

This devotional reading is an outreach birthed from the reflections of my heart.

As He leads me.....turning dreams into reality, it is my “soul” purpose to provoke life change and promote healthy living (holy living); to be a visible display of God’s transforming power that is available to us all.

It is my desire to share the love of Jesus by encouraging, comforting, and inspiring those who, with determined purpose, want all that life has to offer them.

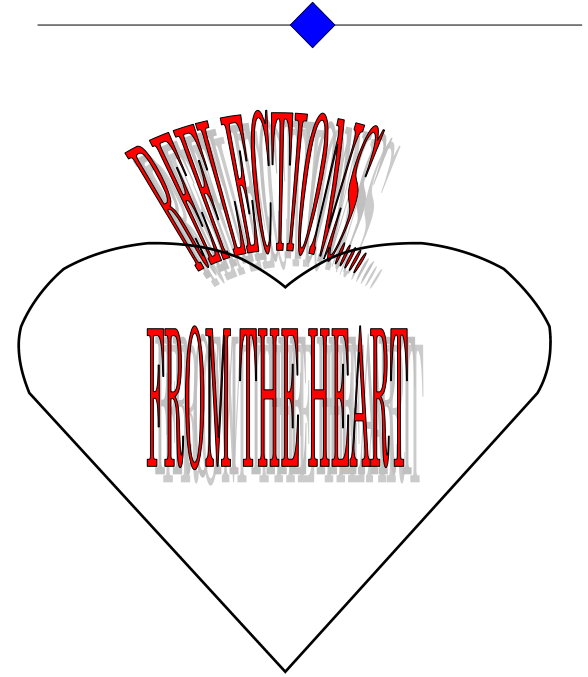
For more information concerning sharing in song, testimony, or an enlightening word of encouragement, please contact Val Bolinger.

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Note: scripture references taken from Amplified Bible

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**A SHELTER IN THE TIME OF
STORM**

A God-inspired word for your day

Isaiah 4:6 “And there shall be a pavilion for shade in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge and a shelter from storm and from rain.”

In keeping with one of my New Years’ resolutions, I have decided to start walking (*again*) for exercise. Of course, the day I made this healthy decision it was 60 degrees, and bright & sunny. Everything in the atmosphere supported my decision. However, today was a completely different story — 40 degrees, cloudy, rainy, and lots of wind. In addition to walking in the rain, I promised my two dogs they could go with me (whom are yet to realize that it is *I* taking them for a walk, and not the other way around). So here I am in the wind & rain, trying to balance the umbrella, leash & pets while attempting to protect myself from this storm I’m walking in.

“Psalm 57:1...for my soul takes refuge *and* finds shelter and confidence in You; yes, in the shadow of Your wings will I take refuge *and* be confident until calamities *and* destructive storms are passed.”

We can all identify with having to face the many varied ‘storms’ of life — from health to finances, emotional and mental torment, burdens for loved ones, bondage’s and oppressions that *seem* so overwhelming you can’t even get a hold of it, let alone conquer it. That’s the hard facts of the matter if we’d be willing to admit it.

I must confess to you I no longer had that desire for fresh air and exercise. After all, the rain was falling, right along with the temperature. It was dark and dismal. The atmospheric conditions no longer supported my desire to do what was right. However, feeling such an impulse to take this walk, I went. (I was yet to realize the Lord had something to say during the course of this journey). So, I ventured out trudging through the wind and rain. The wind blew so hard that my umbrella flipped inside out three times. On the third occurrence I decided the wind and pulling pets were too much for me. So, I turned around and headed home. Would you believe the wind shifted and I was still facing it head on?!? I realized the current plan simply wasn’t working, so instead of holding the umbrella directly over top of me, I put it in front of me 1) to block the wind 2) to keep my umbrella - my source of protection -

from being turned inside with no covering from the storm. As I’m walking along with the umbrella directly in front of me, I think to myself, ‘this may be blocking the wind & rain, but I can’t see very far in front of me. I could trip or fall.’ About that time a pothole came into view and I easily stepped over it and kept walking. Then I began to notice something. Though I could only see just a few steps ahead, I noticed very easily I was on an incline, climbing a hill. Although I new I was protected by this covering umbrella, I still felt the effects of the trip up that hill.

The Lord spoke to me so beautifully through this ‘umbrella experience.’ Let me share it with you...When I was walking with that umbrella out in front and worried that I couldn’t see, the Lord showed me that He is like that umbrella. He is covering me; even in times that I can’t see and don’t know what’s out in front of me. I was assured that all I need to know is that I am covered by Him, by His grace, by His love & by His protection. He showed me that I simply cannot protect myself. Nor can I turn back from storms, despite how overwhelming they may seem, if He has assigned that as my portion. He placed a firm conviction in my heart that I should neither seek a refuge other than what He can provide. Some of the storms I face may be designated as a ‘sanctified experience’ ordained by the Lord in which He chooses not only to have me walk through, but also to sovereignly speak and teach through. God showed me that with Him as our covering it doesn’t mean that we’ll avoid the potholes of life altogether, but He’ll give us the ability to step over them and keep on walking. Even though He is our covering and protection, when we start an uphill climb, it may not eliminate the feelings and sensations of climbing that hill. A steep incline might make me feel out of breath, exhausted after a while; like I just couldn’t make it. It’s through these experiences that we learn to trust and lean upon Him with all our hearts, mind, & strength. “For My strength and power are made perfect...in (your) weakness” II Corinthians 12:9.

In addition to the insight as noted above, the entire event served to remind me of the following:

Selah(Pause & think on this)

The right conditions sometimes make the right choices very easy. At times your circumstances support a right decision (i.e. warm weather and sun motivated me to walk). When the conditions aren’t so nice, it’s not so easy to do the right thing. God is the only true force that can give us the grace to do His will. Haggai 1:14 “And the Lord aroused the spirit of...the governor of Judah...the high priest, and...all the remnant of the people, so they came and labored on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God.

I learned that I simply cannot provide my own means of protection no matter how hard I try. Nor can I turn back from a sanctified storm I was meant to face head on and prevail through. He alone is our shelter in the time of storm. And there are times He speaks most clearly through heavy winds, pouring rain and roars of thunder.

I leave you with the word of a beautiful hymn:

The Lord’s our Rock , in Him we Hide,

A shelter in the time of storm;

Secure whatever ill betide,

A shelter in the time of storm

A shade by day, defense by night,

A shelter in the time of storm;

No fears alarm, no foes afright

A shelter in the time of storm

The raging storms may round us beat

A shelter in the time of storm

We’ll never leave our safe retreat

A shelter in the time of storm

O Rock Divine, O Refuge dear,

A Shelter in the time of storm;

Be Thou our Helper ever near

A shelter in the time of storm

Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,

A weary land, a weary land;

Oh, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,

A shelter in the time of storm