

A living example of shepherds' care



The Woodworth family had the opportunity to visit a sheep ranch. The experience allowed Dan Woodworth to draw parallels between shepherds and sheep and how the Shepherd Jesus cares for his flock. Here, Irene Woodworth is feeding a lamb that was only a day old at the time. (Courtesy photo)

By Dan Woodworth

Have you ever seen and heard of a real living experience that has given you an astonishing inspiring insight into a clearer revelation of the Living Word of God? I am excited to share a story with you about some sheep and some shepherds.

On Saturday, January 26, My Most Beautiful Beloved Bride, Inspiring Irene, our Sensational Spectacular Son, Courageous Compassionate Chris, and I arrived just around noon on a sheep ranch about 60 miles from Boise. We were invited by a Faithful Friend to visit with her (she lives in a different state), her parents and some of their relatives to have lunch with them. We had no idea of the adventure that would unfold before our eyes!

We had a delicious, home-cooked ranch-style lunch and then talked about every topic you can think of. Our time of sharing was rich and rewarding. They gave us a tour of their big, beautiful home and we kept telling stories to each other.

Right before sunset we were invited to check out their sheep. We had never been that close to sheep on a ranch. We saw some rams in a pasture and then the main herd in an enclosed pen. Then the Magnificent Mother of our Faithful Friend, one of the Sacred Shepherds, showed us the mother sheep who were pregnant and those who had little lambs. We were able to pet them. What an Empowering, Encouraging Experience!

My Sweetheart was asked if she wanted to feed a little lamb, who could walk on her own and was only 24 hours old. The little lamb was placed on my wife's lap and she fed her with a bottle of specially formulated milk. That little, newborn lamb was hungry!

We discovered that her mother had twins but only had one udder. She would only feed both at the same time if she had two udders. So this little lamb was rejected by her mother. The Sacred Shepherd saved that little lamb by providing food and shelter for her. I saw in real life how our Sacred Shepherd, Jesus, cares for us, His sheep. We were all astonished and amazed watching the role of the Sacred Shepherd with the sheep. I began to see the Word of God revealed in front of me!

I have memorized and I have been meditating in **Psalm 23** and **91** for several months. Listen to the Living Words of Life in **Psalm 23:1: *The Lord is my Shepherd. I have no lack. I don't need a thing. I have everything I need.***

We did not grow up on sheep ranches like the children of Israel did. We observed the reflection of Jesus and His Sacred Sheep in this "living" inspiring illustration of real sheep with a real shepherd! He always Provides and Protects His Sheep!

The sheep that we observed have enemies. Coyotes will attack these sheep if they are not protected. The Sacred Shepherds have "Guardian Dogs" who attack and kill coyotes who attempt to attack the sheep. Those dogs were very friendly to us. But they are relentless when it comes to predators attacking "their" sheep.

Listen to the Living Words of Life in **Psalm 91:1-6:**
You who sit down in your Daddy in Heaven's presence, spend the night in His shadow, say this: "Daddy in Heaven, You are my Refuge! I trust in You and I am Safe!" That's right — He rescues you from hidden traps, shields you from deadly hazards. His huge, outstretched arms protect you — under them you are perfectly safe; His arms fend off all harm. Fear nothing — not wild wolves in the night, not flying arrows in the day, not disease that prowls through the darkness, not disaster that erupts at high noon.

Can you see Him as our Provision and Protection? Can you also see the Sacred Shepherds that we visited as Providers and Protectors of their sheep?

I have been meditating about how our Sacred Shepherd, Jesus, protects us from our enemies just like those Guardian Dogs act as shepherds protecting their sheep from enemies such as coyotes, disease and disaster.

I thought, "Lord, what are our enemies?" He revealed to me that they are doubt and fear. How does He protect us from doubt and fear? He graciously gives us Faith and Love! The spiritual "coyotes" of doubt and fear will eat us alive and destroy us if we do not have Faith in our Sacred Shepherd that works through His Living Love!

Think about that! Galatians 5:6 reveals His Protection against doubt and fear:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only Faith that works through Love.

Our human effort is worthless! When we have Faith that works through Love, we have His Perfect Protection! Our spiritual enemies of doubt and fear are torn to pieces when we function like those Guardian Dogs that tear to pieces any coyote trying to destroy their sheep! Those sheep trust their shepherds. They know they are always safe. Why don't we let those shepherds teach us as His Sheep how to trust Our Sacred Shepherd, Jesus! Our spiritual enemy, the defeated devil, only has two spiritual weapons: doubt and fear. When doubt and fear try to attack me, like those coyotes trying to attack those sheep, I activate Faith that works through Love!

I say, out loud, with the authority that Jesus has given me, **Psalm 23:1:**

Lord, You are My Shepherd! I have no lack! I don't need a thing! I have everything I need!

I say, "you lying doubt, I cast you out with my **Faith in Jesus!**" (Mark 11:22) "You lying fear, get out! **Perfect Love casts out all fear!**" (1 John 4:18)



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I keep saying those Resurrection Words, just like those Guardian Dogs destroying those coyotes, until those spiritual enemies of doubt and fear are destroyed!

We, as His Sheep, have allowed those "coyotes" of doubt and fear to eat us alive and destroy us! Those Guardian Dogs kill those coyotes because they know that they are Shepherds over those sheep! They know that those coyotes will kill those helpless sheep unless they attack and destroy them! Likewise, those Shepherds are our teachers! We were not created to shrink in fear! We were created to Soar in Faith! Living Love Destroys Shrinking Fear!

We have allowed the culture of the world, the culture of doubt and fear, to destroy the Church. We need to see those enemies like coyotes, who will destroy us, unless we attack and destroy them!

Listen to Our Overcoming Living Lord through the Apostle Paul, in **Ephesians 1:23:**

And He placed all things under Christ's feet and gave Him as Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the Fullness of Him who fills All in All!

Let us glorify Him as our Shepherd! We are His sheep and we will defeat all doubt and fear with Faith in Him working through His Living Love! ■

Dr. Dan Woodworth earned his Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree from the King's University in Los Angeles in 2009. His passion is to encourage and empower people with the transforming power of hope and healing to become all they are created to be. He and his beautiful bride, Irene, have planted three churches. They are in the process of creating a cross/cultural, cross/generational healing community solving pressing problems in Boise and beyond. He may be reached at dan@danwoodworth.org, or visit his website at www.danwoodworth.org.

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