

Welcome to My Closet

Do you have a place you go when you need peace or reset? Or just a location to make you stop and think to keep you from doing or saying something you'll regret? I have a closet.



It's a nice closet. It's even got a window which I hope will encourage you to stop thinking of me curled in a fetal position in a dark, back corner hidden behind clothes and the aroma of smelly shoes. Years ago, I dragged an old bench in there and a pillow so I could lean against the wire shelf racks to just ... look at my favorite tree.

My tree was really sick about eight years ago. It is a magnificent ash tree and it had been attacked by the emerald ash borer. One tree service told me it would be dead before the end of the summer and for the modest fee of \$1800 he'd hack it down for me. Another service said that there was no cure for the pest but if I wanted to shell out \$450, he'd inject some promising new treatment directly into the trunk and pump some really top-notch liquid fertilizer into the surrounding soil. Oh, and did I know that the other ash tree on our property was sick, too...?

We went with the cheaper option because it offered a bit more hope (yes, for both trees). I took to going up to my closet, the best place to look at my tree, to see if I could see any changes ... good or bad. I remember wondering if you are allowed to pray for a tree. It sounded like a stupid question, but there was some heartfelt honesty in the need. You know, there's not a lot of places to ask that question and get a serious answer.

I'd sit there, trying to get the pillow just right between my back and the wire shelves and, well, I began to have some beautiful conversations with God. Quiet little tidbits that would give me peace, or inspire me to go write something, or make me suddenly feel absolutely compelled to call someone and say, "Hi! How are you doing?" At times became more than quiet. I don't have a better word than intense. It became a place that at times I actually sought out just for that God connection...

My husband found me there one day (that was an interesting conversation, let me tell you). But he's a good guy and after almost thirty-five years of marriage is used to my *uniqueness*. (I'm grinning.) One day, when I was particularly upset about something, he said very quietly (because it's dangerous ground you realize), "Why don't you go sit in your closet?" And I did. And it helped.

All winter, even when I didn't know if my favorite tree was alive or dead, I'd go up into my closet. I brought a journal and pen, an extra pair of reading glasses, and a Bible and stashed them under my bench. My cats started to follow me in and sometimes I had to juggle them on my lap while I tried to just [be still](#).

In the Spring, my tree got leaves. LOTS of leaves. The tree guy came mid-summer and stood on the front path in the shade, with the leaves whistling in the wind and some of them bending so

low that you could reach up and touch them. He finally looked at me and said, “This is the most miraculous recovery of (he used a bunch of technical tree and bug terms) that I have ever seen. Can I take a picture?”

Last year was a really hard year for a number of really serious reasons I won’t bother to go into. If I had taken one of those stress questionnaires, I would have scored in the 90s. *It was bad.* There were a number of weeks when I literally spent hours in my closet. And then, as prayers began to be answered (in the way God answers, not the way we necessarily request) and I began to see hope, I kind of emerged.

My husband and I went away for a long weekend to celebrate an anniversary. My daughter stayed with my elderly mom. When we came home, she said, “I have a surprise for you.” On the porch was a huge pot of daisies. “Oh, that’s not the surprise, go upstairs. *To your closet.*” (She might have found me there one time crying...)

With great trepidation I climbed up the stairs. What had she done? (Hey, it’s my holy place now...you can come in – maybe – *by invitation only.*) I opened the door and started to cry. She had moved out a section of clothes. Put in a big, comfy chair. Painted the corner my favorite color green. Installed shelves and arranged all my books and bits carefully. She’d even made a drape (with leaves from our garden pressed into it) to cover the other side of the closet where clothes still hung. Outside the window, my tree waved and grinned at me.

My daughter had been one of the reasons I had been so stressed and worried. And yet she was the one that knew me well enough to not only know to do this wonderful thing, but was able to do this wonderful thing in a way that made this wonderful thing infinitely better. This was my communal space with God and now this was a loving embrace from my daughter as well. Just when I didn’t think something could be better, God showed me differently.

Everyone knows about my closet now. I’ve done online video posts from it. Friends have come for tea and said, “Can I see your closet?” I have a number of other friends who have also worked to have a closet as well. I’ve even had someone ask me to “go in my closet” and pray for them.

There is a verse ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)) that is kind of difficult to wrap your head around. It says, “My [God’s] grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” For me it means that even at our very weakest (you know, when you’re crying in your closet) that’s when God can make you the strongest. For me, my strength, my joy, doesn’t come from anything I do myself; it comes from God’s love, goodness, and blessing. Even when I am [walking through the worst times](#), I know that I am not alone and God is there traveling right along with me.

This wonderful truth is something that is available for you, too. It’s not just a privilege for a special few. You may be ill and infected with pests, but you’re not ready to be cut down yet. God still wants you and has plans for you! Believe this and then watch for it. If a closet can become holy ground, imagine what God might do in the quiet spaces of our own life. Welcome the Spirit into your life to guide, strengthen, and comfort you. This is what God made all of humanity for; a relationship that grows better, fuller every day.

Scripture to maybe check out:

- [Psalm 46](#)
- [Psalm 63](#) I memorized this whole thing I liked it so much. (And I'm not much of a memorizer, honest.)

P.S. For this post, I used The New Revised Standard Updated Edition, put out by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America in 2021. Feel free to check these passages out in whatever Bible version you prefer—almost all of them are available on Bible Gateway!

What are your thoughts about this post? Email me and let me know!
honesttheology@gmail.com