

Luke 15:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders,
rejoicing.

Analysis

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing (καὶ εὐρὼν ἐπιτίθησιν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὥμους αὐτοῦ χαίρων, kai heurōn epitithēsin epi tous ōmous autou chairōn)—The participle chairōn (χαίρων, rejoicing) modifies the shepherd's action: he carries the sheep while rejoicing. The lost sheep doesn't walk home in shame; the shepherd bears the burden. This images Christ carrying sinners, not condemning them (cf. Isaiah 53:6, 'the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all').

The shoulders (ὥμους, ōmous) signify strength and honor—the priest carried the ephod with Israel's names on his shoulders (Exodus 28:12). The sheep is secure, positioned where it cannot fall. Joy precedes the homecoming celebration; the shepherd's delight is in the finding itself, not in subsequent praise from others. This is God's heart: He rejoices over you.

Historical Context

Shepherds in ancient Palestine carried exhausted or injured sheep on their shoulders, a common sight that made this image viscerally powerful to Jesus's audience. The posture demonstrated both the sheep's helplessness and the shepherd's strength. Lost sheep were often too weak or disoriented to walk home even when found. The shepherd's joy contradicts any notion that restoring wanderers is burdensome duty rather than delightful privilege.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the image of being carried on the shepherd's shoulders challenge the belief that you must 'clean up your life' before coming to God?
2. What does the shepherd's rejoicing while carrying the sheep (not after arriving home) reveal about God's immediate delight in finding you?
3. In what ways do you need to let Christ carry you rather than trying to walk home through your own effort?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εὕρων	ἐπιτίθουσιν	ἐπὶ	τοὺς	ὤμους	ἐαυτοῦ
And	when he hath found	it he layeth	it on	G3588	shoulders	his
G2532	G2147	G2007	G1909		G5606	G1438

χαίρων
rejoicing
G5463

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 12:2 (Parallel theme): Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Luke 19:9 (Parallel theme): And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

Micah 7:18 (Parallel theme): Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

Luke 15:32 (Parallel theme): It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Luke 23:43 (Parallel theme): And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Ezekiel 18:23 (Parallel theme): Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

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