

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 we see the shakings continue all around us, may we continue to run to the only One Who can save, heal, and deliver us from the evil schemes of the wicked one that has come with a vengeance these past two years to try to kill, steal and destroy our hope and faith in our Redeemer, King Yeshua, Who Reigns and Lives, forever and ever!

As I share the Good Shepherd's heart with you once again, 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 to the safety of the confines of His Sheepfold drawing you deeper and higher into the eternal plans He has for you!

In His loving Mercy,

Tracy Hogan



Living Parable: To Know Him



After an early morning prayer call and despite feeling tired, I was anxious to go for a prayer walk with the Lover of my soul, to help prepare for our afternoon time of prayer. It was a cool and cloudy August summer's day – perfect walking weather. With faith arising in my heart, I quickly headed out the door a little after 10:00 A.M.

Determined to overcome the fatigue that I was experiencing, I was soon lost in prayer. As we walked past the familiar farm fields, it was decided to go on a route that we have traveled countless times – a road that takes you by many sheepfolds. As I settled into a comfortable pace with the One Who establishes my steps, after a couple of miles I encounter a young ram alongside the road. It always bothers me to see a stray sheep not where they belong, so I quickly tried to discern which field was his. From what I could tell, he appeared to belong to the sheepfold on my left for he did not stray far from it. As I approached, he seemed to pay no attention.

As I got nearer, he did not run off but walked ahead until we came to a wide spot in the road where he then turned around and started to run back to where I originally stumbled upon him. But mid-way, he stopped and turned to face me and started baaing. Feeling weak and with my mind on other matters, I was not in the mood for whatever his complaint may be, but I sensed he was okay. It was a quiet road and believed he would make it back into his fold without my help.

I continued onward and upward as I ascended the steep hill that was before me, praying for the needs of the ministry. After reaching my turning point, I make my descent. When almost to the bottom, I pass two young boys racing on their bikes heading up the hill that I had just came down. As I approach the place where the ram is, at the exact same time, the two boys come racing down the hill and slow down so they are right next to me, with the ram directly on our right, lying down comfortably resting – not at all bothered by any of our activity!

One of the boys gets off his bike and gives the ram a gentle nudge with his foot urging it to get up. Reluctantly, the ram does so and walks a few paces away from us. At that point, I asked the young boy, “Do you know which field is his?” He replied confidently,

“It’s that field right there,” pointing to the one that I had thought was his. But I was not convinced, so I asked him, “How do you know for sure?” “Because he looks like one of the rams from there,” was his reply. And I said, “Yeah, but he is not marked like the others – he has no marking.” Farmers typically mark their sheep with a splotch of color on their backs so they can identify their own flock if any of them should escape from their fields or for when they share open land with other flocks. It is a mark that easily and quickly helps determine who they belong to.

As I pondered for a few seconds what was spoken, thinking how I rarely have any one to help get one of these strays back into their field, and how it would be quite easy to do so in this case, as there are three of us and the gate is only a few feet away. So I asked the boy, “What do you think, should we try to get him back into his field?” The boy, looking quite sheepishly like it was a ridiculous question, said, “Aw, no, when he gets hungry, he will find his way back into his field.” I gently protested and said, “Yeah, okay, but I have such pity for them – I hate to see them outside their fields and just want to help them get back to where they belong.”

*So I asked the boy,
“What do you think,
should we try to get him
back into his field?”*

This young boy patiently listened, said nothing and as I stared at him for a moment, I was thinking of the wisdom that had come from his mouth and I quickly said, “You know that sounds like what a good farmer would say – you may not be a farmer, but it sounds like what one would say.” We parted ways with no further words and it was in that moment, I recognised the Good Shepherd was once again at my side letting me feel His high and lofty ever so patient, wise and noble heart that He has towards His beloved ones. For His ways are surely not our ways, nor His thoughts our own, nor will He ever force Himself upon us. But He desires

us to want to eat and drink of Him constantly that we may know His ways and the eternal plans that He has for our lives.

Too often, we can wander from the confines and safety of the Good Shepherd's sheepfold looking for our source of food or strength in the wrong places. For some, you may be in a season of great discouragement, grief, fear or doubt especially in these latter days as the nations are being shook as never before, that may be causing you to start looking for hope in the wrong places. For others, it may be the temptation to 'try something new' drawing them to another voice that is not His Voice saying, "Peace, peace" when there is no peace, leading them to a deeper state of complacency, happy to sit comfortably on the sidelines of passivity not engaging in the battle that is raging all around them.

Beloved, when outside the safety of His Sheepfold we will wander about aimlessly without accomplishing the eternal purposes that He has for our lives. If we choose to stay outside, we will never know the Lover of our soul, instead we will only know of Him. For it is only in the confines of His Sheepfold, when we strive to enter through the narrow door where we can experience true intimacy with Yeshua and with our Father in heaven. It is only in those confines will we learn to know His ways and what His thoughts are towards us. He longs to see our faces and to hear our voices. He longs for us to experientially know Him that we can become compatible with Him in our words, thoughts and deeds that we can fulfill the destiny that He has for our lives. To become the Bride of Messiah, we must die daily and let the Holy Spirit mold us and shape us until Christ has been completely conformed within us, until our character matches His! It is a journey that does not happen overnight. It is all about an intimate relationship with the One Whose eyes are flames of fire, Who is gently nudging us to draw near to Him that we may know Him.

Being the Good Shepherd that He is, He will let us wander. He will not force us to eat of Him – of His presence. But He will be faithful to cause circumstances that will cause His hunger to come upon our soul that when we become hungry enough – for His ways, His Word, His disciplines – to know Him, it will cause us to return to Him wholeheartedly, that He can make His ways our ways and His thoughts our own. He is a Good Shepherd. He is a good King. And to all who are willing, He will let us eat and drink as much of Him as

we desire – it will be our choice. Remember, in the days of Israel the Lord spoke through the prophet Hosea that He was more interested in their knowing Him than all their sacrifices or gifts!

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Beloved, if you have lost your way for whatever reasons, it is not too late! His jealous love is pursuing you wanting to draw you unto Himself and reveal His immeasurable, unshakable and unstoppable love that He has just for you! He is wanting to heal your broken heart and strengthen you with His power and might. He is wanting you to taste and see and know just how good He is and that He is able to prevent you from stumbling and present you blameless before the presence of His glory in triumphant joy!

Remember, King David, in how when he was so hungry that he took the men that were with him and went into the House of God and ate the showbread! David did not care what man thought of him, nor was he bound up in religion. He had a need to be met and he knew there was only One place where that need could be met. In his hunger, he found his way back to the House of God to feed and strengthen him. When the hunger of the Lord consumes us, it will cause others to have a holy hunger for a holy God, and to pursue the only One Who can truly satisfy our souls!

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. [Hosea 6:6, Isaiah 55:8-9, Luke 6:21] AMEN!