

# Matthew 18:11-14

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-18/matthew-1811-14/>

*In the context of showing how much these little ones mean to Jesus and His Father, Jesus shares that the very reason He came as the Messiah was to save them. He then tells His disciples the parable of the lost sheep as a depiction of His deep concern for these little ones.*

The parallel gospel accounts of this teaching are found in Luke 19:10 and Luke 15:4-7.

Jesus stressed how important each *one of these little ones* is to Him personally. *For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.*

Jesus used *the Son of Man* as a Messianic reference for Himself. The Messiah *came* in order to *save these little ones*. That's how valuable each *one* is to God. Jesus used this exact expression when the short-statured tax collector, Zaccheus repented and restored all that he had defrauded by over-collecting what was due:

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”  
(Luke 19:10)

Jesus likely used this expression on other occasions that were not recorded in the Gospels.

After He said this to His disciples, Jesus then told them a short parable in the form of a question and answer. He prefaced the parable with a reflective question. *What do you think?* He asked His disciples. The Greek word translated as *think* is “Dokeo” (G1380). It means to “suppose” or “feel.” Jesus was wanting His disciples’ first response to the parable He was about to share.

The parable was *If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?*

Jesus describes a shepherd who *owns a hundred sheep*. But *one of these sheep has gone astray* and is *lost*. Jesus asks the disciples to consider if the shepherd will *not leave* his *ninety-nine* other *sheep* in a safe place *on the mountains* in order to *go and search for the one that is straying*? The answer is of course the shepherd would do so.

Jesus continues, and *if he finds the lost sheep*, won't he rejoice *over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray*? This man will be so happy that he recovered what had been *lost*. He will celebrate that his *one sheep* has been found.

As *the Son of Man*, Jesus is our Good Shepherd. This image of Jesus can be seen in passages like Psalm 23 and John 10:14. He too has *come to seek and to save that which was lost*. He goes beyond seeking. He will lay down His life for His sheep (John 10:15).

In a different context, Luke records that Jesus shared another version of this parable known as “the parable of the *lost sheep*” (Luke 15:4-7). It is alongside two parallel parables: “the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10); and “the parable of the prodigal son” (Luke 15:11-32).

The Jesus summarized the point of His parable. *So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.* God desires for everyone to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). And God deeply cares about *these little ones*. The implication for the disciples, and us, is that each of us should care about these little ones too, if we wish to be great in God’s kingdom.

### **Biblical Text**

**For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. “What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.**