

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

*Mike Southern
September, 2014*

He was just a young boy, only a child really,
but his father had finally told him
he was big enough to tend the sheep.

He was so excited!

As long as he could remember
he had wanted to be a shepherd,
to watch the sheep
and keep them from harm.

It was an important job
and his father wouldn't give it to just anyone!
He promised to do his job well.

But now the day was nearly over;
darkness was coming and he needed
to keep the sheep together
so the wolves wouldn't get them.
He counted them all, all one hundred of them—

WAIT! ONE WAS MISSING!

What should he do? What should he do?
He could hear a wolf in the distance...
and that made his decision for him.

He gathered the ninety-nine sheep together,
picked up his shepherd's staff
and set off to search the countryside.

The young shepherd circled around,
wandering the hills, climbing over rocks and fallen trees,
and checking for dangerous places
where a lamb might get trapped.

And though the darkness came
he kept searching until at last
he heard the faint cry of his lost sheep.
When he heard the sound he was overjoyed
and ran to the place where the little sheep was.
He made calming noises until the little sheep relaxed,
then he laid it across his shoulders
and carried it back to the other ninety-nine.
And when it was safe and sound with the other sheep,
he cared for that little sheep
as if it were the most important sheep in the flock.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep is recorded in both Matthew 18:12-13 and Luke 15:3-6. But the verses around the parable — Matthew 18:10-14 and Luke 15:1-7 — give us a good idea what Jesus was really talking about.