

Sermon Transcript from 27th April 2025 – Luke 15:3-7

God's Priceless Love

Sermon TLDR

This sermon focuses on the parable of the lost sheep from Luke 15:3-7, using it to convey the message of God's individual love. The speaker [Wayne] highlights that just as the shepherd tirelessly sought the one lost sheep, named Fluffy for the story, God sees each person as priceless and precious, their value immeasurable.

Even when feeling lost or having made mistakes ("sin"), like the lost sheep, God actively seeks and rejoices over finding that one individual, demonstrating a love that is loving, believing, forgiving, caring, and trusting.

We're encouraged to remember we are all "very special to God", particularly when facing life's difficulties.

Link to the Start of the Sermon (on YouTube)

<https://youtu.be/jnrb2cCiamU?t=3599>

Sermon Transcript

[Prayer] Father, as we come to look at your word this morning, speak to us, I pray. And may we each know that we're priceless and precious and our value cannot be measured.

Amen.

So, I'm delighted to have this opportunity to share some thoughts with you from our reading that we had from Luke 15:3-7. One of three stories just in that chapter that Jesus told. Parables, parable, earthly story. with a heavenly meaning. This one about the sheep. One in verses 8 to 10 about the lost coin and then a very powerful story about the lost son.

And hopefully in these next few moments that we can listen to what God might be saying to us and hopefully some of that song, some of that first song that we sang, I am special because God has loved me. Something like this all can help us to connect. Those who are watching at home. Um, I hope that this will be helpful and useful.

Sorry that you can't have one of these, but I'm sure that something can be uh arranged. So, that's where we're going. So, Luke 15:3-7.

So, that's what we're going to be uh looking about. Now, the shepherd's job was to look after the sheep. And in this story that Jesus told, he said that the shepherd had a hundred sheep. Now, if you're under the age of 125, you can join in. You don't have to if but if you as we go through.

So the shepherd, he knew the names of all of his sheep. God knows our hearts. God knows everything about us. But for the benefit of Langley Free Church today, 27th of April 2025, we're going to use numbers. So as the end of the day, And the shepherd who was looking after the sheep, he was tired. He was hungry. He was thirsty. It's a little bit of joining in. So the shepherd was a little bit tired. A little bit tired. A little bit hungry and a little bit thirsty. He was thirsty. He was hungry. He was tired. Oh, you've got it. And it's not like, you know, like in a few minutes you'll be going through those who are staying for a little bit of lunch. I've seen the cake coming it. Yeah. big cake.

But anyway, um but before that, he had a job to do. Can we have on the next slide, please? So, he's counting the sheep. He knew them by name, but for the purposes of our time together, he's going to be counting.

So, we're going to start with one. Here we go. So, there was one, two, three, four.

Stop. Otherwise, if we carry on, we'll be here till midnight and then the um the cake will be having if you've got anything else. So, we're going to go into the 90s. To make it a little bit easier, we're going to go from 95. So 95, 96, 97, 98, 99.

Stop. So he got to 99. And there was one, just one missing because he had a hundred. He knew their names, but for today. So he got to 99. Now at this point, the shepherd has a choice to make. He could go home, put his feet up, have a cup of tea and watch the FA Cup semi-final between Nottingham and Forest and actually if it was or if it was Tuesday when Arsenal beat PSG for those who don't know I'm an Arsenal supporter. There is more to life than football but when Arsenal beat PSG on Tuesday, come on Champions League. Anyway, let's stick back to the script. So, but because he was tired, he was and he was so he wanted to go home, but he thought, "Hang on, the one that's missing, the one that is lost is just as important as the 99 others." So even though he was tired, hungry, thirsty, thirsty, you're so good.

You're getting the idea. Even though he wanted to go home, he thought, I'm going to see if I can find the one that was lost. Now, for the benefit of the song and to connect the one that's lost called Fluffy. What's the name of the one that's lost?

Fluffy.

Excellent. So, the shepherd decided to see could he find Fluffy? And so was probably Can you still hear me? Am I still on? *[Wayne heads out of the sanctuary to continue the search...]*. Yeah. So, he's probably going around and trying to see if he can find Fluffy. Excuse me, you haven't seen Fluffy have dear. Excuse me. You haven't seen Fluffy, have you? Excuse me, you haven't seen Fluffy. No. So, he's wandering around. He's looking because Fluff is lost. But bearing in mind time is passing by and he is so good.

But he just carries on. Excuse me. You haven't seen Have you seen Have you seen Have you seen Have you seen No. So everywhere he went he asked people and they just smiled and nodded. Have you seen Have you seen the deaf? Has anyone seen Fluffy?

Oops. Not sure if I should have done that. I might have woken up the neighbours. *[Wayne comes back into the sanctuary]*

Those are still But he was going around. He couldn't. Now, the shepherd really did care. And even though he was tired, hungry, and thirsty, he wanted to see if he could find Fluffy, the lost one. And even though he asked loads of people, he looked at, he shouted at the top of his voice, woke up the neighbours at Langley. Um, he was going to give up, but he thought, "I'll just look one more time." And as he's looking around, he's thinking, "Where's Fluffy?" And then eventually he found Fluffy.

Say, "Hi, Fluffy." Hi, Fluffy *[Wayne brings out a fluffy sheep prop]*

Now, I just need to put You weren't expecting me to bring in a proper real sheep, but you know, just imagine driving from Wexham where we live, and then I've got and the policeman comes and says,

"Oh, can I just um look in your boots and where I'm off to Langley Free Church and then if I had a real sheep I mean this this is about 80 this was given to me by someone called Hannah who mom had it whose grandma had it but I use it and then but this is a key thing he popped it on his shoulders and then it says in the Bible reading that we had he says he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says rejoice with me I have found my lost sheep.

If it was happening today might be getting hold of the phone and be ring wicked mom I found fluffy and he was so happy so pleased so excited, can we have the next slide please, forget that you see in this story that Jesus told the shepherd is a picture of what God is like loving believing forgiving caring trusting.

And in this story that Jesus told, the sheep is a bit like me and maybe some of us here at Langley Free [Church] this morning when sometimes we get ourselves lost. We sometimes do things that maybe we shouldn't do. We make mistakes. We mess up. The Bible has a word called sin.

That's why the celebration and the joy of last week, he is risen. Across the world, people were celebrating and partying that Jesus who came lived, died, and rose again. Because people like me, and may I say if I don't mind, you we've done things wrong.

We've messed up. And the shepherd in this story that Jesus told could have given up. And Jesus could have given up. But just as the shepherd went and looked, so Jesus comes. He knows our hearts. He loves us. And the reason why I've given you each one of these this morning. It's a symbol and I'm just going to suggest something. It says on it, "I am very special to God." And at the bottom of it's got the reference Luke 15:3-7. And all I'm going to suggest is if you want to take this with you, take it home. There's a space at the top for you to write your name or for parents, carers to write the names of the little ones who are unable to write. And then keep it. You might want to put it on a fridge or a freezer, in your Bible, take a picture of it and have it on your phone, on your pillow, wherever you might see it.

And then every time you look at this, it's a symbol and you can think because it's got your name and it says, "I'm very special to God." And the reference there, if it's helpful to put your with your name, you might want to put today's date or another date. And the reason for it is this. You see, sometimes In our lives, things can go wrong. The ups and downs, the difficulties, the pain, the questions, the suffering.

I was 12 years old when I became a Christian follower of Jesus. This was in East London. Sunday school was important to me. Last year, I was asked to speak at the funeral of a guy called Jim. He was 95. And 50, 50 plus years ago, he and others shared Jesus with me. Kept into we used to ring up each other. Um on a Saturday regularly he lived down in Torquay. Now when he sadly died his widow said Wayne would I come and speak down in his thanksgiving.

And so, I remember hearing about Jesus as some of us here would have heard about Jesus years ago. Some of us may be hearing about Jesus listening in for the first time. But my hope and prayer is that we'll know that we're special. You see here's a little exercise. If today or tomorrow 10 statements are said to you about you and they're all really nice and encouraging and positive and in affirming, but if just one just one is a little bit horrible, nasty or negative, guess which one you're going to remember. And that's why something like this might be useful, particularly when life gets a bit tough.

And maybe when people say or do things and we're feeling a bit rubbish, that song that we first sung, I'm special because God has loved me for he gave the best thing that he had to save me. And maybe something like this when you look at it and you'll think I and it's got your name in it am very special to God. And maybe you can then read that.

So, this could be something useful today, tomorrow, next week, next year, in 50 years time. for those of you that will be around in 50 years time, some of the little ones when you'll be in your 50s or 60s because sometimes life can be a bit rubbish and a bit negative and a bit nasty and a bit horrible. But it's really important that we know that God loves us and that we are special to him.

And if something like this helps more importantly reading this and that's why Luke 15:3-7 and my prayer and I'm going to pray in a moment is that we might know that as far as God is concerned that we are special says the sheep the shepherd is what God is like.

Jesus is like the sheep the lost sheep fluffy if you like is a bit like me. But Jesus loves came died rose again forgive us and forgives us.

And if there's anyone here this morning or anyone watching online if you don't yet know Jesus [I] want to encourage you to maybe read this check out the songs Read Mark's gospel. That's the one I encourage most when I'm visiting churches or schools. And find out about Jesus who came, lived, died, and rose again.

That's why last Sunday is the most the best day in history. The greatest day in his story when Jesus came back from the dead. Love that song. The greatest day in history that sometimes churches sing.

So, I'm going to pray. And particularly if you don't yet know Jesus, then you may want to quietly pray that in your hearts and then speak to someone afterwards. Someone if you if you've been here regularly, you know the people to speak to. Um I'm happy to chat. And if you do know Jesus, then particularly when times are rough, just remember I am very special to God and God is with us.

Let's pray...

Father, I want to thank you for the opportunity that we've had here this morning at Langley Free Church to celebrate 125 years of ministry of Sunday School, of Oasis. And Lord, I prayed that if there's anyone here this morning watching online or here in the building that doesn't yet know you, that you would speak to them. May they know that as far as you are concerned that they are priceless and precious, and their value cannot be measured.

Thank you that in this story, the shepherd went out of his way to find just the one. He could have been satisfied with the 99 that were safe and sound, but he loved that one. And if any of us hear a feeling like that one.

May we know that we are loved, accepted, and forgiven. And for those who do know and love you, encourage us particularly in those times when life is a bit rubbish, bit nasty, a bit negative, either because of things that happen or things that are said.

And may we know today, Sunday the 27th of April, 2025, and tomorrow and next week and in the weeks, months, and years ahead that we are priceless and precious, and our value cannot be measured.

Thank you for our time together this morning.

Amen.