

Views from the Pews: A lamb's view of the Good Shepherd

He was alright, really. When he led the way out of the gate each morning, my mother followed him, and I followed her. He showed us where to find the fresh grass, and the path that led down to the quiet pool in the bend of the river. But I didn't like the way he always insisted that, each evening, he brought us back to the sheepfold, counted us as we trooped inside, closed the door with a thorn-branch and lay down beside it. We were all squashed up together in the confined space, pushing and shoving, although the stone walls were a comfort when we heard the wolves howling in the distance.

I loved being close to my mother and her warm milk, but as I got older, she became more reluctant to let me nurse, and eventually she butted me away. Hurt and rejected, I fled to the shelter of a thick bush and sulked there all day, ignoring the Shepherd's calls and my friends' responses. Dusk fell as the sound of their voices faded away, and I told myself I was proudly independent now. Then I heard the wolves again, and suddenly realised I was no longer protected by those stone walls. In a panic, I leapt up and dashed off along what I thought was the way back to the sheepfold. In the dark I was soon lost, and then, before I knew it, I was tumbling helplessly among a shower of stones down a steep bank into a ditch. I searched for a way out, but the sides were too steep to climb and thick brambles surrounded me. Alone, cold and frightened I called and called for help, even knowing that my mother was too far away to hear me.

He found me just before I gave up all hope. As soon as I spotted him peering over the edge I bleated all the louder. 'Ah, there you are', he said, 'I've been wondering where you got to'. I was well out of his reach, but he leaned right over and used his crook to pick me up by the middle and haul me to safety. Never have I been so grateful to see him. He held me in his strong arms, and I gladly cuddled up against his warm chest. It was only then that I noticed the deep scars in his hands.

Kim King