

Bummer Lamb

A few weeks ago while I was visiting with my daughter in Arkansas, she told me something I had never heard. Her devotional book described a “Bummer Lamb.” Have you heard of it? It was new to me.

The “Bummer Lamb” is for one reason or another, rejected by its mother. If the lamb should return, the mother further rejects it by kicking it away or even killing it. If it lives, the lamb will wander with its head bowed down. It looks like its neck is broken but in actuality, the lamb’s heart is broken. If the flock has a good shepherd, he will lift the lamb, accept it, nurture it to save its life and give it a sense of worth.

Have you ever felt like the “Bummer Lamb”? Maybe you have felt that persistent fear of rejection from parents, family, peers, employers, strangers, or even governmental authorities through a series of unconstitutional mandates.

It is a challenge not to feel the effects of rejection when we are rejected. Remember, Jesus was rejected according to **Isaiah 53:3**. It is not an easy thing to get over. A lot of our ability to “get over it” is to have a strong sense of self-worth. That is not always easy. That sense of self-worth comes from the Good Shepherd and our faithful trust of Him. In **John 10:14** (ESV) Jesus said:

¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

When we know and are known by our Good Shepherd we can stand up to bullies of the world and ignore their threats and insults to do what we were made to do. Just as the Founding Fathers rejected the opinions of the King, British Parliament, the American Tories, and even some of their own family members in order to stand up for the righteous principles of God, we too can stand.

I read that Benjamin Franklin’s son, William, was the Tory Governor of New Jersey who refused to join the American cause. Eventually he and Benjamin would be at odds because of the American cause. Benjamin did not back down.

John Peter Muhlenberg had a brother would was a Lutheran pastor named Fredrick Augustus Muhlenberg. He was pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in New York City. Frederick opposed John Peter’s involvement in politics, writing to him:

“You have become too involved in matters which, as a preacher, you have nothing whatsoever to do.”

In response, Peter accused him of being a Tory.

The British bombarded and invaded New York City following the Battle of Brooklyn Heights, and Fredrick Muhlenberg’s church was burned, forcing him and his family to flee the city. Frederick changed his mind and decided he should get involved. He joined the patriot cause and was elected as a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1779. Eventually he would be elected as the first Speaker of the House in our new government.

There is a time to give in and there is a time to stand. The time to stand is when you know you and whose you are. Peter Muhlenberg stood his ground with his brother and prevailed.

The early patriots for Liberty could have felt rejection like the “Bummer Lamb.” They could have gone about broken-hearted because of that rejection. But they believed in a cause greater than themselves. They believed in a cause that seemed to radiate from the pages of scripture, which filled their lives. They followed the Shepherd who lifted them from the depths and raised them to the heights of a great cause.

Jesus IS our Good Shepherd as He repeats in **John 10**. He literally laid down His life for us at the cross (**John 10:11, 15**). Yet, there is another way that He has laid down His life for us. That is, He invested His life in ours. That is what the shepherd HAS to do for the “Bummer Lamb” or it will die. That is what it takes to be a church shepherd, a national shepherd, a good leader of any kind. It’s not about power, it is about nurture and building character in people.

One of my favorite Presidents is John Quincy Adams. He laid down his whole life in ministry to America. No, he did not serve in churches, but in our government, even from his youth until he died in the Speaker of the House’s office as a Congressman AFTER his presidency. He built his life on the pages of the Bible. He lived out a biblical worldview which took him into the service of our nation. He impacted people in his day and in generations to come as he fought the evils of slavery to lift those “Bummer Lambs” and give them self-esteem as God’s creation. He died before the abolition of slavery but did his part to stand against it.

Are you a “Bummer Lamb,” feeling rejected and cast out? Welcome to the fold of fellow “Bummer Lambs”! Our Good Shepherd, Jesus can raise us up to His cause of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness which comes directly from His word. We can’t have happiness without Liberty. We can’t have Liberty without Life. The Good Shepherd gives all to us. But, we must embrace and follow Him by faith. It’s the same kind of faith our patriot forefathers had that led to “justice and liberty for all.” Will you follow?

Keep The Light of Your Acceptance by God Burning!