

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

You might be thinking, "Not again, Lucy! You read that rhyme the last time we were together!" And you're right, Pilgrim. I just wanted to celebrate one more time getting to know "the Rose."

You see, in my whole lifetime, I had never been around a cat. My Mama does not like them - so, I thought I didn't like cats either. Wrong! I didn't know a cat! How dare I adopt my Mama's prejudice without checking these fabulous, fascinating felines out myself. Lord, forgive. I don't blame Mama. I blame myself. Ignorance on my part. Lord, forgive.

And then - and then - "the Rose" came into my life. She was part of the package deal when I married my darling heart husband Paul. Oh, and what a surprise delight she is.

Most mornings when I have my prayer time "the Rose" comes and sits in my lap. And if I take a nap on the sofa, she takes a nap too, on my tummy! But goodness gracious! The rest of the time, she's totally unpredictable as her rhyme indicates. She is a gift. If I hadn't taken time to be with her, just hang out with her, get to know her - I never would have known what an awesome creature she is. Lord, forgive.

And then there's Paul. What a surprise delight he is, too! He is a gift. If I hadn't taken time to be with him, just hang out with him, get to know him - I never would have known

what an awesome creature he is. I am, of course, talking about my husband of 558 days - Paul - but also, the Apostle Paul.

You see, in my ignorance, I had adopted some prejudices against this pillar of the church. I mean, if the Apostle Paul was good enough to be chosen by our Lord to be the disciple to the Gentiles, should that not have been good enough references for me? Ah! Ignorance on my part!

Recently, an opportunity came up in our church and for the last 5 months I've been studying this apostle and all of his writings. In the past, I had read and I had studied - but, I believe by God's grace - there's been a softening of my heart. A deeper knowledge and a love has grown for this awesome apostle. I've filled thirteen 3x5 card notebooks with his scripture writings. One of them is: "I want to know Christ." Me too! Paul wrote that about himself in Philippians 3:10a. Here this man who had personally met the living Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus and from that moment on - his every thought, word and deed was spent glorifying Jesus. He still wanted to know Christ better. Me too!

Ah Pilgrim, the most important work in our lives, I believe, is getting to know, know our living Lord Jesus Christ. It is out of this relationship that all else flows - our love for Him - His love for us, our love for others - His love for us, our love for ourselves - His love for us, our love for this world - His love for us. Do you hear the rocking, rhythmic flow of this eternal love

reality? It's all about our relationship - our individual personal relationship with Him.

This truth is beautifully pointed out in John 4 where we find the story of the Samaritan woman at the well with Jesus. Usually when reading, I stop and meditate on her encounter with the Lord. He totally knew her. I've thought, boy, that's great! If He knew her, I believe, He knows me too! I was counting on her relationship, not mine! I was settling for "Second hand Rose" - but that's not what our Lord wants! He wants me - One on one! He wants you, Pilgrim, One on one!

This is brought out even more poignantly if you continue with the reading - John 4:39-42 says: Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony. "He told me everything I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to Him, they urged Him to stay with them and He stayed two days. And because of His Words many more believed.

They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

I believe if they hadn't taken time to be with Him - just hang around with Him, get to know Him - they never would have known Jesus - "the Savior of the world."

Now my mind has skipped to the Rev. Mark Waldo. He is one of my most favorite people. We have spent much precious time together. There are many wonderful memories. I

remember once asking for needed prayer and he responded immediately. Although we were in a busy hallway with people scurrying around, he stopped, lowered his head and prayed out loud for me. I felt a little awkward and self-conscious. But not Mark. He was just talking to his best Friend, our Lord, who he takes time to be with, hangs out with and knows.

Mark Waldo is a gift. And over the years we've taken time to be with each other, just hang out with each other. We've gotten to know each other. At a meeting last month I was thrilled to see this beloved man and just knew he was thrilled to see me too - but his words caught me up short.

We were seated in a circle and went around the room introducing ourselves for there were new attendees. When it was Mark's turn, he said something like, "Oh, I know Lucy, but I am so excited that there are all of these new people and I do not know you and I am so looking forward to getting to know you." And you could tell by the excitement in his voice that he truly was overjoyed. It was as if the Lord had personally given him 5 new gorgeous gifts to open. And I knew, if given the chance, he would take time to be with each one of them, just hang out with each one of them, get to know each one of them and rejoice in his or her awesome uniqueness. (I believe that the Lord feels the same way about us.) And, Precious Pilgrim, to quote the Apostle Paul once more - "I want to know Christ." Do you? I want to spend more time with Him. I want to just hang out with Him. I want to know Him. Do you?

Paul's whole statement says in Philippians 3:10,11: I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death and so somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Do you, Pilgrim?

I am, by God's grace,

Your cat loving, Paul loving, Apostle Paul loving,

Mark loving, Jesus loving

sister in Christ,

Lucy

Let's get to know our Lord better today. Amen and Amen.