

# The Lord My Restorer

by Octavius Winslow

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*The Lord is our Restorer, gently seeking and saving us from our backsliding and restoring us to Himself through His faithfulness and loving corrections.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 23:3, Luke 15:4

**Topics:** "Faithfulness of God", "Restoration"

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## Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the restorative nature of the Lord as our Shepherd, who seeks out the wandering souls of His flock. He reflects on the believer's tendency to stray from God, highlighting the gentle and faithful ways in which Jesus brings us back to Him. Winslow reassures that despite our unfaithfulness, God's love and promises remain steadfast, and His corrections are ultimately for our good, leading us back to paths of righteousness. The sermon beautifully illustrates the tender care of Christ in restoring our souls and the joy that comes from being reunited with Him.

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## Transcript

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul."

"He restores my soul."--Psalm 23:3

It is not the least important duty of the Shepherd--under which similitude our meditation yesterday viewed our blessed Lord--to go in quest of the stray ones of the flock. It would be an extraordinary exception indeed, were there none such--no silly lamb, no fickle sheep wandering from the fold. The religious history of the believer is a history of declension and revival, of departure and return, of his backsliding and of the Savior's restoring. The regenerate soul is bent upon backsliding from the Lord. The sun does not more naturally decline, nor the planets start off from their center, than does the believing heart wander from God.

"O Lord, how many and hidden are my soul's departures from You, You only know! How often my love chills, my faith droops, my zeal flags, and I grow weary, and am ready to halt in Your service. Mine is a sinful, roving heart, fickle to You as the changing wind; false to my vows as a broken bow. But You, O Lord, are my Shepherd, and You restore my soul; pitying my infirmity, knowing my wanderings, and tracking all my steps, You recover, heal, and pardon Your poor, silly sheep, prone to leave Your wounded, sheltering side in quest of that which can be found in Yourself alone."

He restores us gently. When He might justly commission some harsh messenger to awaken us from our reverie, and bring our sin to our remembrance, He sends a gentle Nathan to say to us, "You are the man"--some kind and loving messenger, filled with the 'meekness and gentleness of Christ,' to remind us of our backsliding, to deal with our sin, and to win and lead us back to the Savior, towards whom our love had chilled, and from whom our feet had strayed. Recall His own gentle dealing. Behold Him traversing mountain and valley in search of the one sheep that had wandered; nor resting until He had found it--then, laying it upon His shoulder, with soft and gentle step, He bears it back to the fold, amid the welcomings of the flock, the music of its own restored joy and the songs of angels.

The faithfulness of Jesus in our restorings is not less conspicuous. Though we prove faithless and unbelieving--and oh, what words can describe our unfaithfulness to Christ!--yet He is faithful and cannot deny Himself. It is a sweet truth, O my soul, which you should never forget, that the love and constancy and promises of Jesus are never negated or affected by your conduct towards Him. When our love to Jesus chills, or our spiritual frames and feelings fluctuate, we are prone to infer a similar change in the Lord; whereas, to awaken us from our drowsiness, to bring us to reflection and prayer, He may suspend the sensible manifestations of His presence and the especial communications of His grace; and, ceasing to stand and knock, may withdraw Himself a while, leaving us to exclaim, "I opened to my beloved, and He had withdrawn Himself." Nevertheless, His loving-kindness He will not take from us, nor allow His faithfulness to fail.

Oh, the love of Jesus in curbing our waywardness, checking our wanderings, arresting, healing, and restoring our souls. Truly He forsakes not His people, though they forsake Him times without number. How can He turn His back upon one bought with His sufferings, groans, and tears? How can He forsake the work of grace wrought in the soul by His Spirit? He may withdraw Himself for a time, gently to awaken us from our slothfulness and slumber, yet He returns again, and our lips gratefully sing, "He restores my soul."

And for what intent are all the Lord's loving corrections and faithful rebukes--His measured, though often painful, and even crushing afflictions--but to bring back our wandering hearts to Himself? O blossoming rod, O sweet bitter, O bright cloud, O loving, gentle chastening, that arrests my wanderings, hedges my path so that I cannot find my lovers, and turns my feet back to His ways of pleasantness and to His paths of peace. "He restores my soul, He leads me in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake."

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