

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

I did a difficult thing last week. I've been procrastinating - not just a little bit - but five years worth - now that's a major procrastination! I had avoided the task and tried desperately to put it out of my mind - of course, with no success. Do you know the feeling, Pilgrim?

You have a job to do. It's your job and nobody else's. It wouldn't be fair, would not be right or appropriate to make anyone else do it. It would not go away, even though you have tried everything in your power. It just gets heavier. Finally - finally - you've run out of rope and excuses. You must face the music and as runners say - "Just do it!"

So, I did. I did the dastardly deed - I finally got the boxes out of storage and opened them. I was so wary - almost fearful, wondering what Pandora's box-like woes would have in store.

You see, some of them were packed before a house fire; some were packed before a divorce; some were packed after a divorce; and goodness - the living that has gone on since then! A year of divorce aloneness - then 623 days of healing holy love and marriage to my glorious British professor - living in England, then Birmingham, Alabama - and then his untimely, unexpected death from a massive heart attack - and then a year of widowhood aloneness and now Paul - the loving

Dr. Paul - who's birthed over 16,000 babies and also by God's grace, helped me come forth to a new season of spring where there's a real sense of God's Resurrection power.

Ah, and do you know what, Pilgrim, in such a season of rebirth, it's OK to open closed boxes - secret rooms - hidden, painful places in your psyche. You see, all these five years, I thought that when I opened those cardboard boxes, I would find myself back in the broken, dastardly world of divorce - that I would find myself back in that old skin once more, and I didn't think I could survive that pain again.

Oh, but was I ever wrong! And Lord forgive. For you see, I am a new creature in Christ. I didn't walk through any of those hard times alone and never have I felt the loving arms of our Living Lord Jesus more strongly than in those hard times. You see, I was totally, completely dependent on Him and that, Pilgrim, is the best ever way to be. And without me even realizing it - our Lord was making things new all along - "a springing" - "a rebirthing" - "a resurrection" - after the fire - after the divorce - after Duncan's death - Resurrection Springs came forth. And I was never alone and neither are you, Pilgrim.

The boxes, instead of being hard to handle as I had anticipated, became opportunities for prayerful praise - hard praise sometimes - pulling at heartstring praise sometimes - but nevertheless, praise.

As I'd unwrap each treasure, memories would flood in and they were OK. Pictures, Christmas decorations, knick-knacks, and some just plain old stuff - which one seems to accumulate in 29 years of marriage. Ah - the lightness - the freedom - the healing - the letting go - a real spring cleaning has occurred. Much was thrown away, most given away - and some - some will be treasured lightly - as it should be.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:16: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."

And in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

And best, best of all - our Lord Jesus said in Matthew 28:20: "Lo, I am with you always!" Yea - Pilgrim - we are not alone - no never - ever - alone. Might you have some heavy stuff that's been boxed and sealed for years like I had? May I recommend a deep spring cleaning whatever the season may be. For you see, we have a helper - the Helper - who can carry the heavy stuff. He can heal it and then help you let it go.

Peace.

*I am your lighter than ever Sister in Christ,
Lucy*

P.S. And what actually occurred to cause me to finally open those boxes? God is so good! His timing is oh so very perfect!

You see, right after Paul and I married, right after I'd moved to his home in Decatur, I was asked to give a spring program to the women of the church.

Being early fall, it wasn't too hard to say, "yes" to such a distant request. I said I'd love to do a flower arrangement called "Signs, Symbols and Silly Putty" - interpreting the Easter experience through flowers.

Over the years I'd presented this presentation numerous times and enjoyed doing it. I thought it wouldn't be too hard as a newlywed to pull off.

And it wasn't - except, guess where all of the props for this demonstration were? You got it! Packed in the boxes.

And guess when the actual talk was scheduled? The Friday before Holy Week - right before Easter. Perfect timing! Never had that happened before. And I was asked if the 12 flower arrangements and corresponding scriptures could remain up for a week so that more people could see it. I said, "Yes." Never had that happened before! And a newspaper reporter called and asked if she could come to the lecture. She had read about it in our church bulletin and she thought it sounded interesting. I said, "Yes." And a two-page article with pictures followed. Never had that happened before!

Oh, Pilgrim, the gifts that can come forth from saying, "yes" to opportunities. The boxes were opened and our Lord's Name was lifted up. Yea! Yes! Our Lord does reign - even in our stacked-up stuff! And His timing is oh so very perfect.

One more time:

Isaiah 43:18 - 21. "Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and the rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honor me, the jackals, the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise."

Go praise Him, Pilgrim. God's blessings.

Lucy