

## A STRONG SHEPHERD, BUT WEAK SHEEP

**Isaiah 40:1-11    John 10:11**

**Introduction:** We have all seen soldiers returning from their tour of duty in a war torn country where these men and women risked their lives daily and many had been injured and even killed. They had to be tough, hard, nerves of steel to do what they needed to do. However as we saw them disembark from the ship or the plane their families ran to them, their children ran to them, the soldiers gathered tiny little babies up in their rough, tough arms and tears flooded their once fierce hard staring eyes. Strong men and women but also gentle and tender.

We read about God and His powerful acts of flooding the earth, pouring down fire from heaven, sending poisonous snakes, earthquakes, striking people dead, declaring that this earth would one day be destroyed and a new one be made. However we also read and know of God's tender side in being loving, patient, caring, forgiving and patient.

The Bible pictures God's Children as lambs and Jesus as their Shepherd.

### I. WHO EXACTLY ARE GOD'S LAMBS?

1. Every believer is a lamb of God. In God's eyes that believer is innocent, harmless and defenseless.
2. Little children are young lambs to God. Jesus welcomed little children.
  - A child's attitude is essential in believing in Jesus as is needed.
  - The older one becomes, the harder it seems for one to believe in Jesus.
3. New converts:
  - Beginners in faith who are not yet strong. Grasping only a very few Biblical truths and far from being leaders, needing to sit at Jesus' feet.
  - Jesus never cast aside any for being new, weak in his/her faith.
  - Trees are not cut down in the spring if there's no leaves, buds will come eventually.
  - A sudden burst of growth is not common to new births for growth in newborns is very slow.
  - Jesus cares for the newborn, the weak and those just learning.
4. The weak and timid:
  - There are some who are always sad, withdrawn, depressed, complaining, who seem to have few days of sun in their life. Always deep gloom, no matter how inspiring the music, the message, the worship service.
  - They are poor company but Jesus never seeks out only the strong to love and He never neglects those who are weak.
5. Those of little knowledge:
  - There are always some who just never grasp God's teachings, no matter how long they have been a believer. They just don't seem to be able to "get it."
  - Jesus said to Phillip: ***"Have I been so long with you and yet thou has not known me, Phillip?"***  
Some will always be in a fog, meaning well, but never grasping the deep spiritual things.

- Some are led astray by the slightest breeze of change, going this direction, then that. Jesus will never give up or quit on them, no matter what.

## II. HOW DOES JESUS, THE STRONG SHEPHERD, CARE FOR THE WEAK?

1. Jesus gathers them in close.
  - As a shepherd does for his newborn lambs, so Jesus does for His weak ones also.
  - As the flock "grazes" the weak, newborns are watched closely.
  - When separated, the shepherd goes to look for the weak and brings them back.
  - Jesus watches, cares for, looks after and searches for His own.
2. By teaching them:
  - With a simple Gospel: "I am a sinner, Jesus stood in the sinner's place, I trust Him, therefore He saves me."
  - Jesus never told His disciples everything all at once.
  - It is strange, but true, the weak, the newborn, so often want the strong things first.
  - Jesus gives "milk" first, then the stronger, in proper order.
3. By degrees of experience:
  - As a believer becomes stronger, so Jesus allows things to become stronger in life.
  - Who could have endured as a newborn Christian some of today's experiences?
  - Jesus will not permit us to be tried beyond our own strength.
4. By taking the load Himself at times.
  - *"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*
  - Jesus doesn't send the weak to the front lines, so to speak.

## III. WHY DOES JESUS CARE SO MUCH FOR THE WEAK?

1. All souls weigh the same and cost Jesus the same. Thus the weak are as much redeemed as the strong.
2. Sometimes certain features are soon lost such as charm, determination, innocence and there is an emptiness, a struggle to fill the void.
  - Jesus helps the weak gain back what he/she needs.
3. The weak will become strong someday where grace was once little as a spark will grow into a flame.
4. So none will ever be lost. *"No one shall pluck them out of my father's hand."*
  - What mother would neglect that sick, weak baby for her other healthy children?
  - Would not a mother be more affectionate to that sick, weak one than the healthy ones?

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. If an Angel came and announced that Jesus was going to cast ONE away, who would it be?
2. If a single sheep, a lamb of God's is ever lost, then all will be lost.
3. Jesus is the great, strong Shepherd of God's Children, little lambs. Will you be an under-shepherd and help Jesus by being a special friend to one of His newborn lambs? To one of His weak lambs?