

# The Southeast Sower

S O U T H E A S T C H U R C H O F C H R I S T

The Southeast  
church of  
Christ meets  
at:

35 Walnut Ct.  
Mogadore, OH  
44260

Phone:  
330.628.7432

**SERVICES:**

Sunday

Bible Study:

10:00 am

Worship:

10:50 am

6:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:

7:30 pm

## How Cows and People Get Lost—Mark White (“Biblical Insights,” Volume 15: Number 3, March 2015, Pg. 8)

In my youth, I gained considerable experience with tending livestock, especially cattle and swine. Growing up on a north Alabama farm, my daily companions were often cows and hogs. In all my experience, however, there was one baffling question I was never able to answer. Why is it that a cow can find her way through the hole in the fence to get out of her pasture, but can never find her way back in through the hole she exited? Countless times I chased an old cow up and down the fence right past the break she came through to get out. Somehow, a blindness would set in and she never saw the way

back home! I have teasingly hinted over the years that I might one day research this phenomenon and write a doctoral dissertation on the subject! Every cattleman or hog farmer would be interested to know why this commonly occurs, I assure you.

How does a cow get out of her pasture in the first place? Generally speaking, *she grazes too close to the fence*. The fence is a boundary, placed there by the rancher for the protection and safekeeping of his herd. The fence keeps his livestock where they should be and keeps other livestock (and hopefully predators) out of his pasture. As long as the

cow stays within these boundaries she may graze freely. But too often she grazes closely enough to the fence to see and be tempted by the lush, green grass of the neighbor's pasture. This is prohibited territory for her, but it looks so appealing! Finding a weak place in the fence, she may push her head through just enough to get a small taste of the forbidden grass on the other side. Once her head is through the break, the rest of her body soon follows. Joyously, she nibbles from one full tuft of green grass to another, never realizing how far away from home she is drifting. Once she has eaten her fill,

and not know where she is, nor how she really got there in the first place. The usual herd is nowhere near, nor is the landscape of the forbidden pasture familiar. She is lost!

People get lost the very same way. We are always kicking against God's boundaries until we find a way to get our head's through the fence. The grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence. "Just look at how much fun we would have if we were over in the other pasture," we think. We get across the fence into the devil's field and nibble away at one sinful tuft of sweet grass after another until our bellies ache. When we finally look up and take notice of our whereabouts, we are far from home— away from the familiar herd, lost and alone. The way back seems so hard, and the hole we jumped through becomes difficult, if not impossible to see.

Churches are prone to strain against the fence, too. God's people have never remained completely faithful to Him for very long periods of time. Congregations have gone headlong into apostasy when they stuck their heads through the fence to nibble on the grass of denominationalism, sectarianism, institutionalism, and "social gospelism." They graze from one innovation to an-

other, drifting further and further from the boundaries of God's authority. Very few churches who get lost ever find their way back home to God's pasture. Once they begin to ignore Bible authority, it is easy to lose their way. Cut from their scriptural moorings, they ultimately drift out to the sea of total apostasy. A church can become proud, stiff-necked, and arrogant while the Lord of the church stands at the door knocking to get in (Rev 3:20).

A few words of warning are in order. Stay away from the weak places in the fence. Don't straddle the fence either, because it is so easy to fall over into the devil's pasture. If you find your head through a hole in the fence, back out of it immediately before pride and curiosity pushes you on through God's boundary! Once your head and shoulders have crossed the wire, it's not hard at all to get the rest of your body across. Above all else, appreciate the fences God has erected. Don't despise the restrictions to forbidden pastures. The boundaries of God are designed for our ultimate good. God's fences keep us within the confines of His protection and grace. First John 5:3 reminds us that "*His commandments are not burdensome.*" They are always for our good!

Cattle and people. A lot

**"HIS GREAT LOVE WITH WHICH HE LOVED US" (EPH. 2:4)**

The Ephesians are reminded of the marvelous favor shown them by God. They had been dead in their trespasses and sins, living lives as dictated by Satan (2:2-3). They were enemies (Rom. 5:10; Jas. 4:4), doomed sinners without hope and without God in the world (2:12). But due to the greatness of His love and the richness of His mercy, even when they were dead in sin, they were made alive in Christ (2:5). When they accepted Jesus as Lord (as preached by Paul, Acts 19:4-5) and united themselves with him in baptism (Rom. 6:3-5; Acts 19:5), being baptized into him as they put Him on (Gal. 3:16-27), they were saved by grace through faith as the context makes clear (Eph. 2:8). Now in Christ Jesus they had been brought near by the blood, reconciled to God and with their Jewish brethren in the church (2:16). They now were no longer aliens and strangers, they no longer belonged to Satan but were fellow saints and citizens and of God's household! A holy temple in the Lord built into a dwelling of God in the Spirit (2:19-22). O what a wonderful and Marvelous love, grace, and mercy! - - Ed Holcomb (Southeast Sower, Vol. V, Number 11, February 1993)