

# 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 began soon after arriving in Ireland in late September 2015. They 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.

As battles rage around us, and the darkness increases, it is easy to become discouraged letting our hearts grow weary. Often, we feel like nothing ever 'seems' to change. But things are not as they seem – what once was will no longer be!

It is my humblest honor to share the Good Shepherd's heart with you. I pray this accounting 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 – calling you to live the abundant life that can only be found in Him!

In His loving Mercy,

Tracy Hogan



## Living Parable: Things Are Not As They Seem!



After spending most of the day feeling very unfruitful, not only with the tangible steps that I need to be taking to keep going forward in the ministry, but physically experiencing an onslaught of fatigue making it hard to keep going. A little before 3:00 P.M. though, my spirit was quickened to go for a prayer walk asking, *"Lord can we just go for a walk and pray? Pray for Ireland, pray for Your church – pray for the ministry. Holy Spirit will teach me how to pray for I surely do not know how?"*

With those thoughts in mind, I soon headed out the door. It was overcast and mild for an August summer day. The forecast was for heavy rains to reach our shores by early evening, so I was optimistic to get back before the rain came. I decided to go to the high place that we have been to often. I love the rugged, desolation of that place with the views that overlook the sea and the valley below.

Lost in thought and prayer with the Lover of my soul, I was not expecting anything out of the ordinary, as we walked the quiet country roads that lead to the high road. As I got nearer to the road that ascends to the high place, I could see a herd of sheep in front of me. They had somehow gotten out of their fields. This was going to be interesting, for there were more than I have ever run into before – about 20 or 25. So, I was now wondering how to get past them without herding them in the way I was going?

When I was a few yards away from them, I could see how they had escaped from their fields. The gate, that was on my right, had been left open. Whether unintentional, or someone had meant harm to the flock, I did not know. But I knew they belonged to the flock that were in those fields. I wasn't really in the mood to herd sheep – the day was already so unfruitful! This seemed to be just another distraction trying to disrupt this time of prayer, making me feel even more unfruitful.

My thought, at first, was to somehow get by them – how I was not sure as the road was narrow. So, I kept walking towards them. As I did, a few started to turn around going back the way they had come. Soon the rest followed – Praise the Lord, that made my heart glad. For a moment, I stopped to watch them. They were now pulling at my heart, and I found

myself following them to make sure they got back to where they belonged, with the thought that I would close their gate, and we would all be happy!

As we got to their gate, they all ran through it, with the exception of two. Somehow, they seemed to miss it! I called out, *"Sweeties no, this way, turn around – you are going the wrong way!"* All to no avail. Surely, I should have known it would not be this easy. And, at the same time, I could not close the gate without these two ewes being inside where they belonged.

They walked further down the road, baaing as they went, turning left onto a road that we had not been on before. To my surprise, I found another 20-25 ewes and lambs on the road ahead! It became clear they all belonged to the same flock – these and the ones I had just herded in through the gate. This was becoming much more of a challenge! *"How Lord are we ever going to get them all back into their fields?"* Just as I had that thought, I see one of them jump over a wire fence into a large, open field. *"Lord, how are we ever going to get her out of that field, and back with the ones she belongs to? Why did she have to do that?"*

I surely did not know how to go about it for it was all new to me – this many to herd at one time. So I kept praying for the Lord to help me. Previously, our rescue missions have been for one or two sheep at a time, not a small herd. But I had peace, despite what seemed impossible to me, I knew the Good Shepherd was with me, wanting to teach me His ways and share His thoughts. That once again, I had been divinely setup by the Master Teacher wanting to reveal Himself to me.

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I kept walking towards the sheep, and as I did, they ran further down the road – not in the way we needed to go. Along the way, a stray ewe or lamb would come out of nowhere – hidden in the ditch, or lying down. But once startled, quickly ran to join the rest ahead. Soon, the ones leading turned into a farmyard entrance causing the rest to follow. I was now able to get behind them, and they all turned around and ran down the road, heading the right way! Praise the Lord!

One problem though – the ewe that had jumped the fence who was now in a field by herself. As the others ran by her, she became distressed wanting to be with them. I opened the gate to that field, hoping she would come out that way. To my disappointment she headed the opposite way. I tried to help her find her way, but she refused the help, instead she went down a slope, and across a ditch baaing to be with her fold.

I closed the gate, and walked towards the others that were headed the right way. One lamb though held back, baaing, waiting for that ewe that was not with them. It must have been her mom. I kept encouraging that ewe, *“You can do it, just jump over the fence – you did it before, you can do it again.”* She ran back and forth and finally she jumped over the fence – but not the right fence, but into a farmer’s yard! Despite it not being the direct route back to the others, I knew she would make it. As we came back onto the road that leads to their gate, I met this ewe at the farmer’s gate that was across from it. I opened it and she ran joining her fold. Thank you, Lord, our rescuing Good Shepherd who goes after the one!

For whatever reasons though, the sheep decided to run past their open gate, and keep walking up the hill, where I had originally met the others. I was not too happy, thinking how am I ever going to get ahead of them, and back into their fields? Just as I had that thought, two men and a woman out walking meet the sheep ahead of me, but the sheep run right by them. We greet each other, and I explain the sheep are going the wrong way. That they belong below, where the gate is open. These tourists kindly offered to stand at the gate below, wanting to help me so the sheep would have only one option, to go through it. I was not too optimistic though, as the sheep seemed quite happy going in the opposite direction.

We parted ways, and I continued my walk. Not sure what would happen with these sheep, as we were both walking in the same direction, towards the high place. All of a sudden, the ones leading turned

into a farmer’s driveway causing the rest to follow! *“Hallelujah, Lord, hope has been restored!”* As I walked past the driveway, I waited a few moments and sure enough, all the sheep came running out. This time going down the road in the right direction!

As we got nearer to their gate, I could see the three visitors were still there – Praise the Lord! They were spaced across the road so the sheep would not be able to run past it, but would have only one option – to run through it back into their fields. What a beautiful sight to my eyes to see all the sheep running, taking that slight left through their open gate, with one of the men quickly closing the gate behind them. Mission accomplished, Praise the Lord! I greeted the visitors again, thanking them for their help, as it surely would not have happened without it!

Once again, I found myself in awe of the Good Shepherd ever so near to me, letting me feel His faithful, noble heart towards those that belong to Him. Wanting to encourage the discouraged and weary hearts that have been faithful to Him with very little, year after year, often feeling like nothing ever ‘seems’ to change, as the battles rage around them, yet refusing to let go of the promises that He has given them.

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Beloved, if that is you, be of good cheer. It is a time of increase for His true church, His true leadership – for His Bride to arise and build, His kingdom on earth, His way! Especially, for those who have very little resources, and who have had even less help from others. Yet, in that hard, pressed down place, they have been faithful with the little He has given them to steward His plans and resources His way. Sometimes barely holding on as the enemy whispers lies of defeat, discouragement and failure into their ear. Yet, despite it all they have desperately been



clinging to the only One Who never changes – to the One Whom all change comes from.

Beloved, things are not as they seem – what once was will no longer be! Suddenly, you will find more in your path – leading you to more, increasing your sphere of influence and, at the same time, the resources you need to steward that increase. But it requires our faithfulness and obedience to truth like never before – like our lives depend upon it, for the hour is so late and the darkness is increasing around us.

You will walk in a way that you have not gone before – with the Good Shepherd leading you in ways not yet experienced. All requiring His true church, His Bride to trust in His leadership, and obey, no matter what our eyes see or what our flesh may feel. Even more so than ever, for He is doing something new in this season in those who are called, chosen and faithful.

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In that position of increase, His true church, His Bride, will not be about selfish gain – nor in a hurry, and will not forsake one of His chosen ones, no matter how unlikely it may seem for them to finish their race. Instead, they will stand alongside them encouraging them in the way they are to go. And, while doing so, He will send the help we need to complete the works our Father has sent us to this earth to complete, for we cannot do it without help from others who are walking the narrow road with us.

The help will come when we least expect it, and from those who we may not recognise, at first, as ones sent to help us. But when we do, and work together, each one will know their role only wanting to accomplish His eternal plans, individually and corporately, all for His glory! No more jealousy, competition and envy! What a beautiful, glorious sight that will be to His eyes that are flames of fire! To see His Bride come forth without spot or wrinkle from the fiery trials of

affliction, disappointments, discouragements and sufferings of great loss, that have all been her training ground – to purify and refine her, until Christ is completely formed within her. To be able to show Himself strong and blameless in a Bride who is making herself ready, qualifying her to rule and to reign over all of creation with Him, to be by His side for all of eternity!

*And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Master, your mina has earned ten minas. And he said to him, Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities [Luke 19:15-17].*  
AMEN!



*The Voice of My Beloved*  
A Call to the Nations Ministry

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