

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.

Sometimes, we find ourselves or loved ones, entangled in endless pain, fear and unbearable discomfort for whatever the reasons. But, be assured the Good Shepherd has not forgotten nor forsaken us, instead He is coming to set the captives free!

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 to finish the race that is set before you. May you hear the Good Shepherd's voice calling you out of captivity, and into the deliverance, victory and freedom that He has just for you!

In His loving Mercy,

Tracy Hogan



Living Parable: Release Is Coming.



What a glorious and beautiful day this new morning brought. The sun was shining, the skies were blue with the promise of another wonderful summer-like day. As a ministry we had just finished an extended and weighty prayer assignment that ended on Shavuot – Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost as some may know it. I was drained in more ways than I could fathom, but in a good place leaning on my Beloved for strength and refreshment.

After some time in prayer, I was looking forward to a really long walk with the Lover of my soul – to just be with Him, and enjoy this late May, summer-like morning. With those thoughts in mind, I soon headed out the door a little after 8:00 A.M. determined we would walk the coast road – one of our favorites. I wanted to get to that place that feels like the uttermost parts of the earth, where the beauty of the ocean surrounds me.

As I made my way down familiar roads, I stopped to see how my neighbor's cows were doing. I had befriended them many years ago. Paddy had recently moved them to their lower fields, so I do not see them as often as when they are in the fields that are near the house. All was well with them. They were enjoying the weather, and Snowflake, Pearl and Caleb came to greet me at the gate and enjoyed their treats. We parted ways with my promise to check on them on my way back.

Soon I found myself lost in prayer feeling the Lord ever so close to me, enjoying the beauty of the day, with its cool breezes. It was good to be outside – to have this time of walking, thanking the Lord for giving me the grace to do so. I was quickly feeling refreshed! After some time, while praying about some writing that I am to do, I thought of the Good Shepherd and wondered when we would continue the writing of the parables, knowing it has been some time.

It was a fleeting thought – more of a question to myself, and I quickly moved onto to other prayer topics, comfortable with the steady pace of my Beloved, feeling He was not in a hurry, nor was I.

About an hour and a half into our walk – the halfway point, we reached that place I had longed to get to for weeks – the uttermost parts of the earth. Where the ocean in its raw beauty is magnificent, and even

more so on a day like today. It is a place where often, I just stand and gaze at the beauty of His creation that is before me, always feeling His loving embrace.

After some time, I am starting to feel fatigued, and knowing we have a ways to go, I say, “*Lord, should we go?*”

I make my way back onto the main road that wraps itself around the peninsula, marveling at the ocean, and steep, hillside farm fields that surround me. I come to that comfortable place of praying quietly in the spirit, yet very aware that the only One Who is worthy of all our love, affection, time, devotion, praise, adoration and thanksgiving is walking alongside me.

We pass a few quiet farms that overlook the ocean, where many of their fields are dotted with sheep and lambs. Soon we enter into the forest leaving the beauty of the sea and rugged, coastal farmlands behind. By now the sun has risen in the sky, and I welcome the relief that the shade of the trees brings.

Within minutes of entering the forest, I hear that all too familiar baa – a cry for help! It was a loud, pitiable baa of a lamb in distress. This was not like our other encounters, for the road that I was on was much lower than the field where the lamb's cry of distress was coming from. At first, I could not see the lamb for there was a steep, forest covered bank and ditch that blocked its field that was above me.

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As I got nearer, the lamb let out another pitiable baa. This time, through the leaves I could see him. It was not a good sight! This precious little one was entangled in the wire fencing, where his head and horns were

not able to escape the wire that had entrapped him, leaving him standing on his hind legs, with his forelegs in the air – literally hanging from the wire!

He was baaing and pulling frantically to get free. I quickly said to him, “*Peace be still,*” and “*Lord, please, help him, let Your angels come now and cause him to stay calm.*” As I spoke, the lamb looked my way and quickly became still. Praise the Lord! I could not bear to see him struggle so violently to get free, fearing he would injure himself beyond repair. My heart hurt for this little one and without hesitation I told him, “*Don’t worry, I am not going to leave you – we will get you free.*”

While contemplating how to do so, I asked, “*Lord, how do we do this? There is no way this terrified, precious one can get free by himself, and I can’t climb over that ditch and bank to reach him. How do we get into his field?*” I soon saw an entrance further away – believing this would take me to that upper field. Sure enough it did exactly that, and within minutes I was climbing the gate into the lamb’s field.

Once he saw me, he started to pull violently backwards trying to free himself. It was painful to watch. I spoke to him gently, lovingly and reassuring from afar, “*Be still, peace be still in Jesus name.*” He immediately became still and quiet in that place of endless pain, fear and unbearable discomfort. My heart was comforted by the Lord’s mercy and kindness to calm him.

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As I made my way towards him, I wondered if he would start to thrash violently again, from fear of me – fear of the unknown, as I got closer. As I walked towards him, he kept his eyes on me. I kept reassuring him that he was going to be ok. Soon, I am standing in front of him, trying to evaluate how to get him free.

He surely was in a mess. I placed my hand on his head to see where the wire had trapped him as it was not in just one place, but a couple. I was amazed he did not pull back – or try to fight against me in fear, as I have experienced in the past with other lambs. He just stood still, looking up at me with those beautiful, innocent hurting eyes, seeming to trust my every move.

Not sure how to get him free, I said, “*Lord, how am I to do this? I don’t know how? This is not easy and we don’t have any wire cutters.*” I gently rubbed his head, as I did, I was able to get one of his horns back through the wire that had entangled him. So far so good. Within a few more seconds, I was able to get the other horn back through the wire as well. At first, I could not tell if he was free yet. I rubbed his neck to see if there was any more wire around it. As I did, he took a step back, free at last! Praise the Lord – thank You Lord Jesus!

He quickly ran a few yards baaing to find his mama. As he did though, he stopped a few times, turning to gaze at me for several moments. His gaze meeting mine in silent trust. I believe it is their way of saying how thankful they are, knowing no one else was coming to help them. We soon parted ways, with me saying, “*You are more than welcome – stay away from that wire, and stay close to your mama and companions.*”

As I continued my walk, I was very aware the Good Shepherd was once again, revealing His high, lofty, beautiful and ever so noble heart to me. I was marveling how He comes when we least expect it, wanting to set the captives free – making a way in surroundings that would seem impossible to overcome in the natural.

He was encouraging my heart greatly showing me that those, like that precious lamb, who find themselves in dire situations, sometimes violently rebelling against Him, His ways, His truth – to their utter ruin if they continue, that what once was will no longer be for them. Hearts that have been separated from Him for some time now – hearts that seem impossible to be restored, that a quick release of their captivity is coming. For He is able to bring them to that place where they can hear the Good Shepherd’s voice. And, to not just hear His voice, but respond to it, and not fight against it anymore.

And, when they do, although still entangled in the entrapments of this world, they will no longer be

fearful of His voice – or His ways. Instead, they will allow the Good Shepherd to draw close to them, so He can lay His loving, caring, healing hands on their broken minds, emotions and hearts bringing them the deliverance, victory and freedom they need, setting their captive souls free from the death that wanted to destroy them. Bringing them renewed life in Him.

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Beloved, if that is you – entangled in endless pain, fear and unbearable discomfort, be assured the Good Shepherd's hand wants to set you free. He has not forgotten nor forsaken you and will make a way where there appears to be none, to bring release to your captive soul. So, whatever has stopped you from hearing and responding to His voice – maybe it's depression, anger, addictions, fear of man, loss of a loved one – loss of a child. Or, maybe it's the loss of a relationship or business?

Perhaps, you have been won over by persuasive arguments and beguiling speech and are entrapped in rejection, bitterness and unforgiveness, shame, self-hatred, or even doctrines of demons that have led you – or a loved one, away from the narrow road?

Beloved, hear the Good Shepherd's voice today, that what once was will no longer be and your release from captivity is coming! Will you grow weary and faint not in that place of prayer, believing He is able to save, heal and restore? He is ever so near, will you let the Good Shepherd draw ever so close to you this day?

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. Behold, I long for Your precepts; in Your righteousness give me renewed life [Luke 4:18, Psalm 119:40]. AMEN!



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A Call to the Nations Ministry

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