

INTIMACY WITH GOD

THE LORD IS THE SHEPHERD OF HIS PEOPLE

God hears us when we talk to Him, when we call out to him. And that reminds me of a story about a rancher name Jake.

Jake, the rancher went one day to fix a distant fence. The wind was cold and gusty and the clouds rolled gray and dense. As he pounded the last staples in and gathered tools to go, the temperature had fallen, the wind and snow began to blow.

When he finally reached his pickup, he felt a heavy heart. From the sound of the ignition, he knew it wouldn't start. So Jake did what most of us would do if we had been there; he humbly bowed his balking head and sent aloft a prayer.

As Jake turned the key for the last time, he softly cursed his luck. They found him three days later. Jake was frozen stiff in that old truck.

Now Jake has been around in life and done his share of roaming. But when he saw heaven, he was shocked—why, it looked just like Wyoming!

Of all the saints in heaven, his favorite was St. Peter. (Now, this line ain't needed, but it helps with rhyme and meter) so they set and talked a minute or two, or maybe it was three. Nobody was keeping score—in heaven, time is free.

I've always heard, Jake said to Pete, that God will answer prayer, but one time I asked for help, well, He just plain wasn't there. Does God answer prayers of some, and ignore the prayers of others? That don't seem exactly square—I know all men are brothers. Or does God randomly reply without good rhyme or reason? Maybe it's the time of day, the weather or the season. Now I ain't trying to act smart, it's just the way if feel. And I was wondering Pete, could you tell me—what's the deal?

Saint Peter listened very patiently and when Jake was done, there were smiles of recognition, and he said, *So, you're the one! That day your truck wouldn't start, and you sent your prayer a flying, you, you gave us all a real b ad time, with hundreds of us trying. A thousand angels rushed to check the status of your file, but you know Jake, we hadn't heard from you in quite a long while. And though all prayers are answered, God ain't got no quota.*

We laugh and agree it's a funny story and some of us make comments on how we could relate, but heed the lesson. Don't be a Jake, stay in touch! Intimate (the right) Relationship with Jesus is what life is all about.

The 23rd Psalm of David.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

As you read this psalm I would ask you to think about these six questions.

1. Do I really belong to Him?
2. Do I really recognize His right to me?
3. Do I respond to His authority and acknowledge His ownership?
4. Do I find freedom and complete fulfillment in this arrangement?
5. Do I sense a purpose and deep contentment because I am under His direction?
6. Do I know rest and comfort, besides a definite sense of exciting adventure, in belonging to Him?

The 23rd psalm is a favorite and we read it over and over; many have memorized it as they quote it in certain situations for it brings comfort, encouragement; it brings stability of truth. We also read in John, chapter 10 where Jesus tells us two times that He is The Good Shepherd. Let me give you a quick definition of a shepherds'. It is one who tends, leads, guides, cherishes, feeds and protects a flock given into his care.

And twice Jesus says, *I am the door*. He is making it clear to us that He is the only way unto salvation. He is the door of the sheep. Entering the sheepfold through Jesus is a saving action and provides the sheep with abundant life and provision. The picture is one of security and safety in Christ, as He is the door to the sheep. Jesus gives freedom to the sheep as they go in and out and find pasture.

We as God's children must daily keep an open door in our relationship with Him, and as you will see in reading and answering the six questions above, you will find your answers in your intimacy with God. Jesus paid the price for us to know His ownership.

When we are walking in God's wisdom and understanding of the posed six questions, we will have a definite purpose for our lives. We will travel the road of life in peace regardless of the difficulties and trials that come our way, because we are assured that He is directing us; we are not left to survive alone. In fact, we are not survivors any longer; we became overcomers in the Lord the moment we asked Him to come into our hearts.

I do not think that any believer who walks in daily intimacy with God can ever say that their life is boring. I look back over the 40 some years that I have served the Lord and as

memories flash across my mind, it is like watching a movie clip, and awe fills my soul—laughter fills my mouths and sheer adoration for my Lord fills my entire being, as I see His love and protection in dire times. Living and walking daily with the Lord is the most exciting, comforting, fun-filled, awesome experience a believer can ever experience. No two days are the same.

So don't be like Jake and not have your voice heard when you need God to come to your aid. Don't be like Jake who gave up and died because he hadn't kept in contact with Lord and He didn't have the faith to believe that no matter how things looked, he knew in his heart that God had heard, recognized His voice and was sending help (to the right location)! Amen.

I love the fact that when I call out to the Lord, *LORD, ARE YOU THERE?* His answer is a resounding *YES, CHILD, I AM HERE. I AM RIGHT BESIDE YOU!* and I know that He, my faithful Lord, is!