

All We Like Sheep . . . Fay Nelson

Sheep, looking like little puffs of cotton, dot the rolling hills of North Devon. I love watching them. I love seeing the newborn little lambs in the spring as they totter and “find” their feet and then quickly begin to run and jump and gambol about. I love watching as a ewe bleats and her little lambs, no matter where they are, run to her.

I love the curiosity of sheep. If one bleats more than the norm, the entire flock will venture over to see what’s happening. Last month when we were having a prayer retreat in a lodge on a sheep farm, the sheep were moved to a field beside the lodge. As we settled down one afternoon after a time of tidying up, we realized that many of the sheep had noticed our movements and were standing or kneeling, casually chewing, and watching us through the huge windows.

we are so often compared to them in the Bible). From a distance we may look delightful. The product of our lives may be as useful as the wool and meat sheep produce. Our many characteristics appear to be and in fact are sometimes charming to others. But up close, the detritus of time and choices and circumstance often cling to us and send up a stench that is unpleasant.



CliffAnn “ministers” to the sheep.

How wonderful that God comes close and He doesn’t look at or turn from what clings to us, at how we smell or who we’ve been! He

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of us the opportunity for relationship—without regard to anything at all except that He made us and loves us, and wants us to be family. And when we do respond to Him, asking Him to be both Savior and Lord, He gently and lovingly begins the process of removing the stench and the detritus that caused it, cleansing us, renewing us, healing us, delivering us. And the result of that process is that we become pleasant to be around, because we reflect Him and His love, up close, as well as from a distance.

black sheep who consistently got out of the fields and walked up and down the walkway by the lodge bleating loudly, then plaintively. He was waiting for us one afternoon when we emerged from a trail that we had read “might” be wet, a bit difficult to use, and overgrown. (It was, on all counts.) As we talked to him and scratched his head and assured him that he was a fine herd sire, I noticed something about sheep that I wish I hadn’t.

Their wool is far more pleasing from a distance. The very nature of the wool means that things stick to it, get caught in it, cling to it and leave clear evidence of where they’ve been and the state of their health. As he made it clear that the attention to his head was good and should be continued, I told him that quite frankly, he stank. Undeterred, he lowered his head to make scratching more convenient for both CliffAnn and me and got fairly insistent that we continue. We finally convinced him that our visit was over and went on back to the lodge.

As we walked the Lord began to show me how much like sheep we are (perhaps why

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Walking and praying in and around East-the-Water and watching God break through is one of the greatest privileges we’ve ever had. Serving His people, sharing His love with those who don’t yet understand that He even exists, and holding up the arms of those who love Him has stretched us, broken us, renewed us and brought us closer to Him than we’ve ever been. Our prayer for you is that as He draws near to you, you won’t worry about anything clinging to you, but will walk straight into His arms and hear His words of love, welcome, healing and restoration as He ministers to you!

With grateful hearts . . .

We know that this is a time of financial crunch for many people. Most of the ministries we have contact with are also in need of money. We are no exception. We don’t want to be one more appeal in a stack of them.

We have this request: please just pray and put your gifts where God is directing. Thank you to those who have been faithful partners with us. We are most grateful for your generosity and pray God continues to bless you in abundance.