

The Shepherd of Your Soul

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Many have come out of the last year, defeated and really wanting to make some real changes for the good. And maybe you are one of them. And it always seems the new year gives hope to people to make a new start, to wipe the slate clean. There is a scripture the Lord gave me for today, 1 Peter 2:25, "**For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.**" I don't know anyone who hasn't done the "sheep going astray" bit. What better way could there be to start a brand new year than to stop being a "sheep going astray"? The word "going" is present tense and continuing in action. It didn't say "gone" which would mean an action past that was no longer happening, but Peter was inferring the we, before returning to the Lord, were continually straying. Not just once in a while, either. Here's another thing; How can you return to God unless you came from Him? HMMMMMM???? And if you came from Him, then He created you, and He owns you. Some of us have returned to the Shepherd. Others, well, others of us had to be hunted down like a lost sheep, picked up, and carried back to the Shepherd, but the important thing is, we're back!

I like how it says we were as sheep going astray. Why? Because the Shepherd put His Holy Spirit in us so we wouldn't want to stray anymore. Oh, there are times we may get a little out of sight of Him and we start feeling the pull of the flesh to lead us astray. "Just stray a little", the devil says, "Just a little". Pretty soon, we are clear out of sight of the Shepherd. Remember, sheep don't see real well, and they're kinda stupid. They stray and get into trouble. Maybe the word "sheep" does fit us after all. But if you're like most sheep that have strayed, you will start getting scared when the Shepherd can't be seen. Maybe that's good. Jesus doesn't want us to stray anyway. We need to stay real close to the Shepherd. You see, the Shepherd loves us. He won't run when the wolves, lions, and bears come to get us. Instead, He will stay close to protect His flock. And if one gets scared, He will pick it up and hold it close so it can feel the warmth of His love and the safety of His arms.

Jesus doesn't want us going into the new year with fear. So many have no hope that the new year will be any different than the old one was. This really can be a time of renewal and refreshing for us, and a time of returning to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

Cast all your care upon Him and come close to Him and rest peacefully in His presence. He holds the future in His hands. He knows the plans He has for us. Good plans! Jeremiah 29:11 says, "**For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, Thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.**"

Let the times of the past be sufficient for our straying from God. We have no need to stray. Sheep stray because they're looking for something better. But all we could ever want or need is in Christ Jesus. And He wants to give you all you need, and then some. I mean, why stray? The grass is not greener on the other side of the fence. All that's on the other side are thistles, the rocky ground, muddy waters, and oh yes, the wolves. Don't forget the wolves. They love sheep too....for lunch. But we're safe here with Jesus. He provides us with green pastures, He leads us beside the still waters, He restores our souls.

Yes, we've strayed like sheep who have spent all their lives jumping the fence and getting lost. But we're back in the Shepherd's fold. He doesn't care where you've been, His beloved sheep, He's just happy He found you and you're safe. Now, it's time to be a different kind of sheep. You used to be a lost, straying sheep. Now, you're a found sheep, with a bright new future. Not just for this life on earth, but forever. Because Jesus isn't going to stop being your Shepherd when your earth time is over. He will be your Shepherd for all eternity. And because of that, the peace of knowing all your needs are met, and you're safe and loved, will never end.

And just in case you haven't yet returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your soul, what are you waiting for, a written invitation??

<http://www.lifehealingministries.org/pages/archives/Shepherd.htm>

Well, ok, here it is; Matthew 11:28-30, and it's written to you! It says, "**Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.**"

Jesus is the gate to the sheepfold. There's no other way in to eternal life, but by Him. And He hasn't made the way closed or hidden. The gate is open and there's always room for more. Come on home and lay down at the Shepherd's feet.

Oh, yes, this is the good life!

Rev. Jerry Baysinger