

July 2006

Precious brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus,

Summer blessings to each of you! It is my prayer that as your summer is filled with sunshine and warmth, so your spirit might be filled with the brilliance of the Light of the world, our Lord Jesus. I also pray that the warmth of His love for you would cause you to simply radiate that love to others.

I am one who still believes that how you interact with folks speaks far louder than your words. And when a person combines a gracious demeanor with the salt of the Word as the Lord opens doors, many are drawn closer to the Him! That reminds me of a prayer I once heard someone quote. It went something like this, "Lord, help my words to be loving and gracious today, for tomorrow I may have to eat them!" May I encourage you to interact with others like Jesus would? He's living in you, right? Then pour Him out upon others, bless them, encourage them as you can, and leave judgment of them to God. Be gracious especially to those who are most challenging in your life! It really makes a difference!

The past three months gave opportunity to speak and lead worship at a couple of ladies' events, and preach twice at a church in Elkhart, Indiana. Additionally I led worship for several prayer meetings in South Bend, Elkhart and Fort Wayne. Marlene and I hosted several folks who came to visit us here at Lakes Estates Retreat Center (as we like to call our home!) One group was a repeat trip here for 4 days for 4 gals from the Detroit area. It was wonderful to combine times here at home with trips into Ft. Wayne for Sunday School, church and the House of Prayer. Finally, we had my Sunday School class here for the day on June 17th. How good it is and how pleasant when brethren dwell together in unity! What a community-building event that was, as some 29 folks joined us for the day. One of the great things about that day was that my neighbors on either side of our house pitched in to help make the day enjoyable for our guests. One loaned us her boat and barbecue grill, the other their refrigerator, parking spaces and lawn space! We're hoping to do it again before summer is out!

Finally, it was a joy to attend a 2-day conference in Ft. Wayne on the topic of Passion for Jesus. It was simply wonderful. I came away from that retreat more convinced than ever that I am truly called to devote myself to Jesus first, last and always. I am deeply convicted (in a good sense) that service FOR Him MUST BE SECONDARY to soaking in Him. What do I mean by that? I mean spending lengths of time with Him, browsing in the Word, "wasting" time with Him, that I might really know His heart.

In July a dear friend is giving me a vacation as a gift. She, Marlene and I are going for 10 days to Calgary, Alberta, Canada. One of my childhood dreams has been to see Lake Louise and that is exactly what will happen. We are carving out time for prayer also, so it will be a retreat and a

vacation all at once. What a blessing this will be. Beyond that, most of my times of ministry will be the usual ones; mentoring a small bible study group here in my home, ministry in South Bend and Elkhart, teaching Sunday School and times of worship at the House of Prayer in Fort Wayne. The Lord continues to open up opportunities to teach and preach, and I'm studying even now for some future ministry which is upcoming.

Meanwhile, please know you are in my prayers, and I consider your prayer and financial support to be utterly critical. I am in the process of developing a prayer card and if it gets ready in time for this newsletter, I'll enclose one with those of you receiving it by snail mail. If you are reading this letter online and would like to receive a prayer card, please write me at www.PraiseWithRobin.com and ask me for a copy.

In closing, I'll share another devotion with you from my Weekly Devotion Archives on the Web. Blessings upon you this summer, dear friend.

My love,
robin lee

The Cleft, Your Niche

Have you ever thought about what niche in life you'd like to arrive at? Or have you given thought to carving out a particular little niche for yourself, one that would fit you perfectly? Or conversely, might you consider your life as intrinsically aimless, rather like a piece of bark floating on a lake, without purpose, without power, without its own destiny?

I did a word study on the word Cleft. One of the definitions was that of a niche. Looking up niche led me to this wonderful phrase: a nest, a place of rest, retreat, or lodging. So if we just extract the synonyms describing a cleft, here is what we have: Cleft. Niche. Nest. a place of rest.

Cleft. Niche. Perfect fit. Fulfillment. Completion. Satisfaction. Home. Rest.

My, my, that sounds good. But what does a cleft have to do with any of this? Everything! A cleft is defined further as a crack, crevice, or fissure. A cleft is something split open, most often a rock. A cleft can lie horizontally or vertically. Depending on the strata of the rock in which it exists, it could lie on an angle. Have you ever seen one?

Here's a picture of one:

In His wisdom, our Heavenly Father has used “clefts” either in the real world or in visions to speak to us about His Son several times. Along with the picture that generates in us, he has also spoken of a stairway that also refers to His Son. Both of these pictures refer to Jesus and the position He calls us to. Just read and digest some of this.

In Genesis 28:12. He (Jacob) had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

In Exodus 33:18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

.....21 Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock.

22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."



In the Song of Solomon 2:14

***My dove in the clefts of the rock,
in the hiding places on the mountainside,
literally means (in the secret place of the stairs)
show me your face,
let me hear your voice;
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely.***

In John 1:51 Jesus reveals that He Himself is the ladder that reaches from earth to heaven. He told Nathaniel.....You shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

Now this is what I'm chewing on in great wonder. I put these two pictures together (notice God does that Himself in the Song of Solomon) which are in reality two complementing descriptions of the ministry of Jesus and our place and position in Him together and am simply astonished.

Track with me here. First, **Jacob sees this stairway in a dream. It was a stairway that connected heaven to earth and earth to heaven. That stairway did something that no**

mortal man could ever do. It brought heaven down to earth. Today we know that that stairway is Jesus Himself, God enfleshed. How do we know that? Because Jesus told Nathaniel

You shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” John 1:51

Secondly, Moses really wants to be closer to God than he already was. He presses God saying, “I REALLY want to see Your glory.” God responds, “You can’t. It would kill you, Moses, (because I am all light, and where I shine in unabated glory, I destroy all darkness. You’ve got darkness in you, so if I show myself to you, I’ll kill you.)

But God did this for Moses. He sent him up HIGH upon a mountain the next morning, where He had prepared a special rock for Moses. It was a rock that God Himself had split open. It had a cleft in it; it had a Moses-size niche in it which would fit Moses exactly. God told Moses that if he (Moses) would come to Him, He would take Moses and HIDE HIM in the cleft of that rock. Then he would put His own hand (God must have really big hands!) over Moses, and SHIELD him, SHELTER him, while He passed in front of Moses in all of His own glory. It was only well after God had passed completely by him that He took away His hand, thus allowing Moses to see the back side (train) of His glory.

Finally, we have this wonderful invitation from the Song of Solomon in which the King says to the Shullamite maiden, (representing the Lord saying to us)

My dove *in the clefts of the rock,*

in the hiding places on the mountainside,

(in the secret place of the stairs)

show me your face,

let me hear your voice;

for your voice is sweet,

and your face is lovely. Song of Solomon 2:14

So how does this all fit together? In the most wonderful of ways. The cleft of the rock, that specific split God made in the rock so as to save Moses, was a type of our Redeemer, Jesus, who is the Rock of our salvation. Jesus is the Rock that was **cleft** for us, who was split for us. Just think of this: when the Roman soldier took his spear and stabbed Jesus in the chest, His side, His heart of love for us was split wide open. It was at that very moment, that He made a place for us to hide, a place for us to be saved, a place for us to rest; **that place is IN Him, IN Christ!** And that is not all!

He told Nathaniel that He Himself was the stairway that brought down heaven to earth. When we surrender ourselves to Him, He places us on the stairway, or as God puts it in the Song of Songs, he places us “**in** the secret place of the stairs.

Does it not make ever more sense to us to ponder Paul saying, “I have died, and my life is now hidden with Christ in God.”

Oh happy blessed ones we are! Oh how great is the love of our God, that He would split His own heart wide open, so we could have a hiding place in Him! The longer I walk with Him, the deeper is my appreciation for the reality that I REALLY AM IN CHRIST! He has placed me there.

And if you are His, you are there also. You are in the most perfect niche, the most perfect place in the world. You are literally IN CHRIST! You know, it makes a lot of Scripture much more understandable when you get a grasp on this truth. To give just one example, doesn't it make more sense to you that "now **we have** the mind of Christ." Of course I will, as I reckon my old man dead, my new man alive to God and hidden in the Cleft, in the secret place of the stairs.

May I suggest you ruminates over these Scriptures for awhile and talk to the Lord about where you are in HIS EYES, and if necessary, where and how you've been living. Is it any wonder that we are often stressed in trying to live our Christian lives, especially if we try to keep one foot inside the Cleft of the Rock, and the other on a path of our own flesh, a nice one, but nonetheless, one of our own making?

Father, today, I am in awe of Your total devotion to me. You have loved me with a love so beyond anything I could ever deserve or earn. Your mercy simply exceeds any effort to describe it. Today, I say to you, precious Father, I love the Niche You carved out for me. I make the decision to right now, Papa (Abba), to climb in completely into You – and to rest there. Thank you, my Beloved Rock. I worship You.

I sing to You, Father, from my heart. I sing to you, oh Divine Rock.

Rock of Ages cleft for me
Let me hide myself in Thee
Let the water and the blood
From Thy wounded side which flowed

Rock of Ages cleft for me
Save from wrath and make me pure

While I draw this fleeting breath
When my eyes shall close in death
When I rise to worlds unknown
And behold Thee on Thy throne

Rock of Ages cleft for me
Let me hide myself in Thee

