

WSS Part 13

Friday

Excuse Me Sir, I Am Over Here  
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Today's Treasure

*This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.*

*Isaiah 48:17*

I was watching the trainer working with Apollo and I was intrigued by her consistent words to the horse, “Excuse me Sir, I am over here.” First, she spoke to the horse as if it were a human being. She treated Apollo with respect, with dignity, with a firm hand, but a gentle spirit. She was focused on one thing during this training session, HIS focus. And she wanted that focus to be on HER.

She had him on a long line, called a lunge line, which is usually the first step in training and used every day for most of the horse's life. It helps the horse run out some of its energy, but I realized at this moment of watching Apollo with Ally, that there was something far greater happening during that exercise. She was teaching him; no, COMMANDING him, to focus on her, and only on her. He was trotting around her in circles, on the other end of the lunge line, and every time he would look away from her, she would tug on the line and say, “Excuse me Sir, I am over here.” If he would slow down or speed up before she asked him to, she would give a little tug and say, “I didn't ask for that, do what I asked for.”

On Ally's suggestion, we added a round pen to our field to help with training. The round pen is the boundary that will help us create a safe environment in which the only place Apollo can look for security and direction will be me. Showing him how to trust me, in that close and tight environment, will show him where to look when he is in the big open spaces and needs an anchor. A horse does not really enjoy his first moments in that round pen. It feels too small, it feels unsafe, he cannot find his way out because there isn't one, and if he doesn't trust the person in the ring with him, he is also scared.

The human's job is to tell him which direction to go; to force him to stay on the edge, to tell him when to walk on, trot, canter, and halt. When he doesn't listen, there is a consequence for that: he has to do it again, and again, and again, until he eventually gets it. Once he gets it going in THAT direction, he must start all over again and learn it going the other way. The goal is that eventually, the horse will start to turn toward the

human for direction. The ultimate reward, for any human in that ring, is when the horse is told to HALT, and instead of the horse freaking out, is when the horse turns into the person and walks over to them to “link up”. Yes, you’ve all seen it on the television show Heartland, and it is a very real thing and a huge reward for both horse and rider. In that moment, the horse has said to the human, “I trust you now, and I will do what you tell me.”

Isaiah speaks to this in chapter 48: “I am the Lord your God who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.” Just like Apollo needed that very explicit direction of walking, trot, canter, stopping, going left, going right, and standing still, we need those very commands from God. He tells us in Isaiah that He knows what is best for me, and that he will direct me in the way I should go. I take that quite literally. I hear that to say, “No Heidi, that is not what I asked you to do, do it this way.” Or “Excuse me Mam, I am over here.”

#### LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

Dear friend, God does not change. In Hebrews 13:8 we read, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” His counsel does not deviate, His words are never confusing, and His promises are always ours to claim. So, when hard times come, when we do not understand the things happening in our personal world, or to those we care about, or when it seems God is not there, it is our spiritual responsibility to jump back into the round pen and wrestle it out with God. He is in there waiting for us to return our focus to Him! He gives us that gentle tug and says, “Excuse me, I am over here.” “NO, I did not ask you to go that way, I asked you to do it my way.” We can fight that and end up with a much harsher TUG on the line, or we can submit to His ways, and have the beautiful “link-up” with Jesus because of our obedience. I know this seems like simple words to describe a very painful and difficult exercise to focus our attention on Jesus. But a peaceful heart, once without anxiety and fear, comes from resting in the provision of God and His words. Taking moments every day to “link-up” with Jesus will bring peace to your soul in those moments of chaos.

#### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, only You can remove the anxiety from our hearts, and the fear from our souls. Help us to remember that You are waiting for us to simply look to You, to focus our energy and attention on YOU and the things You require of us, the things You want to show us, and the peace You want to share with us. Remind us to take the time to “Link-Up” with You daily so that we can be prepared for whatever lies waiting for us outside of the round pen. Amen