

Worship

This term we have been thinking about our value of 'hope'. As you read this story, pay attention to the lesson Jesus gives to explain this parable.

The lessons in Jesus's parables were always unexpected. Jesus told these stories to show people how much God loves even those who are struggling in life. In this parable, Jesus explains how God is like a shepherd who searches for even one lost sheep.

Many of the people listening to Jesus preach were tax collectors and others who were known to be sinful people. The scribes and Pharisees, who were supposed to be holy men, grumbled about Jesus spending his time with sinners. So Jesus told them a parable about a shepherd and a lost sheep.

He said that a shepherd cared for a flock of one hundred sheep in the fields. Then one day the shepherd noticed that one of his sheep was missing. It was lost!

So the shepherd left the ninety-nine sheep all alone to go searching for the one that was lost. He searched for a long time, until he finally found it. The shepherd shouted with joy, and then he lifted up the lost sheep and placed it on his shoulders. He carried the lost sheep on his back until he returned to his home. He went out and found his friends. Then he knocked on his neighbors' doors to wake them up. He proclaimed to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep!"

When Jesus finished his story, he said to the tax collectors, sinners, scribes, and Pharisees: "In the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who turns back to God than over the ninety-nine good people who are already with God."

Reflection

Why would the shepherd leave the ninety-nine remaining sheep to go searching for the one that was lost?

What would it feel like to be the lost sheep that the shepherd came to find?

When we are one of the ninety-nine good people who are with God, how can we prayerfully support the ones that are lost?