

Divinely Blessed & Restored



Jesus is the Good Shepherd®

BY MINSTER DORIS B. RYANS

I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. John 10: 9 KJV

In today's society lives have become increasingly complex and stressful. Individuals are faced with challenges in all facets of their lives. Schedules are hectic, technology controls our lives; we have cell phones, text messages, e-mail, and Internet. We live like a hamster on a wheel, going round and round. We have financial burdens, relationship difficulties, unstable work environments, and personal challenges (low self-esteem, loneliness, pride, addictions, worry, fears and poor health). In a nutshell: individuals are struggling!

While we are feeling overwhelmed, I must ask, what is the answer.... how can we get back on track...we are going everywhere seeking answers, that miracle solution....? Well, I want to introduce to some, remind others about an individual that is our answer, that is the solution..... Jesus! ***Jesus.... The Good Shepherd!***

For a few moments I want you to go with me into a valley with a shepherd and his sheep. See the unique relationship that exists between the two. You might ask, what does the relationship of the shepherd and his sheep have to do with the church today. Well, actually a lot. As we look at the shepherd and his sheep, the shepherd represents our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the sheep represent, you and I.

First, let's take a look at a shepherd. Webster defines a shepherd as one who herds, guards, and cares for sheep. This term also denotes one who cares for a group of people, such as a minister or teacher. Be it a shepherd over sheep in a valley, or an individual with the responsibility of guarding, leading and caring for a group of people, a shepherd is a leader, a provider and a protector. A shepherd plays an extremely important role in a sheep's life. You see there is nothing that quiets a sheep like the presence of the shepherd.

A typical day in the life of a shepherd and his sheep begins with the shepherd coming to gather his flock from the sheepfold where he had brought them the evening before. When the shepherd returns for his sheep he has a distinct call or whistle, sometimes the sound of a small flute, which the sheep recognize and when he calls, they gather to follow him. He leads his flock out of the sheepfold to the valley where they can graze in the morning. In the early afternoon, he finds a place where they can rest. The tools of a shepherd are very simple, a rod and a staff, The rod is a huge club that can be used in close combat, or thrown at a wild beast that is trying to attack his sheep. The staff is used to guide the sheep. If a sheep is wandering off or going in a direction the shepherd doesn't want him to go, he uses the crook of the staff to pull him back. The shepherds love and protection gains the trust of his sheep.

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Next let's take a look at sheep. There is no domesticated animal as helpless as sheep. They are known to be meek and submissive as long as their needs are met. Although they require minimal to be maintained (grass and water), they are incapable of providing for their own needs. They will drink from muddy pools and graze in the same spot until the land is barren if the shepherd doesn't lead them to new watering places and grassy plains. In a nutshell, sheep need their shepherd, or they would surely perish.

Here are a few other interesting facts about sheep:

- **Sheep are defenseless.** Sheep have virtually no defense strategy. All they can do is run when danger comes. And because they are not fast runners, a stray dog can kill hundreds of sheep in one night. Because they have no defense strategy, the shepherd protects them using his rod and staff.
- **Sheep Become Lost and Require Discipline.** Sheep have a habit of going astray, of wandering off and the shepherd has to bring them back. One of the shepherd's greatest challenges is stopping the sheep's natural inclination to follow one another rather than the shepherd. The shepherd cares so much for his sheep that if one is lost, he will go and search for the one lost sheep until he is found.

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Early on when the shepherd finds that he has a sheep that likes to wander off, he has to discipline the sheep to correct its behavior. The shepherd will break its leg, make a splint and then carry the cripple close to his heart. The sheep must wait for the shepherd to carry it across the streams and the rough terrain. After the leg has healed, the lesson has been learned. It sounds cruel, but it's really because of the shepherd's love for his sheep that he teaches the sheep this lesson.

- **Sheep Fall Down:** Sometimes heavy sheep will lie down and are unable to get up due to the shift of gravity in their body. It will end up flat on its back with its feet straight up in the air and unable to stand and right itself. When this happens the sheep is utterly helpless and needs the shepherd help. Seeing his sheep in this predicament, the shepherd will roll him back on its side, help it get up, and minister to the sheep's needs until it regains the use of its legs and muscles. The shepherd hopes he has learned his lesson, yet, the shepherd knows that the same sheep might have to be restored to a standing position again and again.

It's pretty obvious sheep need their shepherd. I want to make this a little more personal. In some ways are we not similar to sheep? Aren't we sometimes defenseless, weary and tired and need someone to help us fight our battles? Don't we sometimes become undisciplined, caught up in self and our own wants and desires and before we know it, it's all about me, me, and me? Don't we sometimes lose direction in life; fall down due to bad decisions? Don't we sometimes find our selves in need of saving, restoration, or forgiveness? It's pretty obvious that we need a shepherd too!

We don't need just any shepherd - we need the True Shepherd! We need the Good Shepherd! We need Jesus! We need His love, protection, guidance, and His salvation. John 10:10 tell us: "... *by me (by Jesus) if any man enter in, (come to HIM) he shall be saved.*" With Jesus the Good Shepherd, you will find, new birth, new life, eternal life, and an ability to live a good life here on earth. When I say a good life here on earth, I'm not talking about the things the world consider the components of a good life - money, prestige and power. I'm talking about the things that give "*soul satisfaction*" - love, joy and peace...things that money and position can't provide on a lasting basis.

With Jesus the Good Shepherd, you will find hope and provision for your needs: John 10:9 tells us "*you shall go in and out*" and *find pasture*. You will find green fertile pastures in your life. You will be nourished with food for the body, soul, and mind. You will depend upon Jesus who in Matthew 28:18 declared, "*all power in heaven and on earth is given unto me*" not on the government and the stock exchange

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With Jesus the Good Shepherd, you will find security and freedom from worry and fear. John 10:3 tells us; Jesus goes ahead of His sheep, He paves the way, He calls and they follow Him because they know His voice. You will fear no evil as He will give you discernment to know where to go, when to go, and what to do.

With Jesus the Good Shepherd, you will find restoration. When we go our own way we end up with broken hearts and broken dreams. We will find ourselves in predicaments where we are “cast down” and need someone to rescue us and Jesus will pick you up and brush you off as he heal and restore you. No matter what our challenge is, as David said, “*He restoreth my soul*” which means bring you back to your former position.

With Jesus the Good Shepherd you will find protection. The scripture tells us in John 10:10 “*the thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. But! I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*”! With Jesus you find protection from the enemy’s snarls.

Psalms 23 written by David is the most read Psalms throughout the world and expresses without a doubt how precious we are to Jesus, the Good Shepherd. There will **never** be a greater expression of love by anyone for another than the love of Jesus for mankind. Allow this Psalms to minister to you today and take comfort in knowing that you have such a shepherd in your life!

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.” Amen.

We don't need just any shepherd - we need the True Shepherd! We need the Good Shepherd! We need Jesus! We need His love, protection, guidance, and His salvation.

HAVE YOU STARTED YOUR JOURNEY WITH CHRIST?

Our purpose in this article and daily scriptures is to encourage a heart-to-heart relationship with God. If you do not know God in a personal way, we invite you to make the first step today to receive God's love and the salvation that only Jesus Christ can give. Here are five steps you can take to receive salvation:

1. Recognize you are a sinner and need salvation. The Bible tells us "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
2. Repent of your sins. Sin separates us from God. By confessing your sins and turning from them you are forgiven. The Bible says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).
3. Believe in Jesus. God sent His Son to die so that He could pay for all our sins. The Bible says: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life: (John 3:16).
4. Receive His Salvation. Jesus Christ is a gift you must receive and welcome to live in your heart. He promises: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God: (John 1:12).
5. Confess your belief verbally. The Bible assures "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved: (Rom. 10:9).

You now have been born again! Tell some else your good news and connect yourself with a church home as soon as possible. God Bless and Keep You!

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P.O. Box 31-1405
Detroit, MI 48231
Ph: 313-566-0944
Fx: 313-566-0945

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A banner with a blue background. The word "CALENDAR" is in a bold, white, sans-serif font at the top. Below it, "of Events" is written in a white, cursive script font. In the background, there is a faint image of a calendar page with numbers and a date circled.

CALENDAR of Events

April

Rev. Doris B. Ryans' Preaching Engagements

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Ecorse, Michigan

Sunday, April 5, 2009

10:50 a.m.

**COFFEE, TEA & THEE®
CHRISTAN BOOK CLUB**

March 5, 2009 - April 30, 2009

6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. @ Panera Breads

**Make sure that you check our website for updates and
upcoming events!!**