

God Restores Us

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

During my early years I lived on a farm. One of my chores was to get a small herd of sheep into the pen for the night after they had grazed in the open yard. It should have been a few minutes work. Instead it would often take an hour when they went right they should have gone left etc.

By nature we are like straying sheep, unconcerned about their shepherd. By nature we are unaware of the great events that took place and oblivious to the blessings won for us by the Servant. We wander, each one absorbed in his own way. What a tragic picture of human life! People are often absorbed with themselves, their problems, their joys, and their struggles that they have no time to think about anyone or anything else. Our contemporary world seems to want to stay busy doing things so that it doesn't have to stop to think about God, death, and sin. Satan has bewitched so many to remain in the state of denial about the real issues of our relationship with God. Our sinful nature becomes his willing ally.

The Israelites blamed Yahweh for their exile (40:17). Now they take personal responsibility and own up to their sin. Ignoring Yahweh's way (e.g., 40:3), they had become like sheep in need of a Shepherd. "For you were straying like sheep but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25 ESV).

While mankind, as a whole, was indifferent to Him, rejected and despised Him, He was wonderfully active in our behalf. With emphasis it is stated, "Surely our grief's He has carried, the sufferings which we deserved He has borne in our stead." While we, all men, in the blindness of our self-righteousness, stood back and considered the Sufferer smitten, struck, and afflicted by God, He was taking upon Himself the blame for our crimes, the guilt of our iniquities. Our transgressions were charged to His account, and He was engaged in paying them off. In order that we might again be at peace with God, He took upon Him our chastisement; in order that we might not suffer the bruises and stripes which we had so richly merited, He permitted them to be laid upon Himself. Yea, while we were going astray in our own blindness and willfulness, every one turning to the way which suited his evil nature best, God laid even these crimes and all other iniquities upon Him. Such is the wonderful message of Christ's vicarious suffering.

Prayer: "What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What wondrous love is this, O my soul! What wondrous love is this That caused the Lord of bliss To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!" Amen. (*LSB* 543:1) (*TLSB*)