

WEEK 3- THE LOST SHEEP

EARS TO HEAR

the parables of Jesus

It is not my heavenly Father's will that even one of these little ones should perish.
Matthew 18:14

OVERVIEW

This is a familiar and much beloved parable. The idea that God as the good shepherd would tirelessly pursue even a single lost sheep speaks volumes about his grace and mercy. However, there are several other parables in Matthew (the wheat and the weeds, the fishing net, the great feast, etc.) which paint the picture of individuals being rejected or excluded from the kingdom. How are we meant to reconcile these seemingly contradictory ideas? This question, if we're willing to ask it, will lead us to consider our own responsibility in choosing or rejecting God's grace.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read The Parable of the Lost Sheep, Matthew 18:12-14. How does this story illustrate God's grace and mercy?
2. Read Matthew 18:4 above. Do we see God's kingdom in this way? If we really believe God cares so deeply for those the world has rejected, what are some practical actions we could take to show this love to the world?
3. What meaning can we find in the other parables Barry referred to - the wheat and the weeds (Matthew 13:24-30), the fishing net (Matthew 13:47-52), the great feast (Matthew 22:1-14)?
4. How do we reconcile the idea that God would pursue one lost sheep, yet sort out good and bad fish?
5. What is our responsibility in choosing or rejecting God's grace?
6. Are we joining God in the search for "one lost sheep", or are we pouring out our lives for the kingdoms of this world? What are your priorities? Share with one other person.

**BRING
YOUR
OWN
BIBLE
SERIES**