

*"But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." John 10:2-4 KJV*



Several shepherds would use the same wilderness sheepfold at night. When morning came and it was time to go, the shepherds would walk away and call their flock after them. The sheep knew their shepherd's voice and would follow him. He led them to the still waters and the green pastures. They would not follow another because they did not know his voice. Sheep are trained from lambs to follow their shepherd's voice. It was a practice in the ancient times to break the legs of a straying lamb. "How cruel!" you might say. It would be worse to let the lamb wander into the wild alone to be devoured by predators. The shepherd would then tenderly bind the legs of the little lamb and carry it around on his shoulders until its legs healed. He did this to protect the lamb from the dangers that lurked outside of his guardianship. By the time the legs healed, the lamb would be so used to being near the shepherd, and hearing his voice, that it would not stray far away from his side again. God sometimes will "break our legs" to teach us to stay near if we are prone to wander away to protect us from the "roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." He will remove from our life the things or persons that tempt or enable us to stray. He may remove income or health to bring us closer to Himself. In my case it was health. It has inexorably bound my heart and soul to Jesus, forever! He may even take our loved ones, if they are causing us to not follow. A man once said God called him to preach and that he would start as soon as his son entered college. In less than two years his son died. He himself admitted it was his own fault. Never fear His correction or chastisement. It is always done in love. "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." Do we hear His voice and still go our own way? Will God have to break your legs to keep you out of danger? Are we straying into the lion's den, or do we follow our Shepherd?

The Lord is my Shepherd each hour of the day,  
He patiently guards every step lest I stray,  
And if I be prone to just wander away,  
He tenderly teaches me that I must stay. ~CGP

It is God's Grace and Love that brings His scourge. Each stripe reminds of His everlasting Love. If I were not loved, there would be no concern for my straying heart. When God "breaks our legs," it is to keep us close. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" The Shepherd loves His little lambs and keeps them ever so close. How often do you stray? Perhaps your pain and affliction are a reminder not to stray. How often do we pray when things go well? How about when they do not? Whatever brings you closer to God is from Him; even the consequences of your sin. Listen and follow.

*"The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty." Psalms 29:4 KJV*