

I. Introduction – The church is to be a redemptive restorative community.

II. Do you see any of the Lord's sheep wandering? v. 19a

- A. Professing Christians wander. 2 Tim. 2:19**
1. Real believers backslide. Ps. 51:1ff 32:1ff
 2. Some stray because they were never truly converted. 1 Jo. 2:19 Mt. 13:1ff 7:21ff
- B. What does it mean to wander from the truth? 1:18**
1. One can stray into false doctrine. 2 Ti. 4:15-16 2:17-18 Mt. 24:4-5,11,24 Eph. 4:14
 2. One can fail to put the truth into practice. 1:22-23, 6-8 4:4,8 2:14ff 2 Tim. 4:10
 3. Doctrinal and moral wandering usually go together. 3:14 2 Pet. 2:1-3,10-18
John 3:19-21 Jude 1:8-16 Rev. 2:20 1 Pe. 1:21 3 Jo. 1:4 1 Jo. 1:6
 4. When people wander from the truth, they wander from Jesus. John 14:6
- C. Why do people wander?**
1. Some fear men (persecution). Mark 14:66ff 4:16-17 Ga. 2:12 Pr. 29:25
 2. Others love the world. 4:4 2 Tim. 4:10 Mark 4:18-19
 3. People wander because they have been deceived. 1:16 Heb. 3:13 Titus 3:3
Eph. 5:5-6 Gal. 6:7 2 Pe. 2:19-22 2 Tim. 3:13 1 Jo. 2:26 Rev. 12:9 20:10
- D. Wandering can be subtle and gradual. 1:13-15 1 Co. 10:12 15:33 Heb. 10:25**
- E. Jesus came to rescue lost sheep. Luke 19:10 John 10:11**

III. Turn the straying sheep back to the Good Shepherd and His flock. v. 19b

- A. Who is responsible to engage in the ministry of restoration? Ro. 15:14 Gal. 6:1-2
Jude 1:22-23 Luke 17:3-4 Pr. 27:5-6**
1. Though the elders have a particular responsibility to care for the sheep, James does not say to call the elders if you see someone straying. Heb. 13:17 Acts 20:31
 2. Each of us is a brother-keeper, called by God to rescue and restore those who stray. Ro. 15:14 Heb. 3:13 10:24 Luke 10:30-37 Lev. 19:17-18 Ga. 6:1-2
 3. The ministry of restoration is dangerous work. Pr. 9:7-8 1 Co. 15:32 Acts 20:29
 4. It is more dangerous not to rescue those who stray. v. 20 Ezek. 3:18ff 1 Co. 5:6
 5. In so doing, you share in God's care for His sheep. Mt. 18:12-14 Acts 20:28
 6. What should you do if you think your attempts to confront sin will fail? Pr. 3:5-6
- B. When should you confront someone?**
1. Some personal matters should be overlooked. 1 Pe. 4:8 Pr. 19:11
 2. Those who stray into serious sin and error need to be rescued (and the church needs to be protected). Ga. 2:11-16 6:1 1 Co. 5:1ff
 3. Those who threaten church unity need to be admonished. Titus 3:10 Rom. 16:17
 4. Be very careful not to make a false accusation. 1 Sa. 1:14 1 Co. 13:7
- C. What is the biblical process of restoration? Mt. 7:1ff 18:15-20 1 Co. 5:1ff**
- D. In what manner should you go about restoring a wayward brother or sister? Ga. 6:1**
1. Your motive is to lovingly rescue and restore, not to destroy or judge. 4:11-12
Gal. 6:2 Mt. 4:21 2 Th. 3:15 Ezek. 33:11 Rom. 9:1-5
 2. You must be spiritual. Gal. 5:22ff

3. Be gentle. Pr. 15:1,4 Mt. 7:3-5 1 Co. 13:7
4. Be careful lest you be pulled into temptation.
5. Come with the authority of God's powerful Word. Heb. 4:12 2 Tim. 3:16-17
6. Be prayerful. 1 Jo. 5:16

E. Examples of rescue and restoration. 1 Cor. 5:5 2 Cor. 2:7

1. Nathan restores David. 2 Sam. 13:1ff
2. The Lord restores Elijah. 1 Kings 19:1ff
3. Jesus restoring Peter. John 21:15-17 Luke 22:32
4. Paul restoring Peter. Gal. 2:11-16

F. How do you respond when people admonish or correct you? Pr. 9:7-8 15:12 27:5-6

G. Jesus came on a dangerous rescue mission to restore us to God. Mt. 1:21

IV. Great blessing comes when wandering sheep turn to the Good Shepherd. v. 20

A. Who has been saved from death and has had his sins covered? Ps. 32:1 85:2

1. Not the rescuer, whose sins are already covered by the atoning blood of Jesus through faith. Eph. 2:8-9 Phil. 3:9 1 Pe. 3:18
2. But the sinner who has turned from his wandering. Is. 43:25 1:18 Ps. 103:12
3. He has been rescued from everlasting death. Ro. 6:23 Rev. 20:11ff 2 Th. 1:8-9

B. You are privileged to be God's instrument in rescuing the wanderer. Jude. 1:23

1. God may use you to convert someone who is in the church, but was not yet saved. Acts 3:19 11:21 14:15 26:18 2 Cor. 3:16 1 Th. 1:9
2. God may use you to restore a backslider to fellowship with God and His people. 4:8 2 Sam. 12:1ff Ps. 51:12 Mt. 18:15 .
3. While the process is occurring, you may not know which of these is happening.

C. In what sense can you save anyone?

1. God alone saves. 1:18,21 Eph. 2:1-10 1 Tim. 1:15 2 Tim. 2:25 Acts 11:18 16:14
2. He uses us as His instruments. Lu. 1:16-17 Acts 26:18 1 Co. 3:6 7:16 1 Ti. 4:17 Rom. 11:14 10:13-15 2 Co. 5:18 Pr. 11:30
3. You have the privilege of imitating Jesus, the Good Shepherd, Who came to rescue His wandering sheep from death. Jo. 10:11 Lu. 19:10 1 Pe. 2:24-25

V. Conclusion: Do you know a wandering sheep? Are you a wandering sheep?

Jesus rescues and restores. Heb. 10:24-25 1 Pe. 2:24-25 Isa. 53:6 55:6ff

Discussion questions

1. What are two possibilities concerning the spiritual state of a professing Christian who strays?
2. In what ways can a professing believer wander from the truth?
3. Why do people stray?
4. How can you recognize if you or a brother is wandering?
5. Who among us is responsible to turn wanderers back to Jesus and His people?
6. In what manner should you go about seeking to restore those who have strayed? Ga. 6:1
7. What are some biblical examples of wanderers being restored?
8. What are the blessings which result from turning a sinner from error?
9. In what sense can you save someone from death and cover sins?
10. How is our work of seeking after straying sheep an imitation of Jesus?
11. Write down the names of five people in need of spiritual rescue for whom you will pray and with whom you will seek opportunities to share Christ in the coming year.