

Coming Home to the Shepherd

Clive Ashmore ran to his office to call his wife Charlotte. He had just been honored as Outstanding Executive of the Year. He ran along the hallway muttering, "I knew those seventy-hour work weeks would pay off eventually. "Charlotte, the honor came with a trophy and, an all expense paid Safari for two at a very exclusive Safari Club in Kenya."

I was on cloud nine. The brochure did not do justice to our lodgings. The Queen of England would surely feel at home here. We luxuriated in the spa, revelled in fine dining and were kitted out at the lodge's prestigious outfitters. If only the guys at my club could see me now, enjoying a drink in front of the expansive glass window of the lodge, watching the giraffes munch on acacia leaves.

A crew of men went ahead of us to set up camp for our safari. There were six in our party, excluding our guide. As the Land Rover rattled over the rough dirt roads, I chose to sit in the one-person, back-facing seat to enjoy the view, and to escape the constant chatter of the others. I certainly deserved this trip and I wanted to take it all in. Suddenly, a loud roar reverberated through my body, and a VERY large male lion appeared out of nowhere, running far too close behind the Land Rover. In one accord, one hundred Maasai stepped out of the bush. They ran in unison beside and behind the lion, holding their shields up high. Still pursuing the Land Rover, another bone shaking roar passed through me. The running Lion spoke, and said; "I am the Lion of Judah. I am chasing you down, to reclaim my lost sheep. Do I have your attention now?" I froze in His presence. "Clive, you once were close to Me, but in the last few years, you have dedicated your life to work, seeking achievement, praise, and making money for a very comfortable lifestyle. Thoughts of Me have faded from your life. Oh Yes, you go to church, but that is just social networking for your own ends." Another mighty roar penetrated the air. "I want you to honor Me with all your life and being. I want more conversation with you, true fellowship. You need a greater depth of relationship with Me. I want to use you like I never have before. I am seeking passion, power and fire in you. I am giving you a job to do." " Lord, what do I do now?" "Clive, you can not be a testimony if you are filled with fear. Are you afraid to die? Repent and ask for My forgiveness and for My peace that passes all understanding, because in a moment, all those with you will see Me, but they will only hear me roaring. Neither will they see the Masaai. Your group will be frightened and panicked. Arise in peace and in My authority, and lead the group in prayer, leading them to take hold of Me for protection and guidance and to not let go, no matter what. I will see them home safely. Ask Me for strength, that you may live your life courageously. Remember, the Mighty Lion of Judah is always standing with you."

We never returned to our life in London. Charlotte and I gave ourselves over to God's will for our lives. Now we live in a dirt floor hut and ride our rickety bicycles to neighboring villages to spread the Word of Jesus. The Holy Spirit gave us grace to quickly learn the Maa language. The only club we frequent these days is The Brothers of the Word, a prayer and Bible study group composed of leaders from three nearby villages.

Things are primitive here, but we could not be happier or more fulfilled. Life moves at a much slower pace and I can hear God's voice more clearly, even over the rumbling and trumpeting of my elephant friends. God chased me down all the way to Africa so He could get my undivided attention. "What will He have to do in your life to get your attention?"

If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? Matthew 18:12

For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. 1 Peter 2:25