

Soaking Up Holy Spirit's Healing Downpour

It's been a hot summer!

Having migrated from New York to Florida, where I lived most of my life, I am used to a hot, muggy climate from June through August, along with the recurring afternoon thunderstorms and rain greeting us during the evening rush hours. The storms would bring occasional power outages, so the kitchen was closed and we'd settle for take-out or delivery. The aftermath was the sweet, fresh smell of the grass, a calming breeze and slight reduction in temperature. However, we weren't saying, "Oh, goodie, another thunderstorm!"

In Miami, I remember hanging my laundered sheets on the clothes line so they would get that fresh, airy smell. They didn't take long to dry, but many an afternoon, I would race to the clothesline, trying to beat out the ensuing rain, which would then soak my almost-dry items. When the sun returned and the summer breeze with it, they would quickly dry again. But at the time, I found it most inconvenient.

Rain came every afternoon like clockwork. And when it rained, it poured buckets. It was not gentle. It brought wind, lightning and thunder. It was loud and scary, but it only lasted a few minutes. Then came the sunshine, giving an almost technicolor appearance to the surroundings. Everything seemed cleaner and brighter. Florida is beautiful—hot, humid but beautiful.

In contrast, when I recap my childhood memories, it seemed like we had rainy days in New York. It would be a steady gentle rain that brought refreshing to our surroundings in the spring and summer and drew you indoors to enjoy the comfort of tea or cocoa in the winter. The rain was comforting and we

were prepared for it. We had rain gear—boots, galoshes, raincoats and umbrellas.

Since moving across the country to the desert, I find myself reminiscing about rain. The temperatures have soared from 90 degrees to 115+ degrees in this desert ... and no rain. My husband and I diligently watch the forecasts, and there is the “hope of rain” but day after day, month after month, there had been no rain.

Finally, after five months, it rained last week. I didn’t see it. It happened while we slept, but it was the topic of conversation the next morning. Everyone was excited. It lowered the temperature down into the 90s.

Rain is a blessing in so many ways. Not only does it refresh the earth so that it can yield its fruit and provide nourishment for us and the rest of creation, but it’s symbolic of God’s blessings on us (see Ezek. 34:26). Jesus said that it falls on the just and the unjust (see Matt. 5:45).

Before I lived in the desert, I took rain for granted. Sometimes it annoyed me. I found it inconvenient to my plans. I look back now with much more appreciation. I recognize it as the blessing God intended.

But it means even more than that to me now. When you are in a dry land, you thirst for water. You crave water. You recognize that your very existence depends on water. As the psalmist said, “As the deer pants after the water brooks, so my soul pants after you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When will I come and appear before God?” (Ps. 42:1-2).

Living in a dry land reminds me of my need for water for my physical well-being and existence alone. But it also reminds me that my soul needs refreshing—from the water only the Lord can provide (see John 4:13,14). His promise of the Holy Spirit guarantees that we will have everlasting water: “He who

believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.” By this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believe in Him would receive. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:38-39).

God’s Word rains on us (see Deut. 32:2). It tells us to break up the fallow ground of our hearts and “seek the Lord, until He comes and rains righteousness upon you” (Hos. 10:12).

Comparing physical rain and spiritual rain is not difficult. One refreshes our physical surroundings and brings life to the earth. A cold glass of water on a hot day is a godsend. But it cannot quench spiritual thirst. Only God can do that.

Are you ready to bring your parched soul before Him and allow Him to rain righteousness upon you? Can you sit in His presence and let Him saturate you with His refreshing? Take a moment to lift your hands in surrender and receive His showers of blessing. Then say, “Holy Spirit rain, rain ... don’t go away.”

Prayer Power for the Week of July 30, 2017

This week, follow Paul’s admonition to give thanks in all things—even the weather conditions. Give God praise and glory that you are safe and secure in Him no matter what you face. Continue to pray for the president and all working with him to ensure they make the best decisions for the nation. Remember those who have suffered loss through wildfires, other natural disasters or crime. Pray for worldwide revival, more laborers for the harvest field, the peace of Jerusalem, our military, allies and unity in the body of Christ. Read John 4:14; Psalm 42:1; John 7:38; Hosea 10:12.