

## ***Day 2 Devotion***

*So he told them this parable: 'Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and 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 people who need no repentance.* Luke 15:3-7

There once was a shepherd named Dwight Jordan. Dwight was a physician who saw hundreds of patients in his practice. One day, a hearing-impaired patient came through his doors. So struck by the space between them, by this feeling of not knowing what one another was saying, Dr. Jordan decided to learn American Sign Language for this one patient. One single patient out of hundreds. He could've found another doctor nearby to care for this patient. He could've shrugged his shoulders and admitted defeat. He could've shouted and mouthed the words slowly when talking to his patient. But, instead, he went out looking for the particular and personal way this patient would understand him and how he, in turn, could understand that patient. Dr. Jordan became known as the "doctor who could speak with his hands" and hearing-impaired patients flocked to his office. One said, "No one had been able to understand my concerns before." No one, until this one faithful shepherd.

This story Jesus tells of the Lost Sheep comes as the first in a series of stories about Lost things - lost sheep, lost coins, lost son - the prodigal. A crowd has gathered to listen - a crowd of tax collectors, and sinners. The Pharisees responded, saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." I imagine Jesus muttering, "That's right I do," and proceeding with three stories that tell again and again how much he cares for those who feel lost and alone and afraid.

"Which one of you does not go after the one that is lost until he finds it?" This kind of love is the kind of love Jesus has for each one of us. A love that proclaims, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my one sheep that was lost." This is the love we know in the particular person, birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ - of Love sent from God to show us, in flesh and bone, what love looks like when it is lived out in particularity. It is a love that pays attention to every single one of the Good Shepherd's flock. And that means it is a love that's paying attention to you - a love that sees your pain and your hurt, your hope and your fear, your doubt and your dreams. All of it. And it is a love that still proclaims - I will not leave you out there alone - I will come find you and carry you back home.

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*God-Who-Seeks, You never stop looking for us. What relentless mercy and generosity, what hope and what wondrous love. May we go out seeking and while seeking, let ourselves be found by the Good Shepherd. In Christ's name, amen.*

**Prompts:** How may you pay attention today and seek out someone whom others have cast out or cast aside, ignored or upheld systems for their separation? How might you know that Jesus seeks after you, too, and promises not to leave you out there alone?