

5 SHOWERS OF BLESSING

~ Isaiah 44: 1 – 5 ~

*For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground.*

(Is. 44:3)

You probably know this, but the best way to water your garden or lawn is through the rain that falls on it. You may have noticed that following a rainstorm, your plants look a little more vibrant and they stand up a little straighter.

That's because our atmosphere is about 78% nitrogen, and nitrogen is a large part of chlorophyll. Our plants need nitrogen, but they can't take it directly from the atmosphere. So, the heat and energy from lightning converts atmospheric nitrogen into a form of nitrogen our plants can absorb, i.e. rain. By the way, this is part of what we smell before and after a rainstorm.

Then why do we often look at rain so negatively? “Don't rain on my parade,” we say. Or, “I'm saving that for a rainy day.” But the Bible sees things differently. God's Word views rain as a blessing.

*Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he
has given you autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you
abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.*

– Joel 2:23

*I will bless them and the places surrounding my hill. I will
send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing.*

– Ezekiel 34:26

So, the next time the skies get cloudy, the drops begin to fall, and you smell that familiar smell, be thankful that your lawn and your gardens are about to be nourished in the way they were intended to be. But more than that, be aware of and thankful for the showers of blessing that drench us daily.

*There shall be showers of blessing:
This is the promise of love.
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Savior above.
(Daniel W. Whittle)*

HOW DOES THIS WORK?

~ Mark 4: 26 – 29 ~

*Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up,
the seed sprouts and grows, though he
does not know how.*

(Mk. 4:27)

Every Summer, year after year, I'm amazed at how this relatively small seed I plant in April has become, by July, an 8 foot sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) with 10 inch blooms, many of which will appear on a single branch of the main stalk. If I wanted to, I guess I could discover and then explain scientifically how all this works, but I'd rather just be amazed at how (aside from actually planting the seed and watering occasionally) this all happens with very little help from me. And it happens whether I understand, or am even aware of, the process itself.

And just to show you that there's *always* something to be learned: I only recently found out that sunflowers are actually a part of the daisy family! Who knew? (I certainly didn't.)

The parable referenced above is found only in the book of Mark, and it unveils a little of the mystery of the Kingdom of God. Jesus said the Kingdom is like a seed planted by a sower. That seed sprouts, produces a stalk, develops a head, then displays the full kernel. In all this, the sower doesn't really know how or when this happens.

Sometimes in our efforts to participate in and build the Kingdom of God, we forget it's God Himself who builds and who draws people to Himself. While preparing the soil properly is an important step, the Gospel has a power all its own.

It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that if we implement this type of church programming, or if we adopt this style of worship, or if we employ this kind of upfront personality, our congregations will grow and our sector of the Kingdom of God will flourish. It's a delicate balance, and there are many considerations like these that we have to take seriously. But in the end, it's God who builds. It's God who draws renegades and prodigals to Himself. It's God who, sometimes despite our best and even our misguided efforts, can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.

And God, through His Holy Spirit, is quite capable of all this.