

Rain Down On Us

A couple of weeks ago as I was traveling to a retreat, it was raining so hard that I was having trouble seeing out of my windshield. This does not take into consideration that I was planning a weekend full of outdoor activities at a men's retreat and the weather was not cooperating. I said a silent prayer to the Lord, "God, you know that this was a weekend planned for men to be out in nature with you and reconnect on a new spiritual level, why does it have to be so wet and gloomy." No sooner had I said these words, I came up with an answer, "Love the rain" and this answer was repeated over and over again, "Love the rain".

Calvin Thompson and I were riding together and I shared with him how I had prayed and received an answer from God. Even though God wanted me to love the rain, he answered my prayer and blessed us with a dry weekend and the clouds broke and the sunbeams shined through where we could still sit around a camp fire and have outdoor devotions etc. over the course of this weekend (James 5:17-18).

Have you ever been out in the rain and at first you tried to resist getting wet and attempted to find shelter without success? After a few minutes you probably realized that seeking to stay dry was futile and you began to accept that you are out in the rain and you are going to get wet. Once you are soaked, you most likely didn't care about the drops of rain and in some circumstances you even found a way to enjoy yourself.

We all experience rainy days in our lives both physically and spiritually? Rain is often viewed negatively as something that ruins or hinders our established plans, but I believe that if we view rain from a proper perspective, we will always see its lasting benefits that were intended by the Creator. God is the creator of rain from the beginning (Gen. 2:5; Job 38:25-30). He allows us to face some days where it seems from a spiritual perspective that a dark cloud looms overhead. How we respond to every downpour is important. We need to praise God in the storms of life.

Rain falls from heaven without partiality on both the righteous and the unrighteous? We have all seen the cartoon where no one else has a rain cloud over their head except for the one who is going through the turmoil. This is simply not the case with how God issues the rain (Matthew 5:45). Are you one who sings, "Rain Rain Go Away" or "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" or "Singing in the Rain" or "Bring on the Rain"?

Jo Dee Messina sings the lyrics to this last song:

Another day has almost come and gone, can't imagine what else could go wrong.
Sometimes I'd like to hide away somewhere and lock the door. A single battle lost but not the war.
Cause tomorrow's another day, and I'm thirsty anyway, so bring on the rain.
Its almost like the hard times, circle 'round. A couple drops and they all start coming down.
Yeah I might feel defeated, I might hang my head. I might be barely breathing but I'm not dead.
Cause tomorrow's another day, and I'm thirsty anyway, so bring on the rain.

I'm not gonna let it get me down, I'm not gonna cry, and I'm not gonna lose any sleep tonight.
Cause tomorrow's another day, and I am not afraid, so bring on the rain.

How we respond to the rain often depends on how we view it? If a man had a fishing trip planned he may despise the rain because he may have to dock the boat and stay home. His wife on the other hand may rejoice because her husband will have to cancel and be with her due to the weather. (Note to husbands: don't let her know you are upset and enjoy the time with your wife)

No matter how we view the rain, the rain is always a blessing (Ezek. 34:26) because it comes from God. The spring and autumn rain comes from God above. The rain is a witness of God's care for us (Acts 14:17; Deut. 28:12) When God opens His storehouse we have an abundance. When we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness all of our needs are met. God's people don't beg bread, we have the Bread of Life who gives us the abundant life. He does exceedingly more for us than we are able to ask or think (Eph. 3:20).

Bob Mark farmed for years and he understands the importance of the rain. Many of you also plant your own gardens of produce or flowers. We all know what a blessing the showers are for the earth. The farmer loves the rain because his crops depend on it for a good harvest to be produced (Luke 4:25).

Spiritually speaking we need to see God's outpouring as a rich blessing. When He sent His Son from heaven to die for us and His Spirit to come and live in us, we cannot despise the showers of blessings that come from His hand (Heb. 6:4-8; James 5:7-11). So even when you don't understand the storm you are in and you can't seem to shake the gloominess of the day, remember that what God brings you to, he will bring you through. He can calm a storm and lead you to the fullness of joy. The storm in your life might be just what you need to reach the next level of growth in Christ. What fruit can come from the rain that is falling in your life right now?

Just as the Lord can stop the physical blessing of the rain, He can also withhold the spiritual blessings that come when we patiently endure in the faith (Deut. 11:11, 14, 16-17; Jer. 14:1-7)

Meteorologists are relied upon to tell us what the weather will be like and often we are able to determine if rain is in the forecast (Luke 12:54-55). We need to be a discerning people beyond our physical climate and learn to assess the spiritual atmosphere in our personal lives, our homes and in the church to see the dark clouds moving in so that we handle the storm appropriately.

For example, when we look at our marriages, can we enjoy the strolls in the flower gardens of life if we don't appreciate the rains that fall to produce them? (See Song of Solomon 2:10-14).

In the same way that God rained down manna (Exodus 16:4) and meat to His people (Psalm 78:23-27), He also rained a flood to destroy the world and cast down fire and brimstone to ruin the wicked. (Gen. 7:4, 12; 8:2; Psalm 11:5-7; Gen. 19:24; Ex. 9:18, 33f) We need to heed the teachings of the Lord!

The words that someone uses to teach us are referred to as watering a seed or are like rain (Deut. 32:1-4; Isaiah 55:10-11).

Some people are like clouds without water (which is really a contradiction in terms since a cloud is made up of water particles)...they have a lot to say but are only being divisive (Jude 1:12) In other words they bring a storm with its gloom but provide no rain which produces the growth and its produce.

Sin can cause God to cease his blessing from being poured out while repentance and obedience opens the storehouses of heaven (I Kings 8:35-36) It will be "rich and plenteous" (Isaiah 30:23).

God can also withhold rain and bring turmoil unless we humble ourselves and seek Him (II Chron. 7:13-14) God provides a "plentiful rain" to those who are parched and thirsty (Psalm 68:8-9)

Spiritually God pours out His Spirit and righteousness is the result (Isaiah 45:8) See Jeremiah 5:20-25; Hosea 6:1-3

God can rain on the city he wishes while withholding it from another (Amos 4:7)

Pray and ask for rain and the Lord will give it (Zech. 10:1)

There is coming a day of testing when the rains fall and the floods arise and the winds blow and we face the final storm to see whether our house will stand (Matt. 7:24-27)

The Bible tells us that just as Sodom and Gomorrah received a shower of fire and brimstone to destroy them for their wickedness, that the unrighteous will receive damnation when the Son of God is revealed (Luke 17:29-30)

For the people of God, we love the rain. Even though the rain can bring some gloominess and difficulty, we know that the almighty Creator has a plan that will work out for our good because we love Him. The fruit that comes from a well received downpour is evidence of the benefits of the rain.

Love the rain. Face the storm. Receive each as a blessing.