

## The Voice of the Shepherd

Today I visited with little Emily Furman in the hospital. What a sweetheart! It was seven weeks ago today, that Emily was readmitted to the hospital after going for several years without the occurrence of a serious seizure. But now her life is beset by perpetual seizures. Wednesday they performed surgery which touched one part of the brain to see if the action would cause a reaction that would eventually slow down and stop the continual seizures. Yesterday and today as I have prayed for this precious six year old, I have asked God to help me pray for her. And God kept bringing this passage to mind, "*And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice*" (John 10:4). The phrase that Jesus used, "*putteth forth*" is the Greek word: *ekball*, which means to compel one to depart; to bid one depart, in stern though not violent language. So, when Jesus orders us to go, He may be firm, not harsh and best of all, He is with us, "*He goeth before them*" and not only is He with us, but He leads us, we follow and He speaks to us, "*for they know His voice.*"

God loves His children; He wants the best for them, therefore, I ask the God who loves us infinitely to help me pray for His kids. As I muse about Emily's situation I am praying this prayer for her today and perhaps you too can pray this with me for her or someone else for whom it would apply. "Lord, you are the Great and Chief Shepherd of your sheep. You spoke the worlds into existence (Hebrews 1:2; Hebrews 11:3). Please speak and call forth your little lamb into health and wholeness." Later in the tenth chapter of John, Jesus went on to say, "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*" (John 10:27).

Sick or well, we all need to hear God's voice. "*Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.*" (Song of Solomon 8:13). There is a promise that we who know God will recognize His voice when He speaks. Jesus said, "*...and he calleth his own sheep by name...*" (John 10:3) "*...for they know his voice.*" (John 10:4). "*And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers*" (John 10:5). The devil may try ventriloquism, but like a family member, we know our earthly father's voice and we know when we've heard from God, our Heavenly Father.

The Lord's voice is a healing voice. The Shepherd/King David said, "*He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake*" (Psalm 23:3). The Hebrew word translated "restoreth," means to return, to restore, to turn back. When the sheep have a full grown coat of wool, which is just before shearing time, the sheep will travel in the pasture and if they are not careful, their wool coats can become so weighted down with the morning dew or rain that they roll over on their backs. Once the sheep has rolled over, he cannot roll back and aright himself. His only help comes from the shepherd who discovers him and turns him back over on his feet. If the shepherd does not do this, the sheep will suffocate and die.

The Lord's voice speaks specifically to us. "*...the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name...*" (John 10:3). In the Middle East, even to this day, the shepherds lead their sheep through main thoroughfares and often more than one flock of sheep intersect and upwards of three, four or more flocks are intermingled together. This is no problem for the good shepherd, when it's time to go, he climbs to an exalted place like a hill and one by one, he calls forth his sheep by their individual name. And all sheep know their shepherd's voice and their own name. When God has a specific, custom-made will for your life, He will personally address you. "*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye*" (Psalm 32:8).

The Lord's voice is not inhibited by any dispensation or distance. One of the saddest reasons God does not work is explained plainly and painfully, "*And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief*" (Matthew 13:58). By contrast notice these words, "*And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he*

cometh; and to my servant, *Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*" (Matthew 8:5-10). The result of the man who asked the Lord to "*Speak the word only*" was as follows: "*And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour*" (Matthew 8:13). What do you have need of at this hour? Let us believe God and say, "Oh Lord, "*speak the word only!*" And may we, in turn, hear the words "*...as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee* (Matthew 8:13)

- Pastor Pope -

**[Back to Pastor's Word](#)**