



**bits from bob....**

### **What about the lost sheep?**

**October 26, 2020**

We have traditionally defined evangelism as reaching out to those who have never known a saving relationship with God. Without doubt, such persons need to hear the "good news" of the gospel so they can be redeemed.

Let us not overlook another group who are needy spiritually. The Scriptures have much to say about another group in need of the "good news" so they can be reconciled. I refer to the lost sheep, those who previously walked with God but then wandered away from the Shepherd.

I am saddened when I think about those who have returned to the world and no longer walk in faithful relationship to Christ and his spiritual body, the church. Jesus says that some depart due to hard teaching (John 6:66, Matt. 19:10-12). Others who depart are among those who began the Christian journey without counting the cost of being a disciple (Lk. 14:25-33). Some depart because of misplaced priorities (2 Tim. 4:13). Some do not intend to leave, but are overcome by sin (Gal. 6:1-2). I believe the most common, and thus the most troublesome, cause of departure is carelessness. Most lost sheep merely drift away, wandering in the pastures of the world (Heb. 2:1-4). No overwhelming issues or disagreements, no hard feelings, no doctrinal disagreements, every intention of returning soon, or someday. Sadly, days turn to weeks turn to years, and the spiritual spark dies.

May the love that sends us seeking those who need redemption be strong enough to send us seeking those who need reconciliation. The local church where elders take seriously their charge to give account for the souls entrusted to them will be blessed. Members will follow their leaders in reaching out to the countless brothers and sisters around us who have wandered.

Love motivates. Christ's love compels. We love because God loved us. We love what God loves. God loved the world enough to send his Son to die. We seek to touch the lives of others because God has loved us and because we love with God's love. May we have enough love to seek the unsaved, may we have enough love to keep the saved saved!