

# 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.

Have you ever felt like you are sinking – with no way out, or any help in sight? That despite your best efforts to keep moving forward in the plans of the Lord, circumstances battle you with one obstacle after another, trying to discourage and defeat you from being able to take one more step.

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 strengthening you, as He carries you to solid ground – moving you forward into the plans He has for you!

In His loving Mercy,

Tracy Hogan



## Living Parable: Recover, Redeem And Restore!



This day was proving to be quite full, starting with my early morning time with the only One Whom my soul adores. Afterwards, I counseled a beloved lamb – covering painful ground, but good progress was made. Then quickly transitioning into one of our weekly times of prayer. By the time I ended our prayer call, I was feeling weary in every way possible – emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Despite my lack of energy and zeal, I longed to go for a long prayer walk, before our afternoon prayer watch began. My desperate desire to walk and pray with the only One Who can recover, redeem and restore, soon caused those familiar words to come forth asking, *“Lord, do You want to go for a walk – will You teach me how to pray, for I surely do not know how?”*

My heart was heavy for a few reasons, and the weight of it felt more than I could bear at times, over the past few days. With those thoughts in mind, I headed out the door a little before 10:00 A.M. with the goal to be back by 1:00 P.M. The sun was high in the sky, and it was turning out to be another beautiful, sunny, summer-like day. That in itself cheered my heart.

I had purposed to go on one of our longer walks, where the landscape is indescribable. It depicts His Majestic beauty that proclaims He is the Creator of all creation, with its high, rugged mountains, sloping hills and glens below, dotted with quiet farmlands. As I made my way, up and down the windy, quiet roads, the warmth of the day was noticeable. I regretted not bringing a bottle of water. Ignoring my thirst, I kept praying for the things concerning my heart. And, despite my determination to do so, I was finding it very hard to pray. I was facing great opposition in the spirit realm, unlike I have ever faced before in all my years of prayer walking!

My heart was already heavy enough, and now this battle trying to stop me from praying! At this point, I had nothing left in me to keep fighting the good fight of faith anymore. Discouragement swept in like a flood, and I could only hear those lying voices whispering in my ear saying, *“Why bother trying anymore? You are done. You are not going to make it.”*

Although quite weary, I recognised that voice was not the voice of my Beloved. Causing a spark that was still flickering inside of me to say, *“NO! I am going to finish the prayers I was praying, and then I will keep*

*praying in the spirit for the rest of the way.”* This walk was turning out to be really long in ways I was surely not expecting!

I was glad to reach the high place that overlooks the valley, forest and sea below. Normally I would stop for a moment or two to take in the breath-taking beauty all around me. But today I was just not in the mood, and continued my descent into the valley and forest below, determined to stay in that place of prayer.

Within a couple of minutes, as I came around a sharp bend I was jolted out of my self-pity, to the sound of frantic baaing and the noise of splashing water. At first, I could not see where it was coming from, although I knew the lamb was very near. While looking intently in the direction where the noise was coming from, I found the source of this distress. It was a precious little lamb, about 2 months old. She was stuck in water up to her chest, in a small gully that was formed from the water drainage from the surrounding, sloping, rugged mountainside. The gully was near the road. It was really narrow – about a foot wide, with tall grass, heather and bramble surrounding it.

As I got closer, wanting to understand why this lamb could not get out, that only caused her to frantically try even harder to free herself. Baaing loudly, while her forelegs tried to pull herself forward onto the solid ground that was in front of her. While she did though, her hind legs thrashed in the muddy water pulling her backwards. I thought her hindlegs must be caught on some bramble that was below the water's surface. I quickly spoke to her, *“Peace be still, sweetie – I will help you.”*

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In the blink of an eye, I made my way over the fence and to her side – determined to get her free. She was in an awkward place though. The ground was sloping, with heather and bramble, making it hard to get solid footing, and her head was level with the ground.

We surely had not encountered this kind of rescue mission before! Initially, I tried to find the best spot to place my feet hoping to avoid getting them soaked in the muddy water. At the same time, though, my heart just wanted to get this precious one unstuck as fast as possible, so I quickly surrendered my shoes to the muddy waters, if need be!

Within moments, I was standing over this frightened, more than weary and tired little lamb. I had one foot on each side of the gully where the ground was firm and level. As I stood over her, I continued to speak words of loving encouragement to her. She became quiet and still. In that moment, I placed both my hands, one on each side of her shoulder blades and pulled her up out of the water to see what was catching her hind legs. As I did, I saw that her hind legs, all the way up to her tail were emerged in mud-like quicksand! It was not bramble that had entangled her – it was this horrible mud-like quicksand! She would never had escaped from it, if someone had not come along to pull her out of it!

She ended up covered in mud-like quicksand up to her chest, while fighting desperately with her forelegs – the only part of her that was still free, trying to move forward onto solid ground. She was tired. Her emotions had to be weary from the trauma of not making ground no matter how hard she tried, with the only reward of her labor to be covered in filth. Yet, despite how hard it was for her – physically and emotionally, she did not stop fighting to be free with what spark that was still left inside of her to do so.

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As I set her on solid ground, she stood for a moment just looking at me, then quickly ran to the security and comfort of her mama who was nearby. I made

my way back over the fence, and just stood there watching her for a few moments. She was covered in mud, but so happy to be free and with her mama again. It was in that moment, when I became very aware that the Good Shepherd was standing ever so close to me.

He took me back through this rescue mission in ways that were overwhelming my senses – all the while holding my fragile heart, allowing me to feel the Good Shepherd's loving hands firmly upon my every weakness. As He did, I just cried before my nearest and dearest, kindest and bestest Friend, knowing now He had orchestrated this parable to strengthen and encourage me. That just like that lamb, He knows I have tried so hard to keep moving forward in His plans, but feel I am sinking with no way out. That as hard as I try to keep moving forward, while crying out to the only One Who can help me, the battles that rage all around me keep pulling me backwards, trying to stop me from moving forward in His plans.

Beloved, I sense I am not the only one facing such battles in these last days, as we transition into this new season. You may be doing all that you know how to obey the voice of the Lord, to follow the Good Shepherd – the Lamb wherever He may lead. And while doing so, this world – along with the pharisaic, Babylonian leadership have tried to cover you in shame, reproach and condemnation. All because of the passion of the cross that burns within your heart to know the Lover of your soul – to follow the Lamb wherever He may lead, no matter what it may cost you. Over the years it has caused you to become weak and weary in doing good.

Yet, despite the years of disappointment, rejections, betrayals and afflictions, you have been faithful to fight the good fight of faith to move forward into the plans He has for you. You have not been perfect in all of your ways. In fact, the opposite would be truer. In your pursuit of the One your soul loves and adores, you have made a lot of mistakes, many failures with great humblings that have caused your flesh to peel away and die. All milestones marking the road to perfection. Often the journey has been painful and lonely.

But the obstacles that have been left for you to overcome His way and no longer your way, have done a wonderful work within your soul. All ensuring that the highest place on the face of this earth which you will ever reach is the feet of Jesus. Praise the Lord! His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our own. But the continual cry of your heart has been, "Lord make Your ways my ways and make Your thoughts my



*own. Lord, you have my eternal yes. Apart from You I can do nothing, but I am more than willing."*

Then when feeling your weakest, the enemy comes in like a flood whispering lies into your mind saying, "Why bother trying anymore? You are done. You are not going to make it." Making you feel discouraged and defeated, trying to pull you backwards and stop you altogether. All trying to stop His Light from shining within and all around you, to a lost people that desperately need a revelation of His holy love and holiness. You may not have been perfect in all your ways, but you have been faithful to stand in that place of being perfected in love – all for Love's sake.

You have been willing to exchange your will for His will. You have been willing to sit on the Master Potter's wheel as putty in the Master Potter's hands. Letting Him spin you around, turn you upside down and inside out. Twisting and turning you over and over again. Molding, shaping and conforming you into His likeness, however long it may take, until His work in you is complete.

Beloved, if that is you, then be of good cheer! Know the Good Shepherd is fighting for you and not against you! He will be faithful to bring you to solid, level ground, restoring you to the security and comfort that can only be found in Him. For He is the only One called Faithful and True. But, especially faithful to those who are faithful to Him. To those who obey Him because they love Him. To those who love Him for Who He is, and not for their selfish gain. To those who have one agenda – His agenda, the advancement of His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, all to the fame and glory of His great name! To those who overcome by the Blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, who do not love their own life, unto death.

Not only is the Good Shepherd faithful, but He is willing and able to recover, redeem and restore all that has been lost, stolen and destroyed in our lives in the blink of an eye! When we hold ground – even though at times it feels like we are losing ground and sinking fast. That as we do, in that place of faithfulness and obedience to His Word – to truth, purity, holiness – to the call that is upon our life, we can be assured the Lover of our soul is ever so near. For no one cares more about our destinies being fulfilled and our souls being saved – meaning we are being conformed into the image of Christ, more than He does! Be assured every silent tear – every desperate, weak, silent cry for help in the night hours, when no one else knows or even cares, has not been for naught!

In that place of faithfulness and obedience, beloved, know the Good Shepherd will come. He will lay His loving hands upon your circumstances. In His fiery, burning, passionate, jealous love for you, He will remove those things – wrong thoughts, situations, or people that are trying to destroy the plans He has for you. He will place your feet on solid ground, giving you the grace that you need to keep moving forward in His plans. He will come when you least expect it. And, He will come like a Jealous Lover fighting for that which belongs to Him! His timing will be perfect, for He is able to prevent us from stumbling, and present us blameless before His presence in triumph joy!

May the Lamb receive the reward of His suffering in the fullest measure – our lives presented to Him as a living sacrifice!

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*Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the Lord stood by. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy [Zechariah 3:3-5, Jude 1:24] AMEN!*

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A Call to the Nations Ministry

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PO Box 140 | Kenmare, County Kerry | Ireland

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