

- A. Has anyone ever questioned you or made innuendoes about some of the company you keep.
 - 1. Teens are pretty well used to being asked about some of their “friends.”
 - 2. Occasionally Jesus was asked about some of the company He kept.
 - 3. When that occurred in text, he responded w/ 3 parables, the 1st being re: one lost sheep.
- B. This morning, we want to focus on the urgent need we have in the Mayfield area to rescue lost sheep.
 - 1. There are very few of us who have difficulty remembering at least one person who used to attend here regularly and are still in the area, but have assembled with the N. T. church in months / years!!!
 - 2. Factually, where are all the scores of people who used to be here, but have wandered off the old path.
 - 3. What individual do you know, & miss, who would be worth any & every effort to bring about their return? Is it your son, daughter, husband, wife, dear friend, etc.
- C. Aim: *Want us to tune up our spiritual interest in those unfaithful to God and turn up our spiritual fervor about becoming much more diligent in trying to rescue our straying brothers & sisters.*

Discuss.

I. NEED TO SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF --- ONE SOUL. (vs. 4)

- A. In Jesus’ illustration, you see shepherd folding in flock, leaving them in care of the keeper of the sheep
- B. Christ used example of saving a lost sheep on Sabbath to reflect the grt. value of a man’s soul, **Mt.12:11f**
- C. The N. T. focuses one the importance of the individual, **Jn. 1:41-45**
 - 1. It is important to preach to vast audiences, evangelizing the masses.
 - 2. Should remember that the gospel is *people-oriented*, not program-oriented.
 - 3. Impossible to over emphasize the value of **-one-** single soul.
- (D) => One can obey the Gospel, become a Christian, & then fall away & be lost, if they do not repent.
 - 1. **1 Cor. 10:12f; 2 Pet. 3:17; Jas. 5:12; Heb. 6:6**
 - 2. **2 Pet. 2:20f** – Since the death of an unfaithful Christian spells a certain serious doom, we must not sit idly by, not having made significant efforts to bring an erring bro. or sis. back into the fold/church.

II. UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF GOING OUT AFTER ONE STAY “SHEEP.”

- A. We have to have a caring attitude.
 - 1. In **Psa. 142:4**, we hear David’s lonely, desperate cry, *No one cared [about me] for my soul.*
 - 2. Sometimes people grow depressed, & conclude, *If I died or disappeared, no one would ever notice!!!*
 - 3. Spiritually, we can’t afford to let that kind of thing happen. We have to go after the lost...because we care
- B. There has to be an effort put forth. (Not: *I wasn’t my fault....but I need to do something...got to try...*)
 - 1. This is going to require at least 2 things:
 - a. **TIME** (est. priorities) **Eph. 5:16**
 - b. **EFFORT Gal. 6:1-2**
 - 2. To be Christians (i.e., *like Christ*), we must also *seek and save the lost*, **Lk. 19:10**
- C. There needs to be genuine patience exercised in the process of *going out...*
 - 1. There is no simple 1-2-3, A-B-C formula.
 - 2. There are great rewards for rescuing a lost brother or sister. **Jas. 5:19-20; (text vs. 7)**
 - 3. Fanny Cosby wrote, *Rescue the perishing...patiently win them.*

III. APPRECIATED THE INVOLVEMENT WITH HEAVEN.

- A. While there were murmurings on earth (**vs. 2**), there was joy in heaven, (**vs. 7**)
 - 1. This summer we have witnessed the jubilation of families reunited, & mourning of a lost child’s remains.
 - 2. This is but a glimpse of the celestial world & eternity.
- B. Why is there joy in heaven when a wayward saint comes come?
 - 1. Heaven know the corrupting consequences of sin.
 - 2. God shares the blessed fruits of harvest when repentance has brought home a lost soul.
- C. The importance of reclaiming just one Christian that is AWOL produces **CELEBRATION** in heaven.

Concl.

- A. How much effort have you made in recent weeks to reclaim the lost sheep – even one?
 - 1. If we haven't been working to reach out to & restore the lost, we may be just as lost. **c. Ezk.33:8f**
 - 2. If you have not given lost sheep loud & clear warning, will you repent of your neglect & sin now?
- B. If you are not faithful to God, even though you have obeyed the gospel, will you come back right now before time slips away, & it is too late for your salvation.
- C. If you have never been baptized into Christ to wash away your sins, then you need to be saved today.