

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory
May Your Love flow through me*

Precious Pilgrim,

Do you remember the thrill of getting a new textbook at the beginning of a school year - the smell, the feel - opening, looking, knowing you'll be spending days on end, months on end, studying and learning - receiving the gifts that this yet unknown world had to offer?

Being a visual person, I especially love looking at the photographs, illustrations, and charts. They were like windows that I could quickly look into and get a glimpse of a future scene to come. It would excite me so just flipping through those pages, stopping, looking, and then I'd continue turning. I'd form a quick opinion on this little mileage gleaned. What's that statement? "You can't judge a book by looking at its cover." I'd have to add by its inside visual representations either. For me, it takes time to study and make that knowledge my own.

I'm a slow reader and a slow learner. I always have been. I love the process of learning just as much as the end product. I enjoy underlining and highlighting, taking notes, and making flash cards. Sometimes that's the only way I can tell whether I've read a page or not. Also, a peanut butter fingerprint in the margin is a good indication. Yes indeed, my eyes have feasted on that page, along with my tummy. By

God's grace, and with time and effort, some of the new knowledge just might stick and become my own.

As Christians, Pilgrim, we are called to read and mark and inwardly digest God's Holy Word. And I'm so glad. I want His scripture to be inside of me, to be a part of me, do you? Oh, but I can't remember verses very well. I wish I could. That's just how my brain was made and, at 57, I've finally accepted that. But I still get as excited about a new study as if I were 12 years old. This fall our women's bible study at our church is studying Moses. Of course, I've been to these familiar passages before and, by God's grace, will go there again and again. It's just that there is a freshness, an excitement with each new visit. I'm at a different age and stage in my life's journey, so what I'm bringing to the study is different. BUT---

Do you know what, Pilgrim? It's not about me and what I'm bringing to the study - but rather, it's about the Holy Spirit - our true Teacher and the Light that He is shining on these ancient living words. Isn't that good news?

This week we studied the plagues. Last week we studied Moses' call and the burning bush. I didn't recall Moses' humanness in his immediate response. It was a resounding "yes" and then and then, it is as if his "yes" started ricocheting off the mountains. He seems to begin backpedaling. Here he's talking to the Almighty God, Yahweh, who's called him to deliver His people and Moses firmly says "Yes, send me" and

*then the doubts start slipping in. Moses says, "I can't talk."
God says, "Who made mouths?"*

*It reminds me also of the Apostle Peter - his enthusiastic
"yes" response to the Lord when told to come walk on the water
with Jesus. Peter then starts slipping and sliding and sinking
when he takes his eyes off the Lord.*

*It reminds me of myself - my pleading pestering cry to the
Lord - "Please use me!" - and then when given an opportunity
to serve, I start pulling back.*

*Have you, Pilgrim, ever experienced that "getting-cold-
feet problem?" This new study on Moses is being taught by a
Texan, Kathy Phillips, via video and workbook. Last week I
wrote down two of her statements, which seemed appropriate to
my shaky steps:*

*"Get out of that ditch of false humility." And "Get over
yourself! It's not about you! It's about God!"*

*And then -- and then just last weekend I was given an
unexpected gift. My husband and I went on a retreat at our
church camp. The theme was on listening - listening to God --
listening to others - listening to ourselves. There were over 40
participants from the southeast. It was grand! Did you know,
Pilgrim, that the words "silent" and "listen" have the same
identical letters in them? (Just an interesting little tidbit.)*

*As followers of our Lord Jesus, we are commanded to
occasionally "Be STILL and know that God is God." Oh and in
this busy, bustling world, it was so good to draw apart for the*

weekend and enjoy the beauty of nature and the good Christian fellowship. We worshipped and sang and prayed and listened. It was a wonderful fill-up of a time. But, what bowled me over, and I want to always remember it took place at our closing service. We had Holy Communion and then were told anyone who wanted his feet washed, as the Lord instituted at the Lord's Supper, to come forward.

Over the years, I'd attended one or two services where this act was offered as part of the worship service. I had never gone up. Why? I have flat feet, bunions, calluses. I very seldom paint my toenails. I never want to bring attention to them. Hello? Should the shape of my feet be the criteria used to accept a foot washing? I don't think so! Let's revisit the scene with our Lord when He instituted this act. It's found in John 13:3-15.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper, and laid aside His garments, and taking a towel, He girded Himself about. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

And so He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter."

Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part of me."

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean, but not all of you."

For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all are clean."

And so when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."

Oww! The verse I'd adopted as my own was Peter's. "Never shall You wash my feet!" And then the Lord's response reverberated in my brain - "If I do not wash you, you have no part of me." Oww!

And then I could hear Kathy Phillips' words of truth once more: "Get out of that ditch of false humility" and "Get over yourself! It's not about You! It's about God!"

With tears in my eyes and a lump in my throat, I stood and joined those in line. The protocol was when it was your turn - you sat in a seat and the one who had just gone before, would kneel down and wash the next person's feet. On

completion, they both would rise and give each other a gentle embrace and then continue. And all was done in great reverence. There was a quiet, a calm, a holiness as if it was an acted out prayer.

When it came my turn, I sat and received. The tears kept flowing and that's something for someone who seldom cries like myself. My feet were washed slowly, lovingly with care. This brother in Christ, who was only an acquaintance, never looked up. He just gave the gift and by God's grace - I received. On completion, we both stood and hugged gently.

It was now my turn. Through my tears, I looked around and there was no one else in line. I hadn't realized that I was the last. I hadn't realized. I was disappointed. I wanted to give back - then I could sense in my spirit - "No Lucy, this day you are just to receive. Receive. Your opportunity for giving will come again - but not today." "Yes, Lord."

Pilgrim, do you ever find it easier to give than to receive? Do you ever when given a gift, can't wait to give it away? Pilgrim, this day, may I recommend a day of just receiving - receiving our Lord's love. Let Him fill you - then when it's time to be used and poured out, by God's grace, maybe our response can be a more solid "yes" - based solely on His LOVE. That is a sure foundation. For He is our Rock.

Lucy