

June 30, 2013

Dear Friends, Far and Near,

The last day of June, 2013! Where does time go? I'm sure the writer of Ecclesiastes could tell us a lot about that.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness: according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." In a book I recently read, the fact that we are to be repenting over and over again for our sins against our Holy God was emphasized.

It is our nature to not see our sins as sinful as they are. It is when we see His holiness that our hearts see them differently and we experience anew His mercy in forgiveness.

These months have been uneventful other than several bouts with A fib which seems to do me in and leave me exhausted. I have an appointment with a specialist who deals with the electrical aspects of the heart and my cardiologist seems to think he can prescribe some new medication that will help this problem. He had assured me it wouldn't kill me and I am taking him at his word. I do thank the Lord for each time He brings me through and gives relief. You didn't know about this but your prayers, interpreted by the Holy Spirit, have given strength when needed.

My daughter, Renata, from Knoxville came and spent two weeks with me so Cherry and Jim and their daughter could go to Virginia to see their son and wife and two grandsons. It was a very special time and we both enjoyed our time together. Renata teaches English to highschoolers. She is a voracious reader and I love to read, so that is how we spent our evenings.

I told her I was thinking of telling a story from my early years in Bolivia and she suggested the one I am going to share: It was in 1951 and Bob was with a Brazilian guide far away, up the river making an effort to meet a tribe of indigenous people who had never seen a civilized person before. He was gone for three months with no possibility of sending any message to me. Our first son was not yet two months old when he left. I bought vegetables on the Brazilian side of the river which I crossed in a canoe that crossed the river back and forth throughout the day. This particular day I arrived at our house and the porch (just a layer of sand) was covered by what must have been thousands and thousands ants. It was dusk and would soon be dark. I had heard about that ant..it would enter the house and go through it, eating every crumb or insect in its way. WHAT To DO?? Only God could have given me this idea. I ran to the back of the house and grabbed a good size rag which I soaked in alcohol which we always had for igniting our one burner primus burner. I first tied the rag to a strong stick and lighted the rag and ran to the porch and began with the ants closest to the door and moved the flaming rag back and forth until every ant was gone and the baby which I held in my other arm and I were safe to enter the house and rest in peace. This is just one of the many experiences when God protected me from harm. That house had one large room and a bedroom. The bedroom was in the front and had one light bulb hanging from the ceiling. It went on

each evening as it became dark. There were screens on the two windows but no shutters or curtains. The town drunk slept under my window every night...a safe place for him to rest. God wonderfully cared for me during that time when I was the only American woman living in that village.

On the fourth of July this week, I will be ninety years old. For some reason God has kept me here. Pray with me that my days will be only for His glory. When we really want to know Him better it will involve many lessons we would prefer to skip but the more we apply ourselves, the more honestly we can say what the Psalmist said: "I, thy servant will study thy statutes. Thy instruction is my continual delight."

I have "delighted" to read a book by Elizabeth Elliot: KEEP A QUIET HEART. Hers has not been an easy life but she has taught many to love the Lord and His precepts.

At this stage in my life I spend many hours alone...just me and my Saviour together in the home He has given me. As a result, it is quiet. In this day, it seems it takes much discipline to be quiet or still. There is noise and loudness on every hand so that, for many, it takes real discipline to turn off the many interruptions and noisy influences. Do I really need to hear the news every hour? Even now, I have some beautiful music playing in the background. I could turn it off and spend this time just with you.

I strongly recommend this book. It will make you think and meditate and contemplate the possible changes that need to be made in your life and home.

To all those to whom I send this letter, I thank you for your love and friendship through the years. For many of you it has been well over half a century and we still think of the wonderful memories we have and the friendships that could begin again the minute we could see each other. One of these days that will occur...we listen for the shout and know we are being called. We truly do have a blessed hope. Some of you still send me monetary gifts which come as God's provision for me. I thank you with all my heart.

"Lord, give to me a quiet heart
That does not ask to understand,
But confident steps forward in
The darkness guided by Thy hand."

Much love in Christ,

Julie Collins

