“I’VE FALLEN AND I CAN’T GET UP”  
Psalm 42:5, 11  
October 5, 2014

INTRODUCTION: I received a call from a pulpit committee in Gaffney, South Carolina last week. In our conversation, I was asked if I knew Scott and Ginger Burleson from Lavonia Church.

Share my memories.

Through the years Janet and I have collected sheep and read a few books on sheep, especially Phillip Keller.


Luke 15:4
"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"

As we read these texts always be remembering that it is a sheep in the Good Shepherd’s care who is speaking in this text. David was acquainted with the bitterness of feeling hopeless and without strength in himself. He knew what it was to be “cast down” and dejected.

Ps. 42:11, “Why are you cast down, O my soul?” The word “cast sheep” is an old English shepherd’s term for a sheep that has turned over on its back and
cannot get up again by itself. A “cast” sheep is a very pathetic sight. Lying on its back, its feet in the air, it flays away frantically struggling to stand up, without success. Sometimes it will bleat for help, but generally it lies there lashing about in frightened frustration. If its owner does not arrive on the scene within a reasonably short time, the sheep will die. This is but another reason why it is so essential for a careful, compassionate sheep man to look over his flock every day, counting them to see that all are able to be up and on their feet. If any are missing, the first thought is one of my sheep is cast somewhere. I must go in search and set it on its feet again.

Not only does the shepherd keep a sharp eye for cast sheep, but also the predators. They know that a cast sheep is easy prey.

I am also told that the largest, fattest, strongest, and sometimes healthiest sheep can become cast and be a casualty.

1 Corinthians 10:12
“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

GREAT QUESTION:

How does this happen?

A heavy, fat, or long fleeced sheep will lie down comfortably in some little hollow or depression in
the ground. It may roll on its side slightly to stretch out or relax. Suddenly, the center of gravity in the body shifts so that it turns on its back far enough that the feet no longer touch the ground.

As it lies there struggling, gases begin to build up and as they expand they tend to retard and cut off blood circulation to extremities of its body, especially the legs. If it is very hot, they can die in hours; cloudy, maybe several days.

If the cast sheep is a ewe with lambs, it is multiple losses. Do you sense the shepherd’s urgency? As though of time running out!

**QUESTION:**

**How do you help cast sheep?**

Roll the sheep on its side. Lift her to her feet. Then straddling the sheep with your legs you hold her up, rubbing her legs to restore the life to her legs. When the sheep started to walk again she often stumbled, staggered, and collapsed.

**QUESTION:**

**How do you help this from happening again?**

As you straddled the sheep you would talk to him.

“When are you going to learn to stand on your own feet? I’m glad I found you in time, you rascal!”
1. Tenderness

2. Rebuke

3. Compassion

4. Correction

5. “Discipline”- break a leg

“He restoreth my soul” – to return; to cause to return; to return to a former condition

ILLUSTRATE:

As with sheep, so with Christians, some basic principles and parallels apply which will help us to grasp the way in which a man or woman can be “cast.”

1. Idea of looking for a comfortable spot to lie down

2. No demands upon self-discipline or hardships

3. Too much wool. Often the fleece became very long, heavily matted with mud, manure, burrs, and other debris; literally weighed down. Wool depicts the old self-
life in the Christian. The things of this world that weigh us down.

Hebrews 12:1, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

It is significant that no high priest was ever allowed to wear wool when he entered the Holy of Holies. Speaks of self, pride, personal preference.

Answer to long wool? Shear; not a pleasant process. What a joy for sheep and shepherd once done.

**MAJOR PROBLEM WITH CAST SHEEP:**

1. While on their backs they can’t follow the Shepherd.

2. Isolated from the flock.

3. They become very easy prey.

4. They personally suffer from being in this position.

5. Sheep can’t help each other back on their feet.
“If we don’t trust while we are on our feet, God help us when we are on our backs.” JMH

CONCLUSION:

Hebrews 12:10-11, “For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

If a sheep constantly becomes cast and begins to lead others the Shepherd must deal harshly.

- Stubbornness

- Waywardness

Hebrews 12:5-11
“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "’My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’" If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have
had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

1. Assures Us of His Love. 5-6

2. Assures Us of Our Sonship. 2-8

3. Assures Us of His Holiness. 10

4. Assures Us of His Blessing. 11