

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

*“Lighten up, Lucy!” You’re taking yourself too seriously!
Relax in the Lord! Your world is pretty rosy. Your children are
healthy. Your husband has a job. You have a roof over your
head. I mean really, you better be walking in joy, for life
doesn’t get much better! What’s the big deal?”*

*This was the pep talk that I gave to myself all week long.
On the outside everything looked pretty much like smooth
sailing, but on the inside, I’d been “inner plaiting.” You know
“inner plaiting.” It’s when you take three strands of
responsibility and you start mentally braiding them. As the
week progressed, or rather digressed, the braid got woven
tighter and tighter until I thought I might scream. The braid
was becoming knotted and gnarled, for there was no joy in my
activity. The martyr syndrome was setting in, but I couldn’t
understand what actually was the problem. I felt pulled to the
left - pulled to the right - go team - go team - fight - fight -
fight.*

*As I write this cheer, I realize that “lean” is the correct
active verb, not “pulled.” Oh! What an insightful mistake. It
was my attitude toward the required activities that was the
problem. When you lean toward something, you’re already in
an attitude of going forward. It can be an attitude of humble*

submission, surrender by choice - a "go with the flow" mentality, as opposed to a stiff-necked pull.

There is not a more poignant picture of leaning into a situation than our Lord Jesus carrying His own cross down the Via Dolorosa to Calvary. I've always been deeply moved by dramatic representations of this scene. I've felt that the bleeding back of our Lord Jesus was bent from this burden carried, and rightly so, but today I realize that more important than His "burden bend" was our Lord Christ's "loving lean" forward into the reality of His death and dying for us. I bet when Simon of Cyrene took the physical load from His back, He still continued to lean into the reality - kept seizing the opportunity - kept surrendering into the crucifixion with every step forward.

And here I am dragging my feet as if they were rock-laden. I don't want to do any of my checklist. The responsibilities are heavy laden because of my attitude. Let's see if we can get to the root of the problem. The bottom line is:

I don't want to be responsible.

I don't want to be

I don't want to

I don't want

I don't

I

Hmm! There lies the problem! Lord, forgive.

You can't lean when you're "I" oriented, for it is the most stuck position there is. A real deep freeze of the heart occurs. There is no room for growth. There is no room for caring. There is no room for love - His or ours.

And then I think of the beloved disciple, John, and how it says on the night of the Last Supper he leaned on our Lord's shoulder. Wouldn't you just love to be known as the disciple who leaned on the Lord? Totally leaned? I don't believe this position John took was just a one-night occurrence, for the Bible repeatedly uses the phrase when describing him. I believe he leaned all the rest of this life. Oh, wouldn't that be grand and glorious to be known as such?

To be able to lean, we must be flexible, with a good root system, just as our Lord described in the parable of the seed. A few weeks ago I received a deeper understanding of this truth. I drove to Birmingham, which is about an hour and a half away, for a meeting. I had heard about the horrendous storms they had recently experienced and I knew there had been great damage done, but little did I realize the extent of that damage. We see documented disasters on the TV, but they remain somehow contained in the tube and are thus easily forgotten. But to physically drive through devastation and experience it first-hand is not so easy to capsule.

Everywhere I looked there were these huge old trees snapped in two as if a giant had taken a stroll, whereas the smaller trees and bushes were still standing as if nothing had

occurred. I learned from a horticulturist that the survivors were those who could bend and be flexible and had a deep root system. Those big, old, puffed-up "I" trees broke in the storm, whereas the little leaning ones did just fine.

We can learn from this example, I think. We need a deep root system too, one that can hold with the loads that life affords. We need to lean on Jesus, just like John did and just like all the other saints and disciples have. Our Lord's shoulders are plenty wide enough for us all. We just have to be willing to let our vertical "I's" lean a little forward into submission and surrender.

Psalm 61:1-2

*"Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.
From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee,
When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me
To the rock that is higher than I."*

"lead me to the rock that is higher than I"

"lead me to the rock that is higher"

"lead me to the rock"

"lead me"

Do you notice what has disappeared when we get to the basics? That's right. That awful "I." To Him be the glory!

I am your sister in Christ,

"trying to lean" Lucy

P.S. Before I leave, I'd like to read the Parable of the Sower. It's in Matthew, chapter 13.

A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among the thorns which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil where it produced a crop, a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear. Then Jesus said, "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means. When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who receives the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the Word and at once receives it with joy, but since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the Word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns and the man who hears the Word but the worries of his life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the Word that fell on good soil is the man who hears the Word and understands it. He produces a crop yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.

Amen.