

Dearest Friend,

As you read this I know you are thinking that you don't have time. Let me assure you, you do. You just spent almost two months abroad and on the go; all you want to do is rest but you are on the move again. Whether moving houses or preparing to move to college, it is hard to hit the ground running right after a Royal Servants trip. I should know, I have done it twice. I pray my story helps encourage you and reassures you that God's got you in this time.

In 2015 I went on EuroQuest. That summer was a huge turning point in my life as I put to rest the demons of my past and looked forward to a new chapter in my life in college. The only problem was I had two weeks until I left, knowing I would probably not be returning to live at home again. Two weeks seems like a long time until you live it. In that time, I had to clean out most of my old room, pack for college, family plans, and many other personal items that needed taken care of before I left. I did not have time to decompress when I got home, it was hit the ground running. You may have an even shorter time and my heart goes out to you. Before I had realized it, I was loading up my truck and moving to school. It felt like my RS trip had almost not happened. Over the next couple of months God showed up and helped me slowly piece together what had happened and how I had changed. He pointed out how I now saw people and the world differently than before. It was a slow revelation and I poured over the journal I had kept over the summer on many occasions. God showed me He would not just change me in as big of a way as He did and just leave me hanging, but rather He worked His way into the business of my life to put me together and keep me whole.

This last summer (2019) I went on Nehemiah and faced an even more uncertain future and another quick transition when I arrived home, but God showed up in ways beyond my imagination. This story actually starts the October before, but I will keep it short, I promise. I was working as the head riding instructor for a horse barn teaching around 30 students a week. I loved teaching and my students, but my heart hurt to share Christ with them. It was a secular barn so, legally, I couldn't. My heart broke over a student clearly seeking, and I couldn't give her the answer to find life. I knew then that rather than waiting until I was more financially secure to go into ministry, I had to go now. I questioned my next step when I remembered my Nehemiah invitation I had received after my first summer. This would be the last summer I could go. I had been thinking about it the last couple years, but it did not work out logistically. I prayed and asked God if he wanted me to go on Nehemiah and if so to make it clear. The next morning, I received my renewed invitation to Nehemiah and immediately applied. My lease was up in June so come spring, while I prepared for the summer, I informed my boss of my departure, hired my replacement, and searched for an Equine ministry who needed me. I contacted everyone in Oregon and Washington but none of them had openings.

Come June I moved my stuff to my parent's house for storage and started to accept that I would just have to try again to find a job when I got home from the summer. As I was packing my apartment I got a call. A woman from one of the ministries I contacted said she had an opening starting in September. I went and interviewed and a week before I left for the summer I finally had a place to go when I came home. It was a volunteer position for now, so I had no income or a place to live but I knew where I was going to be. Coming home I had three weeks to find a job, housing, and move while preparing for my brother's wedding. Panic started to set in as soon as our wheels touched down. I was spending a few days visiting my friend in Michigan before returning to Oregon, and while I was looking forward to it, I knew I had so much waiting for me to do, I didn't know if I could relax. One afternoon there, I was watching the rain pour and while journaling God gave me his peace beyond understanding that He would work

an alumni open letter:

...to those moving soon after their return home

everything out. Upon returning to Oregon I called the woman from the barn who then gave me a job lead that had just opened that week and a housing lead with her son and daughter-in-law who just bought a house and needed a roommate. The timing on everything was perfect and within a week I had a paying job that would work with my barn schedule and a place to live within 10 minutes from both. I was blown away. While it was still a whirlwind of a month, God proved his faithfulness time and time again showing me I was just where He wanted me.

My friend you are in for a wild ride as you transition quickly to the next stage of your life, but you don't have to fear. As cheesy as it sounds, if God brings you to it, He will bring you through it. He brought you through your RS trip a new person and He will help hold you together no matter what you go through. If you need rest, He will provide. If you need a job, He will provide. If you need a home, He will provide. God never promised that this life would be easy, and it doesn't slow down, but He has promised that no matter what comes He will be right there with us. You may hit the ground running, but He is matching you every step of the way.

Luke 12:22-32

²² And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶ If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰ For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

³² "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Philippians 4:4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Your Friend,

Mary Schmidt