



(*Luke 15:3-7*).- Jesus addressed this parable to the scribes and Pharisees: "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance."

Introductory Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, you wanted to love me with a human love. You did not spare any sacrifice to love me. Even when I rejected you, you sought me out to bring me back to your fold. Give me a heart as loving as yours. Let me burn with zeal and charity for you, your souls, and your interests. Help me to understand that my life was given to me to love and spend itself loving souls and you.

Petition: Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart more like yours!

1. The Heart of a True Shepherd: The heart of Jesus pours out its love on us. He came into this world to love us more than anyone else ever could. He follows us long distances to bring us back to him. Christ compares himself to a shepherd, a lowly laborer who makes many sacrifices and puts himself at the service of the flock. A shepherd can give more importance to the life of his flock than to his own life. Christ the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. No flock, no matter how large or valuable, could ever be worth more than a shepherd. Yet the Father wants the sheep to be safe, to thrive, to grow and be strong. Christ dies in order to give us life. There is nothing that makes the shepherd happier than to give life to the sheep.

2. He Pitched His Tent Among Us: We celebrate our Shepherd and his love for us. He has loved us with an everlasting love that passes through a divine heart but also through a human heart like ours. Christ is close to us as

a shepherd. He did not remain aloof and distant but wanted to come down to our "desert" to rescue us when we were lost. He did not insist on living in luxury but pitched his tent among the flock, content to live like one of us. The Feast of the Sacred Heart celebrates that proximity to us through a divine love made human. He is true man as well as true God. He has made himself our brother.

3. A Devotion of Love: Christ wants to set each of us on his shoulders to carry us back to the Father. He does not force this on us but follows us until we are ready to surrender to him. Our devotion to the Sacred Heart is a devotion of love. We see a heart that has so loved the world while receiving so little love in return, and we desire to give ourselves to him more and more. We are saddened by the cold and heartless response that he receives in return for his sacrificial love - saddest of all, the weak half-hearted love from many of those who have been called to consecrate themselves lovingly to him. Christ invites us to help him bring in the lost sheep. We can call to them and let them know that he is out searching for them. Above all we can console him by giving our love to him.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, you let your heart be pierced for me on the cross as a sign of the plenitude of your unconditional love. Help me to not allow that sacrifice to go in vain. Inspire a deep and burning love in my soul that will not allow any infidelity or sin to cheapen my love for you. Allow me to accompany you in your mission to bring back the lost sheep. Make me an ambassador of your grace and mercy. May others come to know your love through that same love reflected in me.

Resolution: I will search for a lost sheep and encourage it to come back to Christ. I will be like Christ and not lose patience but charitably help that soul find its way back to the fold.