**HE RESTORETH MY SOUL**

**Written By: Tommy Romans March 2016**

**Psalms 23: 1** - The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

 **2** He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

 **3** He **Restoreth** my soul:

 You must remember when you read this 23rd Psalm, it is the sheep doing the talking! The sheep in the Good Shepherds care is doing the speaking. “Hey, I want everyone to know that I am in this good fold. I am one of His in the family of God. The Lord is my Shepherd, He leads me, guides me, feeds me, shelters me and supplies my every need. So why does the Sheep make this statement: “He Restoreth my Soul?” It refers to the spirit when exhausted, weary or sad. The Shepherd renews it when it’s troubled, worried and worn down with toils and cares. He brings back the courage and vigor and fills it with new joy. The original Hebrew reads: “He bringeth back my soul, He causes it to return.”



 Have you ever gotten down? Have you ever gotten stressed out and got so burdened down that was like to be cast down in life, David did! This man knew what it was like to go astray, to fall and not be able to get back up. He had many battles. He had tasted defeat in his life and felt the frustration of falling under temptation. He not only saw it happen to the sheep in his care, but he himself was acquainted with the bitterness of feeling hopeless and having no strength in himself. Listen, you don’t even have to sin and fall but life has its frustrations, cares and problems that sometimes weigh our very spirit down and it seems we can’t get up!

**A CAST SHEEP**

 Only those who are closely acquainted with sheep and their habits will fully understand what it means to be a Cast Sheep or in other words, “a Cast down Sheep.” If you go back thousands of years ago, this was an old English Shepherds term for a sheep that has turned over on its back and cannot

get back up on its feet by itself. Notice the terminology in scripture of this condition: David, the man after God’s own heart, that wrote this psalm, said in **Psalms 42:5** – “Why art thou Cast down O my soul and why art thou disquieted in me?” Disquieted means – being troubled, feeling low in spirit, down and out with no peace. **Vs. 6** – O my God, my soul is Cast down within me!

 Phillip Keller, the great sheep herder who owned and cared for sheep for many years said: “A Cast Sheep is a very pitiful sight. Lying on its back, its feet in the air, it flays frantically struggling to stand up. Sometimes it will bleat for help, but usually lies there lashing about in fear and frustration. If the owner doesn’t arrive on the scene within a reasonably short time, the sheep will die. This is the reason why it is so important for a careful shepherd to look over his flock every day, counting them to see that all are able to be on their feet. If one or two are missing, the very first thought to flash in the shepherds mind is – one of my sheep is Cast somewhere. I must go in search and set it on its feet again.” (What a picture of God’s people! No wonder the Lord calls us sheep in both testaments. We so easily get down!)

**HUMANS ARE FRAIL**

 Did you know we are so frail by human nature? We can be strong physically and look like a picture of strength and health, but inwardly we sometimes struggle and faint. Thank God for those who have strong wills, determined hearts that keep right on going and serving God! These precious souls press on and follow their shepherd through the heat and cold, up mountains and through the valleys. They know the secret and therefore stay near Him because they are sure that when they get down and weak, He will be there to lift them back up!

**NO TIME TO DRAW BACK**

 Listen children, it pays to stay near to God now days in these troublesome times. Jesus is getting ready to come – “They Chief Shepherd will soon appear!” Please don’t wander away from Him and get scattered now. Stay on your feet, don’t roll over, it could spell your doom.

**Heb 10:22** Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

**A HEAVY MOTHER**

 Keller goes on to say, one particular Ewe I owned in my flock was notorious for being a Cast Sheep. Every spring when she became heavy with Lamb, it was not uncommon for her to become Cast every second or third day. Only my diligence made it possible for her to survive from one season to the next. This precious Momma would get down because she was carrying a lamb – she was heavy.



 Here is a picture of Christian parents who are endeavoring to raise their children in this sinful stress filled world now days. It’s a task. You labor in prayer to spiritually keep them, guide them as you yourself endeavor to stay near the Shepherd. You carry a load for your children. You watch for their soul and stand guard. You realize as a parent if you get down and stay down, you may lose them.

**SON, KEEP MY SHEEP**

 Keller said, “One year, I had to be away on business for a few days. I pulled my son aside and said to him, son, you are going to be responsible for my sheep, especially for that mother who is heavy with lamb. If you manage to keep her on her feet while I’m absent, you will be well paid for your efforts!” Every evening after school, he went out into the field and faithfully set her on her feet, so she could survive. Keller said when he got home, the mother Ewe rewarded them with a fine pair of twins! Can I say here, O the reward and the blessing of encouraging others and helping them to spiritually stay on their feet? Come on children, reach out and lift your brother and sister up. Encourage them to stand, it is surely going to be worth it. We can’t let up now, Heaven is just a heartbeat away. Let’s help each other make it home!!

**THE DANGER OF BEING A CAST SHEEP**

 It is not only the shepherd who keeps a sharp eye out for cast sheep, but also predators! Wolves, coyotes, dogs, cougars and buzzards all know that a Cast sheep is easy prey and death is not far off. Keller said that knowing cast sheep are helpless, close to death and vulnerable to attack makes the whole problem very serious for the shepherd. Even the largest, fattest and strongest and sometimes healthiest sheep become cast and will be a casualty.

**HOW A SHEEP BECOMES CAST**

 A heavy, fat or long fleeced sheep will lie down comfortably in a little hollow or depression in the ground and roll on its side slightly to stretch out and relax. Suddenly the center of gravity in the body shifts and then it turns on its back far enough that the feet no longer touch the ground. The sheep panics and it begins to paw but cannot get up. As it lies there, gasses begin to build up inside and cuts off the blood circulation in its legs. If the weather is very hot, it can die in a few hours. Keller said, “If I lose a cast sheep that’s carrying lambs, it’s a horrible loss, I lose the little lambs too.

 Shepherding sheep is a 24 hour a day of constantly counting, caring and tending them. I have repeatedly saved and restored my sheep. Early every morning, I wound go out and search the sky to see if there were any buzzards circling overhead. These black-winged vultures had bald heads and 6 feet wing spans. If I spotted them over my ranch, I knew I had a Cast Sheep! When I saw them circling, fear gripped my heart, I knew I had a sheep down and in trouble.

**CIRCLYING BUZZARDS – A SURE SIGN**

Here is a picture of satan looking for victims who are spiritually dead or on the verge of giving up. Buzzards don’t have eyes like eagles but they have a very keen sense of smell. They circle endlessly on the air currents overhead (so do the powers of darkness, the prince of the power of the air), until they pick up the scent of a dead body. They can sniff out the dead from more than a mile away. As a body dies, it gives off a chemical that begins to waft upward and the circling vultures pick up the scent. Others join it and they circle downward lower and lower until they find their dying victim. They love death. You must remember, your enemy the devil has very good eyesight and sense of smell. He can tell when you are getting weak or begin to drift away.



Keller said, “when I looked up and saw the black figures circling, I left everything and ran into the field to count my sheep and make sure they were all on their feet. Again and again, I have spent many hours searching for a single sheep that was missing.” (So does our blessed Lord and Saviour! **Mat. 18:** Jesus said, How think ye? (How do you feel about it?) If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth He not leave the ninety and nine and goeth into the mountains and seeketh that which is gone astray? Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. **Luke** records that He goeth after that which is lost, until He find it. And when He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing.

 Don’t you realize now more than ever that you are God’s sheep and little lambs? Just one of you are very special to the Lord and there isn’t any effort to great, a mountain too high or wilderness too thick, a valley too wide or deep for Him to get to you. He cares about you and does not want you to get down and end up losing you to the devil and his worldly predators! The Lord knows our weak human nature that we are so prone to go astray and get down!

**GOT TO GET THEM ON THEIR FEET**

 Keller said, after spending hours searching, I would see it in the distance, cast down, unable to get up and I’d run toward it with a sense of fear and joy; fear it might be too late and joy that I had found it! Tenderly, I would roll the sheep over and lift it to its feet. Then straddling the sheep with my legs, I would hold her erect and rub the sheeps legs to Restore the circulation. It often took quite a while. When the sheep started to walk again, it often stumbled, stagger and collapse in a heap again. I reached it just in time – it was almost gone! All the time I worked on the sheep to get restored, I would talk gently to it – “when are you going to learn to stand on your own feet? I’m so glad I found you in time! My language to the sheep as I talked to it was with tenderness, rebuke, compassion and correction. Little by little it would regain its strength and balance.

 Aren’t you glad this thing is personal? Our great Shepherd is compassionate and tender to lift us out of the dust when we fall. What a revelation of the heart of God just how much He loves us! Each one of us are so special to Him, that a price could never be put upon our eternal soul. You are worth more than a million worlds to Him.

**THE REASONS FOR BEING A CAST SHEEP**

**(The Danger of Coasting)**

 So, what causes us to be a Cast Sheep? In our Christian life, there is a great danger in looking for the easy places, the cozy corners, a comfortable position where there is no commitment, no desire to really follow the Shepherd and do His Will. When we coast along we are most vulnerable. When there’s no demand upon self-discipline and we have no desire to please the Lord and be involved in His service – we are in grave danger!

**(TOO MUCH WOOL!)**

The great sheep herdsman Phillip Keller in his many years of service in loving and caring for his sheep, said – “When Sheep have too much Wool, often their fleece becomes very long, heavily matted with mud, manure, burrs and other debris and it makes it much easier for them to become Cast, literally weighed down with its own Wool.” **Wool** in scripture is symbolic and typifies the Old Life – the old carnal self. It is the outward expression of an inner attitude. In other words, it is your own selfish ways and desires that you struggle with in your Christian life. The Wool is the area of your life in which and through which you are continually in Contact with the world around you. Here is where you find the clinging accumulation of worldly things, possessions, ideas and entertainments begin to weigh you down and hold you down. You must remember - No High Priest was ever allowed to wear Wool when he entered the Holy of Holies into the presence of God. Wool spoke of self, of filthy pride and God could not tolerate it! Our Wool, our selfish ways must be dealt with before it gets us down and cuts off all our spiritual circulation and causes us to die.

**O GOOD SHEPHERD WOULD YOU**

**SHEAR ME!**

 O Jesus, would you take us in your hands and apply the keen, sharp cutting edge of your shears (Holy Word) and work on our lives. It might be unpleasant for a while, but it will sure pay off. Lord, I might struggle and kick in the process and suffer a few cuts and nicks, but O what a relief when it’s over - just to be free from ourselves! What a Restoration! To be free from this old clinging world and its many influences will make me stronger to follow the Lord and stay in His paths. When I am sheared and clean, then I can happily take my place in the Fold. I will bear His image and markings. **HE RESTORETH MY SOUL!!**

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 Thank God we have a Good Shepherd! He hath dealt bountifully with us and supplied our every need. He hath saved and redeemed us. He feeds and keeps us. We are the Sheep of His Pasture. We have come through the valleys, crossed raging streams. Our Lord doth safely lead. Our resting place is on the mountain and we’re safe within His fold! We are grazing in His pasture as we near our Heavenly Home! O what a Savior and friend is He!!