is. He did the hard work of coming, dying, and rising again. We don't have to save anybody. We just get to introduce our friends to the Shepherd who already loves them.

Illustration

The Air Force pararescue team has a motto: "These things we do that others may live." Their job is to go into dangerous places to save wounded people, even at great cost to themselves. In 1966, during the Vietnam War, 134 American soldiers were trapped in the jungle and badly outnumbered. A pararescue jumper named William Pitsenbarger, who was off duty that day, chose to go help anyway. He was lowered from a helicopter again and again, pulling wounded men to safety. He saved about 60 men and died there. Years later, when he was awarded the Medal of Honor, relatives of the men he rescued were asked to stand. Hundreds of people rose, people who would never have been born if he had chosen a comfortable day off. **Reaching one person can matter for generations.** Jesus gave his life so that others may live, and he calls us to follow him into the lives of people who need him.

Application

So what do we do with this? First, we get brave and leave our comfy spots, because Jesus left his for us. That might mean sitting with the new kid at lunch or inviting the neighbor nobody talks to. Everyone is worth the rescue, even the people who are different from us or hard to like. Second, we don't just "lower a basket" and hope people wander into church. Lots of people don't even know they need rescuing, so we go to them with kindness, an invitation, and a life that shows what Jesus is like (Matthew 28:19-20). Third, we don't give up! The shepherd kept looking until he found his sheep, and sometimes friends take a long time to hear and believe. So we keep praying, keep being a good friend, and trust that God wants them found even more than we do.

Convo Starters

- Why did the shepherd leave 99 sheep for one? What does that say about how God sees each person?
- Who is your "one"? If you don't know yet, what could we pray to ask God to show you?
- How does it feel to know that Jesus is the real Rescuer and we just get to make the introduction?