

*Come Holy Spirit
Use me to Your glory*

Precious Pilgrim,

Let us go back to the opening verse. You'll find it in Psalm 118:24. "This is the day that the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it." Do you know, Pilgrim, it is a fact - this day, this specific, particular, precise moment in time, the one in which you and I find ourselves was brought to us by none other than the Living Lord God - Heavenly King - Almighty God and Father. It is a gift, an incredible awesome gift. But wait a minute. Maybe you're finding yourself in a pickle of a mess at this particular time. Maybe you're sick, or dying, or grieving or if not you, one of your loved ones. Maybe you're experiencing the heartache of a broken relationship. Maybe the burdens of life seem to be weighing you down, weighing you down so heavily that you don't even know if you can take another step or even if you want to. Why, if given a choice, you'd like to trade this day in for another.

Is this your attitude, Pilgrim? Well, I think by God's grace, that's OK, at least for the moment. I understand, but most importantly, our Lord does. I'm going on my 5th month of widowhood. It is hard. My heart often is heavy. I miss my precious husband so much. I miss his touch, his smile, his feel, his smell, his mind, his laughter, his walk, his talk, his companionship. His love made me feel beautiful. He fleshed out the love of Jesus for me.

And do you know what, Pilgrim? I think it's all about relationship. All I wanted was to be with Duncan and all Duncan wanted was to be with me. We were at our best when we were together. We were called "the love birds." At age 54, I'm mighty proud of that. I think I was more the "real Lucy" - the one the Lord intends me to be, designed me to be, when I was with him.

But wait - our verse says - "This is the day" - not yesterday - not blue sky days only - but this day - He made - whatever this day has in store - good, bad, yucky, hard, happy - this is the one and only one we have at this moment, and whatever that package might hold - and what are we to do with it? Why, it might be a bummer or it might be beautiful - what is to be our response? The psalmist said, "We are to rejoice and be glad in it." Help! What? Be real! Always - this is to be our response! Impossible - right? Yes, right - impossible in our own strength, in our own power, but not if we are in God's strength, God's power.

Once again, I think it is about relationship. I know that I am not alone in this time of sorrow and neither are you, Pilgrim. I know that the same Lord Jesus that wept for Mary and Martha, joining them in their grief over their brother Lazarus' death, is joining me in my grief for Duncan and is joining you, Pilgrim, in your situation.

And I know that our Lord God is not a zapper. The pains of life are not brought on by Him. When He created this world

as Genesis says - "it was good" -- "it was very good!" The brokenness, I believe, is our own doing, the universal fallenness of mankind, but that's not the end of the story. There is the "Good News" - it is our Lord Jesus Christ - our Savior, Redeemer, Friend. He is with us personally - in every situation - in every circumstance. Again, it's about relationship - not Duncan's and mine, although Duncan's love, as I said, did help flesh out the reality of the importance of a loving relationship. No, I believe our life's work, the one each and every one of us is called to totally participate in - is our relationship with Jesus. He is to be our all - our everything.

But how? By His grace. By His Holy Spirit. It is a constant, continuous - daily - moment by moment - turning towards Him.

As I was reading this morning's devotion, a verse jumped out at me. I inwardly smiled and said "Thank you, Lord." It's as if the Holy Spirit sometimes uses a yellow highlighter pen and says, "Hey Lucy, look at these words, my words a little closer. There might be some take home value for you today." I've read these very same words numerous times, but today they became brighter, lighter. Listen: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." That's Isaiah 40:5. And there was one particular word that shown even more brightly - and surprise, surprise - it wasn't "desert" for this isn't a dark, desolate, depressing season I'm in, just a season of grief. No, the word that leaped off the page

into my heart was "High way." That's right, highway. The one word became two - high and way. We know as Christians, Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. And it is His Way, which is often a set apart, uniquely different way that we are to live, to walk - it is the "High Way." Yes, there are ditches and bumps, valleys and hills along our journey of life, but always by our Lord's grace, we can take the High Way - His Way even in the pits.

Psalm 84:4 says "Happy are the people whose strength is in You, whose hearts are set on the Pilgrim's Way."

I'd like to leave you today with two little personal episodes - Duncan episodes. You know, when you are grieving, it does seem to help to go back in your mind and revisit some sweet memories. No, we are not to live in the past. In fact, one of Duncan's and my favorite sayings that we saw on a sign in Snowville, Utah was:

Cherish the Past

Dream the Future

Live the Present

And by God's Grace, I'm trying to do just that.

It's just these episodes help flesh out the idea of "High Way" for me. You see, we were walking in the woods near our home - bird watching. It was a glorious cold crisp day and I was doing one of my most favorite activities -- following right behind Duncan. And all of a sudden down Duncan went. He fell first on his face in the middle of a huge mud puddle -

binoculars, boots, jacket, glasses, pants - in the mud. I was so concerned - almost jumping in to rescue but he quickly stood up and just burst out laughing - and so did I.

Then on another occasion we decided to take an all day cross county ski lesson. It was physically the hardest, most exhausting day of my life - but even more so for Duncan. He was an excellent downhill skier, but couldn't snowplow, which is a needed skill when cross-country skiing. For over two hours we side stepped with skis up a hill and then tried to snowplow down. Duncan fell every single time - over and over and over again. He'd get up, laugh, and try again - get up, laugh, and try again. I could not get over his determination - with humor - his perseverance with humor. He seemed in both instances to take the "High - Way."

And then there's the road to Emmaus. Each one of us is on this road. It might have a different name, might have different twists and curves - the topography might be different - but it is still the same. We are each on a journey with our Lord going Home. We may not sense, feel, hear Him all the time, but that's OK. He is. Our Lord is. And He said, "Lo, I am with you always." He is, Pilgrim. Always.

So today - this day - let's take the High Way - where our Lord reigns and remember, "This is the day that the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it" - even if we fall in a mud puddle or down an icy slope. Laugh and rejoice as Duncan did - we are children of the Light!

God bless.

Isaiah 35:8&9. "And a highway shall be there and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not pass over it, fools shall not err therein. No lions shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it. They shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there."

And let us once more go back to Psalm 118:24. "This is the day that the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it." Do you know what other declaration is made 5 times in that Psalm? "His love endures forever."

Ah, Pilgrim, it is because of this reality, God's enduring love for each one of us, that we can rejoice and be glad this very day. Peace. God bless.

Lucy