

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: Keep Asking, Keep Seeking – Keep Knocking.



After spending most of the day somewhat discouraged trying to find my way in how to go about the plans the Lord has for me, I asked, *“Do you think we can just go for a walk Lord and pray?”* It was still Shabbat and the sun was going to soon be setting. So I hurried out the door a little after 3:00 P.M. The sun was still shining, and the cold winter air was refreshing to my soul. It was good to get out and have this time with the Lord that was becoming more and more frequent.

There is something special about the sun shining on a cold winter day in Kerry. The rays of light seem to highlight the beauty of the mountains, hills, pastures and coastal land, causing them to glisten even more beautifully. As I walked, I was enjoying His creation, thankful for this time to be with the Lord, feeling His comforting presence all around me.

After about 30-minutes or so, I found myself on one of the windy, quiet back roads that is surrounded by farmland. The sun was going down quickly and I was thinking I should be able to make it back before it got dark. With those thoughts in mind I soon came upon an ewe, on my right, with her head sticking out of the wire fencing facing the road.

When I got to where she was I stopped to greet her, as she stood there eating the grass that was on the other side of her field. I spoke what was becoming my typical greeting to all the sheep or lambs, that, *“We love you and bless you, kisses right between the eye balls to each and every one of you and hugs forever.”* I further told her, *“The grass is not greener on the other side – it’s exactly the same. You need to eat the grass that is in your fields.”*

Where she stood was a wooded area that had open pastures in the distance. There was a big farmhouse near and I was pretty sure she belonged to whoever owned that house. At this time, though, I did not know that she was actually stuck. I was still learning much about the sheep, that were becoming my nearest companions, and I did not understand them too well, yet.

So, I continued up the hill on my way, thinking that however she got her head through that wire, surely she will be able to get it back through when she is done eating the grass on the other side. When I got back to the house, I did not give it anymore thought.

The next morning, after my time of prayer, I asked the Lord, *“Do You want to go for another prayer walk?”* So once again I headed out the door, this time a little after 9:15 A.M. It was a quiet Sunday morning and I was feeling the stillness all around me, as we walked and prayed. For some reason I decided to go the same

way I went the afternoon before, which normally I don’t do too often – go the same way back to back.

I soon approached that place where I had last left the ewe from the day before. And to my horror, I could see that she was still standing in the exact same place, with her head sticking out of the wire fencing! My heart sank! I felt horrible for her knowing that she had been standing in that place since 4:00 P.M. the day before, and probably even longer, and no one had helped get her free. I felt even worse that I had left her the day before not realizing she was stuck. My heart was grieved that she stood there all night long, not able to move. And, I could have helped her, if I had paid more attention to her needs.

I told her how sorry I am that I had left her – how I did not know that she needed help! How sorry I was that she had to suffer like this with no one to help her – stuck in that place all night long. I was thankful that it did not rain during the night, as she would not have been able to find shelter. I told her that I would help her.

This was all new to me. I had not ever gotten this close to the sheep before. I did not know what to do. I had helped many back into their folds, by patiently helping them find a way back in, but this was different. I asked the Lord to help me – to show me what to do. As I got near, she became frightened and pulled forcefully backwards. Her horns were stuck in the wire above and the closer I got the harder she pulled. I kept praying and speaking to her kindly, reassuring her that I was there to help her, not hurt her.

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After a few minutes I stopped, as her frightened eyes met mine. I did not want her frightened, nor did I want her to hurt herself from pulling back so hard. I was concerned if I tried to do any more I would cause her harm. The wire seemed so tight around her throat and I thought that she could possibly slit her throat if she pulled too hard – which I would not ever forgive myself if something like that happened.

I kept praying, asking the Lord to help – asking Him to send someone who knows what to do. As I looked around the only viable solution seemed to be the farmhouse that was near. I told the ewe, *“I am going to go get help – I promise you, this time I will not leave you until you are free. I will be back.”* So I ran to the farmhouse that I was pretty sure she belonged to. At first I was a bit hesitant to knock on the door, as the house was pretty quiet like its occupants might still be in bed.

I thought of the ewe stuck below, and lost all fear of offending and knocked really loud and waited. No answer. I knocked even louder. Waited some more. No answer. I knocked one more time, to no avail. I was not sure what to do now. This was a very quiet road with few houses. I went back to the ewe, more determined than ever to help get her free. I prayed some more asking, *“Lord, where are the shepherds? Please send me someone that will know what to do.”*

Right in that moment, I turned around and saw a man with a small boy in the distance up the hill. My heart was so thankful. I quickly ran to them, explaining the situation asking if he would help. Once we got back to the ewe, he took a step towards her, putting his hand on her head, and as he did she pulled back so hard that she somehow got free from the wire!

I felt so foolish, and told him I did not know what to do – if only I had done that I would not have had to bother him. I asked him, *“If she could pull her head out, why didn’t she until now?”* He did not really know why, but shared that even when the sheep get caught in the bramble, they will not free themselves without help. That it is like they become paralyzed – like a self-defense mechanism kicks in, even though in reality they are actually exposing themselves to more harm.

We soon parted ways, with me thanking him for helping and for all that I learned, as he had taught me so much. As I continued our walk, I was pondering all of this with the Lord. First, so thankful that He rescued that pitiable ewe – that she was now free – no longer stuck. And for how sorry I was that I did not recognize her need for help the day before.

I kept thinking about how horrible it must have been for her to be stuck like that for almost 24-hours, while others passed by, ignoring the silent cries for help. I said, *“Lord, no one wants to be stuck – nobody! It is one of the worst feelings in the world to be stuck and no way out. Nobody wants to be stuck Lord, no one!”*

It was then that the Good Shepherd made me aware of His ever so noble heart towards His sheep. The lengths that He will go to set us free from whatever is entangling us – especially when there is no one else who can or will help us. He is constantly watching over us. He cares about our every need – from the

smallest to the greatest. Nothing escapes His notice. Even though, at times, it feels like we have been forgotten, passed over, ignored by man. Our Good Shepherd will never forget or forsake us – He is fighting for us to live and not die. He is fighting for us to be restored back to the safety of His sheep pen.

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Be assured the Good Shepherd will answer our silent cries of help. And just like when I knocked on that farmhouse door three separate times, to no answer. Even though that owner did not answer the call for help – that ewe’s freedom was not solely dependent upon whether or not they responded. So, too, the Lord will be faithful – relentless, and passionate until He finds someone who will answer the call to help His stuck sheep become free.

Beloved, if you are one who finds yourself “stuck” whatever it may be – anger, addictions, grief, fiery trials that feel like they are more than you can bear, not knowing how to go on. Keep asking for the Good Shepherd to help you. Keep seeking. Keep knocking. He will be faithful to send the help you need – so that you can be free. No longer paralyzed by oppression, fears, doubts, failures, shame or rejection. Instead, free to be all that He created you to be. Free to be able to follow the Good Shepherd wherever He may lead. Free to fulfill the high and lofty destiny that He has just for you – to be the Bride of Messiah.

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened [Luke 11:9-13]. AMEN!



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A Call to the Nations Ministry

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