



Showers of Blessing

By Tammy Borden ©

Pouring rain. I peered out the small window to see the ominous clouds, thunder, lightening and a small lake quickly forming in front of the building I had found as a shelter from the storm. Safe. The ground was already saturated from an overnight rain of an inch or so only two days earlier, and several days of stormy weather the week before. It was the middle of July, usually the driest month of the year. But this year it proved to be the wettest July ever on record.

I was at a large outdoor event when the rains came and I found myself peering out that window. Several others had gathered with me, some friends, some strangers. It was about 3:00 in the afternoon and families of all ages were caught somewhat unexpectedly by the fast moving storm. Most made it inside before the drenching rains began so that they could wait it out.

In my mind, all I could think was, "Enough, already! When's this rain going to end?" I recalled a friend telling me how her basement flooded. Another told me of how his garden was beneath four inches of water a few days earlier, and I thought about how this dousing rain might be the final blow. I was more fortunate since I lived on higher ground, but still couldn't escape the wrath of the rain. Everything had flopped over. Slugs were seeking and destroying. Powdery mildew reigned. Tomatoes were rotting on the vine. Weeds were taking over. And the mosquitoes! Need I say more?

It's hard to make sense of it sometimes. Storms often put a damper on our plans and our parties, as was the case with the event I was at. Where only a half hour earlier I saw crowds of laughing and singing people, now there were huge puddles and a sea of scattered lawn chairs tossed around by the fierce winds. The people inside along with me waited impatiently, talking on their cell phones or trying to sit clumsily on the floor as they tried to get comfortable. Needless to say, there was an air of disappointment. That was, until I looked out the window again. I could barely believe my eyes.

A group of teenagers had gathered, running through puddles, laughing hysterically as they tried to battle the piercing wind and rain. Though there wasn't any audible music aside from the heavenly rumbles, they danced to a melody that seemed to spring up from within them. They splashed around like carefree ducks in a pond, drenched from head to toe, arms outstretched and faces pointed towards the sky.

Suddenly my high and dry surroundings didn't seem like a safe haven any more, seeing their freedom and joy compared to the sullen faces surrounding me. Where I once felt sheltered, I now felt captive. I contemplated for a moment, "Should I go? Do I dare?" I brushed off the silly notion and stayed inside along with all my newfound companions, choosing to remain every bit as ill-tempered as them.

I regret not dashing out the door to frolic in the rain that day. I have no doubt in my mind that I would have experienced a joy far greater than those who hid inside. But fear kept me from going. Not just fear of getting wet or even fear of the danger. But more so, it was the fear of wondering what people would think of a forty-something year-old woman trying to do the slip-n-slide through a 6" deep river that had formed nearby. Staying inside was dry. Staying inside was expected. Staying inside was... safe.

I wonder how often we see the storms of life as curses instead of blessings. We find it hard to see the good in something that has the potential to cause so much damage. Yet often, I believe we purposely hide ourselves away from the storms of life and try to protect our souls from the blessings that can be showered upon us in the midst of it. We peer through the window; catching glimpses of what it could be like on the other side if only we'd put aside our fears and reservations. We keep up appearances so those around us, who may be equally as miserable, don't think of us as imprudent or childish. We choose to remain ill-tempered.

I thought of something else that day... God longs to shower us with his grace and mercy, to douse us in His Spirit. What would it look like to abandon our self-awareness and focus fully on His awareness, to become fully drenched in His Spirit? How often do we say we want to be consumed by his presence, yet hesitate to step outside to experience Him like never before? We often become complacent to remain where we are spiritually because fully releasing ourselves to the power of His Spirit is unpredictable and may mean taking the risk to look foolish. Sometimes the storm is God wanting to shower us with His blessings, if only we'd step out into the rain.

Rains come. Winds blow. The storms of life are inevitable. Will we stay safe? Or will we take the risk to experience life in all its unpredictability, yet all its fullness. I hope to have enough courage the next time a storm comes, if that be from the weather or life. Will you join me? Step away from the window. Walk through the door. Stretch open your arms. And dance.

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