

Breaking Bread Blog by Jo Lynn Bright

October 2011 ~ "The Parable Walk"

Fall is such a great time to retreat, steal away, so that one can be intentional about listening to God and being refreshed in spirit. October was such a time for me. One of my dear friends invited me to join their ladies for their annual women's retreat. Both of us were so excited about the opportunity to get away and leave daily life behind for a few days. We didn't even mind the bunk beds and "slumber party" atmosphere. Even though I do have to admit that climbing to the top bunk quickly reminded me that I no longer possessed the teenage body that once upon a time attended cheerleading camp at this same retreat spot! Not to mention that I had already inhaled three homemade cookies that had butter dripping from them. My dear husband was very intentional in making sure that I wouldn't forget his great cooking while I was away.

*There is just something special about numerous women being in one place worshipping and praising God. The weekend was full of fun, laughs, too many cookies, encouragement, and **meeting new "friends."***

*On the drive home, my friend asked me what the highlight of the retreat was. I immediately responded, "**The Parable Walk!**" She inquired further. I went on to explain that it was intriguing because I had never been on a parable walk before. I'd been on prayer walks, but not a parable walk. God met me there!*

A parable walk is a self-guided time spent with God, alert to His presence and His leading. *I was so longing for the retreat weekend to provide an opportunity to "steal away" alone and listen to God, and the parable walk satisfied this longing. Our leader helped to prepare us for this time with God by asking questions, reading scripture, and giving clear instruction. A key instruction of **inviting the Lord to speak to me in what I notice** really pressed me to allow God to be in charge and to anticipate His presence.*

*I started out on a defined path where others were also travelling. For those of you who know me, I'm not too much of a risk taker, so I tried to stay on a clear, well-travelled pathway, so that I could take the "safe" way. When I looked to my left, I saw this tree with reddish leaves and it stood out against the other green landscape. Do I dare veer off the path? What if I get lost? I took the risk, as I tried my best to listen to God's leading, and **He seemed to be saying, "take the risk."** Just beyond the tree in front of me was a structure that was inviting me to come explore. There was a path that led to the structure, and as I was walking the gravel beneath my feet changed to stepping on acorns. I stopped and looked at my changed pathway, picked up an acorn to keep me company. **One never knows what they will find along the way as they are listening and obeying the Father.***

*Upon entering the pavilion, I noticed there were several choices for seating, yet I felt the urge to sit on one particular bench. God led me to that place to sit and listen to Him, as He reminded me of His desire to commune with me. **Imagine that...the God of the universe wants to spend time with me!** I'm a MESS! He just wants me to stop for a few minutes in*

*my day to be alone with Him, so that we can be close, and He can make me like His Son. **He gave me a song in the pavilion**, and it speaks of wanting to know Him...more than anything, more than anything!*

*As I looked out from the pavilion and prepared to return to our starting spot, I noticed other women on the path I had exited, another sitting under a tree in the posture of surrender. **God spoke—“I’m speaking to all of you because more than anything, I want to be in relationship with each of you.”** He has a plan for each of us, if we would just take the time to listen to His voice. We can have no doubts; those plans will always offer the opportunity for each of us to point others to Him!*