



*For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth... in every place. (1 Thessalonians 1:8)*

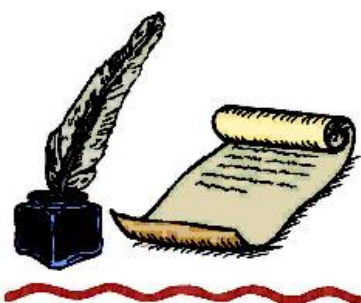
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## The Shepherd's Pen: Woe Is Me!

**W**oe is me! Woe is me! This year has been a real downer. I don't like sheltering in place. I don't like wearing a mask. I don't like social distancing which means I cannot embrace my brothers and sisters. I miss that. I miss so many of my brothers and sisters in the assembly. I miss the fellowships and the times to sit down over a meal together. I miss being able to go to a door and invite people to worship with us or to engage in a personal Bible study.



Woe is me!

When I look only within, at my selfish self, there is so much that disappoints me. There is so much to be negative about. When I look only within, it is so easy to become discouraged and depressed. It is so easy to fall into despair.

Yet, most of you know that I am an optimist at heart. As far as I am concerned, being a Christian makes me an optimist. Though this has been a troubling year, I have many reasons to feel blessed. Why? I look beyond my selfish self. I look beyond this world. And I look to those things in this world that are blessings rather than dwell on the negative.

Rather than become discouraged and obsessed with the things I cannot do and the things I miss, I will look without to find things that I can do to help others and to encourage others. After all,

it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). I will look without and realize the spiritual blessings that I have regardless of all that goes on around me (Ephesians 1:3). Though I am troubled, I have peace. Though I may struggle, I have hope. Though I am tired, I have rest. Though I may feel alone, I have God and the avenue of prayer. Though I may have regrets, I have forgiveness. I, also, have the love of my brothers and sisters in Christ. Though things are not what I want, I have joy.

Woe is me! Yet in Christ, I am victorious!

Terry L. Mabery

Romans 8:35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. ASV