



SERIES: Walking with Jesus
SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD
Thursday, November 23, 2023
Scripture: Luke 17:18-23
TITLE: The Reason to Celebrate

What causes you to celebrate? Is it the touchdown or a game-winning shot that wins the game? Is it finding a \$20 bill in the laundry? Is it finding your keys after you lost them in your home? For me, I love to see my Duke Blue Devils humiliate the Tarheels. That makes me celebrate big time.

But have you ever wondered what makes heaven celebrate? Well, Jesus tells us in Luke 15:1-7 (CSB).

All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to him. And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

So he told them this parable: “What man among you, who has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it? When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!’ I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who don’t need repentance.”

Jesus’ message is both encouraging and challenging. Many people today project Jesus as this great teacher and social justice warrior. But Jesus was far more than just a great teacher. He was far beyond a social justice warrior. He was a radical Savior who came to seek and save the lost.

That’s why His message is so encouraging. Because of His great love, I was one of those sheep who was rescued. You, too, were likely one of those sheep that was lost in the woods and entangled by a web of sin. But Jesus freed you and carried you to freedom. Today you are part of His flock. You are cared for, fed, and protected. When Jesus rescued you, heaven erupted. It was a heaven-shaking celebration. When one person repents of their sin and turns to Jesus, heaven goes wild. That is encouraging.

But it’s also challenging because there are so many people around me who don’t think they’re lost. They think they’re fine. The culture says, “not all who wander are lost.” They think people don’t need salvation. They need liberation from God and religion. But Jesus came to seek and save these people.

The question is, “will we help Him?” Jesus has recruited every saved person to lead people to the Good Shepherd who can save them from sin and from themselves. That’s why this is my

challenge for you today. Today is a day for thanksgiving. I want you to thank God for salvation and the many blessings of being His child. Tell Him and share it with us in the comments below. And then, share this message with someone in your family, friends, or sphere of influence who needs to meet the Good Shepherd.

Jesus came to save the lost. When one person is rescued, heaven erupts in thanksgiving. So let's make heaven erupt today as we celebrate our Savior.