

I. Introduction

A. The Lost Sheep

So He told them this parable: "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? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 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.' 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." (Luke 15:3-7)

1. How do you hear this? Consider how a nomadic, shepherding tribe would hear this.
2. Camels, sheep, goats, cattle
3. Open country, not with friend or corral
4. Basically, the 99 are expendable to find one that is lost - there will not be 99 when the shepherd returns
5. Reaction: Anger, dumbest story ever.
 - a. Anger, dumbest story ever
 - b. "If that happened, we would beat them or possibly kill them."

B. Church is family, and we all are part of the family business,

*Jesus about His Father's business. (Luke 2:49, KJV)

And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

1. Our family's business is providing a pathway for people to learn to love and to obey Jesus.
2. Our territory has no boundaries, and the competition is rooted in lies and deception but is outwardly and momentarily attractive.

"The great commission is not just a command; it is a mission statement. It is Jesus' strategic plan to see the Good News reach every generation in every geographic location on Earth." Roy Moran

II. Making disciples

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for My sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the

Son of Man comes. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. (Matthew 10:16-25)

A. Sending you out as sheep among wolves

1. Parallel passages

- a. And He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves." (Luke 10:2-3)
- b. As you sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word," (John 17:18-20)

2. Shepherd Jesus: is He really good?

- a. Shepherds
 - 1) Kids: sheep and wolves
 - 2) Keep the sheep safe from threats, particularly predators. Feed, care for, and protect, right?
- b. Jesus, the great Shepherd, sends His sheep among the wolves.
- c. *10 out of 10 shepherds agree that a good shepherd does not send the sheep out among wolves. So, if this is the case, there must be a really profound reason Jesus sends His family out into opposition and, at times, even danger.

3. Davy and Natalie Lloyd (May 23, 2024)

- a. Mission: to see the Gospel of Christ make a difference in the lives of Haiti's young people.
- b. In the scope of eternity, it is never a tragedy to get to go home to Jesus early.
- c. *This however doesn't lessen the tears, the pain, but we must remember what Jesus says and what He has promised.
- d. I don't know how the Lloyds lived their lives (I assume that they loved Jesus and obeyed Jesus), but God calls all of us to be faithful and wise.

B. Wise and serpents and gentle as doves...

1. We are called to give our lives wisely, we don't throw them away

*There is a difference between a Jesus follower's life in peril from foolishness and their life in peril because they are about their Father's business as they carry the name of Jesus.

2. Alone, wisdom of a serpent is only cunning, and harmless as doves is little better than weakness. But combining the two can save us from unnecessary exposure to danger and at the same time a sinful and disobedient desire to escape sharing in the suffering of Jesus.

3. *Jesus is calling us to unflinching zeal and calm discretion.

C. Beware of men

1. The ones who Jesus is sending us to will not receive us well - but they are ripe for harvest. The wolves are among those ripe for harvest.
2. Persecution on mission is normal.
 *Caution: New Testament is clear, not all Christians will experience the same level of persecution or opposition. In God's mercy, more severe forms of persecution or opposition are restrained in some settings, settings like our own. We are not called to pursue persecution, nor are we called to pursue comfort. We are called to pursue Jesus.
 - a. The normal Christian: 70% of Jesus followers globally live in environments of persecution (we are in the 30% minority).
 - b. Only two ways to end the persecution of Christians:
 - 1) Stop talking about Jesus.
 - 2) Love the persecutors all the way to Jesus.
3. Wolves
 - a. Jewish leaders
Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, (Matthew 10:17)
 - b. Governing authorities
and you will be dragged before governors and kings for My sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. (Matthew 10:18)
 - c. Family members
Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, (Matthew 10:21)
 *Islam and family members; hardest part. Can you see this and still say, "I choose Jesus."
4. Escape is sometimes God's pathway (Matthew 10:23) and at other times it is not (Matthew 10:17-18)
 - a. *When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Matthew 10:23)*
 - b. *Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for My sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. (Matthew 10:17-18)*
5. *Endurance is key but it doesn't always mean stay. We need godly discernment and the power and filling of the Holy Spirit. Either way, if I stay, I use that opportunity to speak Jesus and if I flee, I speak Jesus in that new place (19-20)
When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (Matthew 10:19-20)
6. All about the family business
 - a. Jesus is saying that we are to be making disciples whether it is hard or easy, costly or free.

- b. *Jesus did not design His family to live in comfort and ease, He sent us out to where we will face opposition and those who oppose us are the desire of His heart and the reason He shed his blood.
- 7. *Some of us will face little opposition because of God's mercy and others because of their own disobedience. The vast majority of Jesus followers around the world face the same suffering Jesus faced - and the Spirit gives them the power to endure with joy that many of us in ease don't understand.
 - b. We are to be about our Father's business

III. Communion

- A. God has brought a family together - we call this the church.
 - 1. We are united under the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus - if we have nothing else in common, that is enough.
 - 2. We serve one another as brothers and sisters with the blood of Jesus as our familial bond.
 - 3. We gather to encourage, challenge, comfort, and inspire each other to love God and others.
 - 4. We go out and provide pathways for anyone and everyone to learn to love and obey Jesus - that is our primary activity in the world.
- B. Jesus' family
 - 1. Jesus did not design His family to live in comfort and ease, He sent us out to where we will face opposition and those who oppose us are the desire of His heart and the reason He shed his blood.
 - 2. Some of us will face little opposition because of God's mercy and others because of their own disobedience. The vast majority of Jesus followers around the world face the same suffering Jesus faced - and the Spirit gives them the power to endure with joy that many of us in ease don't understand.