



Daily Reflections

December 11, 2018

Scripture

Matthew 18: 12-14

Jesus said to his disciples:

"What is your opinion?

If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray,
will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills
and go in search of the stray?

And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it
than over the ninety-nine that did not stray.

In just the same way, it is not the will of your Heavenly Father
that one of these little ones be lost."

Our Scripture Reflection

The answer to our Lord's question from a business perspective is a resounding NO. No good shepherd with any business sense would leave 99 safe sheep to go after 1 lost sheep. Never! Today we rejoice in the wonderful Truth that Jesus is not like an earthly shepherd. He came to lay down His life for each and every person. Each one is of immeasurable value to Him.

Food for your Journey

Jerry Hoffman hosts a Web site called "Stewardship for the 21st Century."
He shared this story from his own experience on this Web site:

A number of years ago, my wife, Joan, and I had a unique experience of hospitality that will never be replicated. Holly, a member of our staff, was getting married. Holly had been in Japan making arrangements for a group of Japanese young people to come to the United States and spend time with members of our congregation. She was a guest in the home of Tomeko. On a whim, she invited her Japanese friend to attend her wedding, and to her surprise, she came. Joan and I told Holly that we would welcome the opportunity to host Tomeko in our home. We met and sat next to her at the rehearsal dinner. She was a very attractive and expensively dressed Japanese woman. Joan gave me a sharp elbow in my ribs, leaned over and whispered, "Get a good look at the size of the diamonds on her ring!" When we talked to Tomeko about her impending visit to our home, her eyes lit up and she said, "Oh, let me prepare a Japanese meal for you and your guests." We had already made arrangements for guests to be in our home in order to meet Tomeko. She seemed pleased and even more insistent. We finally agreed.

We picked her up and stopped at the most impressive grocery store in the Twin Cities. She immediately began to enthusiastically load the basket with jumbo shrimp, filet and other very fine and expensive foods. She started to add the pots and pans necessary to prepare the meal, until Joan was able to assure her that we had the necessary cooking utensils. When we finally arrived at the checkout with a grocery cart overflowing, I was feeling very apprehensive about what this episode was going to cost. She saw me reach for my billfold and at once declared, "I pay! Cheap!"

When we arrived home, we took Tomeko to our guest room. In a very short time she returned in work clothes and literally took over the kitchen. Joan attempted to help, but wasn't doing it properly and was soon cast out of her own kitchen. About two hours later, our guests arrived. After the preliminaries, we went into the dining room, expecting Tomeko would join us. But she insisted we be seated. She then served us the most fabulous several course meal we have ever eaten. In our efforts to be good hosts to a foreign guest, we ended up being guests in our own home. This obviously wealthy lady emptied herself, took the form of a servant and graciously served us. Just as Jesus, who, though in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be exploited, emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. What an absurd but powerful idea. The Lord of the universe emptied himself and took the form of a servant on our behalf.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Your birth brought the promise of eternal life to our world. As I prepare for the celebration of Christmas, may I do so with a longing to receive You in my life as I never have before. Thank You, Lord. Amen