

## The Cows are Stomping the Fawns

Dear Friend,

Some years back Matthew and I were visiting the old Daniel Boone homestead when I heard a cry in a neighboring pasture. It sounded like a baby in distress. As I looked in the direction of where the sound was coming from I saw a cow with its head down periodically moving forward and stomping the ground in front of it.

When I saw the source of the cries for help was a small fawn that was being stomped by the cow, I climbed over the fence and ran to the fawn's defense. The cow which had been reacting out of fear for its own calf had been trying to rid its pasture of this strange creature.

I know that in most circumstances the best thing when a fawn is found is to leave it where it was, because its mother will return. In this case, that couldn't be done because this fawn had been injured.

I then picked up the fawn and Matthew and I proceeded to drive to a wild life rescue center. We then left the fawn there. Later I learned it had passed away the next day from its injuries.

As I reflected upon this episode of the cow stomping the fawn because the cow feared the fawn's presence would bring harm to its calf and the other cows in its pasture. I couldn't help but see how this was an illustration of how many were treating the homeless and the migrants today.

When one is different, penniless, and homeless they are often attacked by the mad cows who want them out of their pastures or neighborhoods. Tragically many who regularly attend church and consider themselves religious, directly and indirectly support the actions of the mad cows who continue to stomp the homeless and the hurting.

God weeps when He sees the destruction that the lust for power has brought and the prayerlessness of His people. His heart is broken as He sees those He loves going into a Christless eternity, because of the lack of prayer that the lost will be saved.

God has called each of us to wake up and be prayer warriors. As prayer warriors, we are intercessors who by the power and the promises of Scripture, visualize an alternative future to one that is out of control. Prayer breathes the life of the Spirit into the present culture of death. Those

who have sold out to the status quo and made peace with injustice, benefiting economically from social injustices, will have neither the desire nor ability to be powerful prayer warriors.

The scriptures are full of one account after another of people reaching out and helping those in need. The Bible challenges each of us to do the same. Tragically though instead of doing that, many like the angry cow, choose to stomp those who are different and are in their pastures.

One of the greatest hungers in the lives of the migrants and the homeless is the hunger for the roots of community. These hurting individuals are left to wander the streets, as they feel like unwanted guests wherever they go. Terry explained her stomping by the Missouri Family Support System. Instead of offering support they “wanted to take my child from me after Corey had been in the children’s shelter for 30 days saying I had “abandoned” him. I needed to prevent this. I had thirty days to find us a place to live and a job. Instead of helping me they were going to take my child from me.”

We must remember that just as pollution can destroy a land of milk and honey so systems of greed and injustice cause those with power, like mad cows to stomp, the ones who are helpless. Listen to what Jeremiah 22:13-14 says to those who do this, *“Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor. He says, ‘I will build myself a great palace with spacious upper rooms.’ So he makes large windows in it, panels it with cedar and decorates it in red. “Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?” declares the Lord. “But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion.”*

God declares to the spiritual leaders who support those mad cows that are stomping the refugees and the homeless in Ezekiel 34:2-4, 7, 10, “You shepherds, these are the words of the Lord God: How I hate the shepherds of Israel who care only for themselves! Should not the shepherd care for the sheep? You consume the meek, wear the wool, and slaughter the fat beasts, but you do not feed the sheep. You have not encouraged the weary, tended the sick, bandaged the hurt, recovered the straggler, or searched for the lost; and even the strong you have driven with ruthless severity...I am against the shepherds and will demand my sheep from them.”

How we need spiritual leaders today who will help us feel what the homeless and the migrants are feeling. Shepherds who will show us how to go to our knees and pray for those who are being stomped and oppressed.

It is compassion flowing from the heart of Jesus that drives us to our knees as we hear of the homeless driven out of our communities with no place to sleep. When we are moved with the compassion of Jesus, we are moved into the middle of the needs of others. Our prayers are then able to move those in need to the very throne of God with a love for them, as Christ loved the Church (Ephesians 5).

Nancy described what it was to be homeless after she was released from the hospital. "People look at you and treat you differently when you are homeless. I have gotten comments such as "we don't want your kind here" People in public look at you like you are diseased and people who you thought were your friends all of a sudden are too busy for you and can't lend a couch for a night for you to sleep on. They stop returning calls, texts etc. When I ended up homeless after my car accident I was put down and made to feel like I wasn't worth anything, a nothing."

Can you hear the words of Isaiah the prophet to the mad cows who are practicing a form of religion as they deny the homeless and the migrant seeking refuge in this country the right, like helpless fawns to have a place to find shelter each night? "The Lord opens the indictment against the elders of his people and their officers: You have ravaged the vineyard, and the spoils of the poor are in your houses. Is it nothing to you that you crush my people and grind the faces of the poor? This is the very word of the Lord, the Lord of Hosts", Isaiah 3:13-15.

In Deuteronomy 15:4-11 we see that it is impossible for God to bless a society unless it cares for the poor. Because of such neglect the state of Missouri, instead of receiving God's blessing, has now become known as the State of Misery, where many have become content to be spectators of the homeless begging at the intersections rather than advocates in their behalf. Where are the Amos's' of today who aren't afraid to label the wealthy women of Samaria as cows because they constantly demanded that their husbands get more and more money. Amos was able to recognize an economic system that discriminated against the poor and blamed the poor for their problems rather than seeing that those in need because God's justice had been distorted and perverted, while those who called themselves people of God remained silent.

Jeremiah knew that a society was measured by how it responded to the needs of its people. By reading Jeremiah 5:26-31 we see that wealth which is acquired and maintained in the face of poverty is illegal. Jeremiah boldly proclaims that those people who make excuses for not helping the poor, the homeless, and the migrant can't really be the people of God.

Is your response: Oh, but I'm a follower of Jesus Christ-I'm a New Testament Christian washed by the blood and filled by the Holy Ghost. Then I say, be one. The power of Christ has been imparted to us not to entertain ourselves but to be the salt of the earth.

It's impossible to look to Jesus without seeing how he identified with those that the mad cows were stomping. In Matthew 25:31-46 we see how Jesus is not merely concerned about the poor but completely identifies with them. What we do or don't do about those who are hungry, sick, homeless, or in prison, we do to Jesus. There is no such thing as fence straddling on this issue, nor does this say anything about helping just the deserving poor or the unfairly imprisoned. Jesus wants us to take our eyes off our own needs and open our eyes to the poor helpless fawns that the mad cows are stomping all around us.

Jesus makes it clear that earnest intercessory prayer performs a vital role in destroying the citadels of injustice as He asks, "Will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:6-8).

It takes faith to see the gap between what God intended and what is the current reality of things. This faith then gives us the power to pray and work to correct these injustices. Faith enables us to see that Jesus Christ is risen and stands ready to help us rise up and move forward removing the mountains of injustice that stand before us.

Look at the direction offered in Hebrews 12:1-3. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

As believers we can stop the mad cows who are stomping the least of the least as we move forth by faith. It is the perfect love of Christ which casts out all fear. Now let us trust our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He has a special job for each of us to do. For truly Christ is raising up an army of compassionate people today who are willing to lay down their very lives in obedience to Him as they pray and stand up in defense of the hurting and homeless who Jesus said, "as often as you have it to the least of these, even so you have done it unto me."

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Rice". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry Rice