

# THE *Good Shepherd's Heart*

— LIVING PARABLES —

The Voice of My Beloved Ministry Publication



## **Welcome back to the The Good Shepherd's Heart: Living Parables!**

These parables are an account of my real life encounters with the Good Shepherd, which are by His divine design, and contain the heavenly jewels of revelation, wisdom and priceless lessons in leadership and stewardship that He has graciously taught me. These encounters take place on the countless prayer walks we have done, walking the beautiful farmland and coastal shores in County Kerry. They are what I call Living Parables where the Master Teacher has me walk something out in the natural, then makes me very aware He is there to teach me a spiritual lesson, wanting me to see another facet of His beautiful Good Shepherd's heart. The parables began soon after I arrived in Ireland in late September 2015.

It is my humblest honor to share the Good Shepherd's heart with you. I pray these accountings will bless you, strengthen you and encourage you as you run to finish the race that is set before you. May You hear the Good Shepherd's voice calling you closer to His bosom wanting to strengthen and restore you!

In His loving Mercy,

Tracy Hogan



## Living Parable: He Gently Leads Those That Have Young.



I had only been in Kerry a few short weeks and was still getting familiar with my rural surroundings – and the wandering sheep that I often encountered while out walking the land in prayer. I had not ever been amongst the sheep like I find myself so often these days, and was trying to understand them – their character and temperament, and why they end up outside their sheepfold. It was becoming a daily adventure – walking the land praying while running into sheep outside their sheepfold. I noticed those outside their fencing do not wander too far from their fold. Instead, they stay close to the fencing wanting to get back in, but seem to not know how.

So, I found myself not only praying much for Ireland, but now for these sheep to find their way back to the safety of their sheepfold! Today's prayer walk was no different. Yet, as I began this walk, I had no idea that the Master Teacher had divinely orchestrated events in such a way to teach me a very powerful lesson in leadership, all preparing me for a painful trial that I was going to walk through in a short few months.

Today I decided to go to the high place that I had recently discovered that overlooks the valley and sea below. I quickly headed out the door, thankful that the weather was pleasant for late October – it was overcast, but no rain and mild for this time of year. Every now and then the sun would peek through the gray clouds, as I walked the quiet roads praying.

When I got to that place – I stood there feeling the Lord's heart. Soon an utterance of prayer came forth for Ireland, this isle known as the Emerald Isle that He loves without measure, for her to fulfill her destiny as a nation. For her to know the heights, lengths, depths and breadths of that love – to save, heal and restore her back to rightful inheritance that can only be found in Him, as a people, tribe, tongue and nation.

The morning was now turning into early afternoon, so I began my way back. As I continued praying in the spirit, I decided to take the long way back. It is a narrow, winding road, up and down hills, that passes many farmlands before bringing me to the main road. Often on this road I would encounter a wandering sheep or two. We somehow managed to get by each other, without them being too frightened, for there was not much room to pass by, as comfortably as they would have liked!

I was soon on this road, and as I climbed the first of two hills, I was starting to feel fatigued. It had been a couple of hours since I started walking, and honestly, I just wanted to get back to the house – I was not feeling too spiritual

at all. But I kept praying in the spirit, despite my weak flesh, encouraging myself that I only had another half hour to go.

With these thoughts, I really hoped I would not encounter a wandering sheep. As it could take some time before we could pass each other, for I did not want them to run too far away from their sheepfold. So, at this point, in my tiredness I was just not in the mood for a delay.

When I came to the top of the hill, seeing the road below to the next hill, I was not too happy to see two ewes at the bottom. They were across from a farmhouse where the road begins to climb uphill, bringing you out to the main road. This part of the road is particularly narrow, so I was wondering how to pass without causing them to run up the hill onto the main road. I was concerned, if that happened, a car could hit them, which I could not bear for that to happen.

So, with these thoughts in mind, I made my way down the hill praying – praying for the Lord to send His angels to help us get by each other. My prayers were not being answered and the very thing I feared they were now doing – running up the hill towards the main road! I stopped at the bottom of the road across from the farmhouse – trying to woo them back, speaking, “*Peace be still*” and kind words to them, to no avail.

---

*I kept praying, greatly  
concerned, as  
I could not see them  
anymore for the road curved.*

---

I kept praying, greatly concerned, as I could not see them anymore for the road curved. I asked the Lord to send His angels ahead to stop them and cause them to turn around and come back. I waited standing in that place for I knew if I continued it would cause them to run further in the wrong direction onto the main road, possibly being injured or killed.

After a few moments I saw their heads appear in the distance walking in my direction. As soon as they saw me though they stopped, not wanting to take another step forward. So, I turned around walking back up the hill I had just come down, hoping that would give them a comfortable

distance between us to get back to their sheepfold. It seemed to work. As I glanced behind me, they were now continuing to walk down the hill.

Once they got to that place across from the farmhouse they stopped. It was the widest part of the road, so there was a chance we could get by each other. I started walking towards them and they turned around and started walking up the hill again. This time they did not run, but walked a few yards and stopped. I was able to get to the farmhouse, while they stood looking at me. They clearly wanted to come back, but were afraid to get too close to me so they could pass by.

We were at a standoff! I kept praying to no avail. I was tired, starting to get frustrated and just wanted to get back to the house – this walk was turning out to be longer than I had planned. I considered going back the way I had come, but it would be even longer so I decided against that thought.

As I stood there, contemplating what to do, a thought came to mind to hide myself behind the half wall that was at the end of the farmhouse's driveway. It was off the road a few feet and angled just enough that if I crouched real low, I would be out of their sight, and just maybe the sheep would walk by and we could both go on our merry way!

By now I had nothing to lose, except more time, so I did exactly that. I waited a few minutes and nothing – no sheep in sight. I was going to stick my head out to see if I could see where they were and decided not to. I waited a few more minutes. It felt like forever. If anyone saw me they had to seriously wonder what in the world I was up to – talk about odd behavior!

My weary mind could take no more. I had to stick my head out to see where they were – wondering if I was just wasting time sitting there. Right in that moment, right before I did, the two ewes walked right by me – victory! Hallelujah! I jumped up and praised the Lord, thanking Him for making a way! Thanking Him for showing me what to do and keeping the sheep safe. For I was truly relieved no harm came to them. And, I was truly relieved I could be on my way – no more delay.

As I walked up the hill, I kept thanking the Lord for rescuing them and me. And, what seemed like such a foolish idea, to hide myself behind that wall until they passed, was really all Him, His infinite wisdom. I kept thinking about if I had insisted, in my weariness, frustration or insensitivity, to go up the hill, because I was anxious to get back, how I could have hurt the sheep. Best case they may have been injured. Worst case they might have been killed. I was so thankful the Lord had given me great grace to wait, to be patient, even though nothing in my weak flesh wanted to.

Later that evening, I was contemplating all of this before Him one more time – thanking Him, marveling at His

wisdom. He then spoke about what I had experienced, and what the Good Shepherd had wanted me to learn. I just wept and wept, asking the Lord, *“Please help me to never forget this priceless lesson. Please help me to not ever be careless or reckless with Your sheep’s hearts. Please forgive me Lord for any way that I have in the past.”*

---

*So often His sheep find  
themselves outside His  
sheepfold – outside that place  
of truth, purity, holiness,  
peace and security that can  
only be found in Him.*

---

So often His sheep find themselves outside His sheepfold – outside that place of truth, purity, holiness, peace and security that can only be found in Him. They know where they belong, but for whatever reasons they wander outside of His pen. Those reasons can be many; wounds not healed, fear, confusion, unforgiveness, religion, false doctrines, deception, pride, rebellion, rejection, neglect by leadership to feed them – there are many, many reasons. So they wander away from Him.

At the same time, His sheep have a longing to return to where they belong. So many do not wander too far – but try to stay close to their fold. Often though they cannot find their way back on their own, as quickly as when someone helps them – for a blindness has come over them. It is easy to find a way out of His pen, but most times it is harder to find the way back in, once on the outside of it.

When those who know the way back into His sheepfold, first come in contact with those that have found themselves on the outside, it can frighten them. At first they can run – trying to get away as fast as they can. For those people look and sound so foreign to them, making them feel uncomfortable in their ways that are not the Good Shepherd's ways. So at first, they run trying to get away.

But they run only so far before turning around wanting to return to where they belong. If those who are to help lead them back are patient, share truth in love and extend them much grace, the sheep will no longer run in the opposite direction. Instead, they start the journey of coming back into His fold. They will come at the pace that is set before



them by those who were sent to lead them back. Those leading are to lead gently those that are young – spiritually immature, until they can digest the meat that has been given to them. Some will come more quickly than others.

The Lord further told me that if had I insisted on going at “my pace” in walking up that hill to the main road, by disregarding what might happen to the sheep, I would have the potential to not only injure them, but possibly kill them. So too is it with His sheep. Meaning, if I insist in leading at my level of maturity, what I think they can handle, it could injure or destroy them, spiritually speaking. It could stop them from fulfilling their destiny.

These were frightening words for me to hear – but words I needed to hear, for I would not ever want to be careless with a single heart. No doubt I have in my walk over the years, but the Lord knows it would not have been to intentionally hurt someone. This surely had me see, what may sound like common sense to most, in a whole new light – His Light. Seeing the Good Shepherd’s heart towards His beloved ones and how His patience will win many back to Him.

At the same time, there are times to deposit truths, seeds, into these precious lambs souls that are outside His sheepfold. He will divinely arrange for those times to take place in one’s life. They may be hard truths for some to hear. Some may become startled, offended, even rejecting those truths. For a season they may want nothing more to do with you as a leader, as a pastor, as a mother or father – as a friend, and run quickly away.

But it does not mean we are to withhold feeding them the spiritual food that will nourish them – no matter how hard it may sound, or however uncomfortable it may make one feel. At the same time, it is so important it is done in His timing. That we are ever so sensitive to His leadership and wisdom in how to do so. It requires great grace, patience, long-suffering, humility and loving kindness, especially when your flesh wants to do the exact opposite.

After that deposit takes place – those seeds that have been sown, there can be a season where we are no longer actively involved in someone’s life. The Good Shepherd, at times, will remove from their life those who were sent to help them find their way back, if they are not responding. Why? Because they need time to digest what has been sown. If they are given more when they have not embraced, digested, what has already been given, it could push them further away from Him. As well as, they have been given just enough to awaken them out of complacency so they can find their way back, if they desire.

Additionally, those seeds need time to grow and mature, enabling them to come back at His pace – not ours. Meaning, we do not force them back pre-maturely by

putting our timing, expectations or judgments on them.

He is the Good Shepherd. He knows what each of us need and no two situations are identical. He is the way, the truth and the life. He will always lead us in the way that will bring us to truth, no matter how hard it may seem to hear at times. For it is truth that sets us free. It is truth that brings us back to the narrow road that brings eternal life.

In His faithfulness, He will be faithful to bring those into our lives who will teach and lead us in the way we are to go. Even if it seems frightening to us initially – for His ways are not ours, nor His thoughts our own. And, at the same time, He will provide every grace, strength and courage that we need to follow the Good Shepherd wherever He may lead. For His sheep will know and obey His voice – doing so from that position of abiding in love.

---

*The Bride of Messiah will  
be a bride of intimacy.  
She will know and follow the  
Good Shepherd's voice.*

---

Ultimately, our Beloved King wants to restore us back to an intimate, love relationship that can only be found in Him. He doesn’t want any of us outside His sheepfold. But it requires a response – our obedience. Our obedience was always meant to restore us back to intimacy – keeping us in the intimate confines and safety of His sheepfold. The Bride of Messiah will be a bride of intimacy. She will know and follow the Good Shepherd’s voice. She will know her Bridegroom King intimately. She will be one who lives solely to satisfy His every desire – not her will being done, but only His for all of eternity!

*He tends His flock like a Shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads those that have young [Isaiah 40:11]. AMEN!*

---



The Voice of My Beloved Ministry Publication  
PO Box 140 | Kenmare, County Kerry | Ireland

[www.thevoiceofmybeloved.com](http://www.thevoiceofmybeloved.com) | [info@thevoiceofmybeloved.com](mailto:info@thevoiceofmybeloved.com)