

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*This sentence jumped out at me today as I was reading morning prayer, "Come away by yourself to a lonely place, and rest a while." These words of our Lord's acted as an affirmation of "Yes, I had made the right choice," for today I came to the lake. If you had seen my "to do" list - in which some of the activities have reached the critical "must do" status - you would have found my choice an incredibly amazing one.*

*For instance, I need desperately to go to the grocery store. Thank the dear Lord, my husband has had dinner meetings these last two nights, for we're now down to canned goods only. I need to go through stacks of stuff which seem to be accumulating at an inhuman rate. Every time I turn around, there seems to be another pile. It's awful. I had planned to tackle all of the above today. I had intentionally left the calendar clear so I could attack these dastardly deeds.*

*But when I awoke this morning at six, saw that it was going to be another beautiful day after last night's rain, I scratched those well-thought-out plans, kissed my husband good morning, said, "I'm out of here," and off to the lake I went.*

*But you must be thinking, "Isn't she the same person who's been literally out of town for the past month? Who's been to Miami, to England, to Palm Beach? Who's been back to back to a convent and a spa? Shouldn't that have been enough fill up,*

*R-and-R time for even the most depleted?" Well - well, this is different.*

*You see, tonight I'm speaking to a group and I know myself well enough to realize I could not go, cannot go, under my own power. All they would get is one dried-up little vessel. I am not a speaker, just as I am not a writer. If there ever, ever is any success at either effort, it is one hundred percent by God's grace. He, and He alone, can empower me, can use me. If I went out on my own, all alone, it would be a total, complete flop. And it still might be, and that's OK now in that I would just have to say, "Yes, Lord. Thank You, Lord. May You use my humiliation to Your glory. May You turn my failures into Your successes."*

*I'm not anything special. I have my ups and downs and fall-arounds daily. Often, I grieve over my lack of growth. I'll think there's been some headway in some particular area, and then the very next instance I'll realize I'm back at square one. I get so blasted disappointed in myself. And if it bothers me, I can't imagine how much it must grieve Almighty God. Lord, forgive.*

*I hope one of the benefits that comes out of these letters is encouragement to the strugglers, the ones who are like me, trying and falling and failing and trying and falling and failing - keeping on keeping on. Reason being - the only reason being - Jesus loves me and He loves you. I don't know why. It is a mystery, but that truth keeps me going.*

*So I've come to the lake. It takes forty-five minutes to get here and forty-five minutes to get home. I've walked around, sat around, lain around, and I've prayed. I've read morning prayer and listened to the birds sing. Up here, they do this all day long. I guess they're happy campers, like I am. I've watched the sun-shimmering water dance. I've watched the pine needle fans wave. The sounds of the water gently caressing the shore have become the soft, rhythmic heartbeat of the day. All is well at the lake. Bees, birds, butterflies, busy. Seed pods floating gracefully to the ground.*

*I fast today for those who will gather tonight. Only our Lord Jesus Christ knows their needs, their concerns, their wants, where they are in their walk with Him. Only He knows what needs to be said and what needs to be heard. I'm only a middle-aged cracked vessel. My prayer is that He will use me to His glory. That is all. That is enough. Peace.*

*Later. "All is well. Safely rest." How did the speech go? I don't know. I never do. For me, the important thing is to say "yes" to the opportunity. As always, I was blessed beyond measure by those attending the gathering. A gentleman quietly spoke of how this week he had been able to listen and to witness to a student of his who has AIDS. A young woman's voice cracked with emotion as she read a prayer. The warmth of those gathered from various churches around Montgomery was felt. I pray that my words were to His glory.*

*And as for the supper, the Lord does provide! When I got home, I opened the refrigerator. It looked as I remembered - empty. On the bottom shelf I found an English muffin. On the door I found a can of tuna and two pitiful-looking pieces of American cheese. In the vegetable bin there was one cucumber and one tomato that our daughter had brought (she doesn't like either). I assembled all of these, added mustard, salt, pepper and toasted the whole thing. It was delicious. I tentatively tried the skim milk, for the date was way past due. Much to my delight, it was still good and there was just enough for one large glass. My husband, fortunately, is out of town so I didn't have to share this feast for "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." I don't know if he would have perceived this supper with as much appreciation and enthusiasm and glee as I did.*

*Going to the lake, or going to the grocery store? That was the question for this day.*

*Thank the dear Lord that He does fill up our time and the feast at the lake and at the church and at home. He does provide, if only we allow Him.*

*Now, here are a few verses that I'd like to share that really nourished my soul today.*

*1 Peter 3, verse 4. Let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God.*

*Psalms 130, verses 5 & 6. I wait for the Lord. My soul does wait. And in His Word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord, more*

*than the watchman for the morning; indeed, more than the watchman for the morning.*

*Psalm 62:1&2. My soul waits in silence for God only. From Him is my salvation; He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold. I shall not be greatly shaken.*

*And then, Psalm 131, verses 1 & 2. Oh, Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty, nor do I involve myself in great matters, or in things too difficult for me. Surely, I have composed and quieted my soul like a weaned child rests against his mother. My soul is like a weaned child within me. Thank you, dear Lord.*

*“Come away to a quiet place...” I’m glad I did. Might you need such a trip, yourself?*

*I am your sister in Christ,*

*Lucy*