October 29, 2026

The One Still Matters

October Series: Love Your Neighbor
Week Focus: For the One

Scripture – Luke 15:4 (NIV) – *"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?"*

Devotional Reflection

THE VALUE OF ONE DOES NOT DISAPPEAR BECAUSE NINETY-NINE REMAIN. In Luke 15, Jesus tells the story of a shepherd who has one hundred sheep but discovers that one is missing. From a purely numerical perspective, ninety-nine out of one hundred might seem like a successful outcome. Yet the shepherd does not treat the missing sheep as an acceptable loss. He goes after the one that is lost. Jesus tells this parable in response to religious leaders who criticized Him for welcoming sinners. Through the shepherd's concern, Jesus reveals something essential about God's heart: those who are spiritually lost are not insignificant to Him. **THE ONE STILL MATTERS TO GOD.**

It is easy to overlook individuals when we become focused on larger groups, busy schedules, or visible accomplishments. We may celebrate how many people attend church, participate in ministry, or respond to an invitation while giving less attention to someone who is quietly struggling, disconnected, or unfamiliar with the gospel. Numbers can help us recognize opportunities and measure certain aspects of ministry, but they cannot fully express the value of a person. Every individual has a story, carries burdens we may not see, and possesses dignity as someone created in God's image. The person others have stopped noticing is not beyond God's concern. **PEOPLE ARE NOT IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY ADD TO OUR NUMBERS; THEY MATTER BECAUSE THEY ARE CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE AND NEED THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

The shepherd's pursuit also reminds us that God's concern for the lost is not merely sentimental. Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and save the lost. Through His sinless life, sacrificial death, and resurrection, He accomplished what no human effort could achieve. Salvation is not the result of someone being sufficiently encouraged, welcomed, or included. It is God's gracious gift received through faith in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, those who have experienced His grace are called to participate in His mission by faithfully sharing the gospel. We cannot save the one, but we can refuse to treat the one as unworthy of our prayers, compassion, or witness. **THE ONE IS WORTH OUR FAITHFUL CONCERN BECAUSE THE ONE MATTERS TO GOD.**

As you move through today, think beyond the people who are already part of your regular conversations and relationships. Is there someone who has gradually become disconnected? Someone whose absence has gone unnoticed? Someone you have stopped praying for because you have not seen any evidence of spiritual change? Perhaps there is a neighbor, coworker, family member, or friend who needs to know that someone genuinely cares. You may not be able to resolve every difficulty in that person's life, and you cannot determine how they will respond to the gospel. But you can pray, reach out, listen, encourage, and remain faithful in demonstrating Christ's love. **SOMETIMES THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP WE CAN TAKE IS TO REMEMBER SOMEONE OTHERS HAVE STOPPED NOTICING.**

🔥 FOCUS FOR TODAY

The one is not too insignificant to matter, too far away to notice, or too unimportant to reach with the love and truth of Jesus Christ.

🛠️ PRACTICE

- Return to the person you identified earlier this week. Consider whether there is a deeper need, a forgotten struggle, or an opportunity to demonstrate genuine concern.
- Pray specifically for that person's spiritual needs, asking God to provide opportunities for meaningful connection and gospel witness.
- Consider whether someone else within your circle of influence has become disconnected or overlooked. Look for an appropriate way to communicate genuine concern.
- Examine whether your attention has become focused primarily on people who are already connected, comfortable, or responsive, and ask God to broaden your compassion toward others.

🙏 PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding me that every person matters to You. Thank You for sending Jesus Christ to seek and save the lost. Forgive me for the times I have overlooked people, become distracted by numbers or accomplishments, or stopped showing concern for those who need Your grace. Through Your Holy Spirit, give me a heart that reflects Your compassion and a willingness to reach those who may feel forgotten. Help me pray faithfully, love sincerely, and share the hope of the gospel with humility and courage.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

✍️ REFLECTION QUESTION

Who have I allowed to become overlooked or forgotten, and what would change if I began treating that person as someone who truly matters to God?