

Ever Seen a Rain Lily?

Following the recent rains in our area, the undaunted rain lilies have sprung to life. Delicate white flowers flung across fields, woodlands and roadsides in a glorious array. After months and months of serious drought, it seemed like a Halleluiah Chorus for the precious drops of nourishment and refreshment. (Isaiah 35:6 "The dry land shall be glad.")

The crocus shaped rain lily, with its six petals and yellow throat, is supported by a slender stem with a bulb root. It remains un-noticed among the weeds until the rain falls. Then it emerges in response to the life-giving rain in an expression of upward praise. Rain, the affirmation of God's attention, brings "joy and singing". (Isaiah 35:2)

Isaiah 35:1-7 talks about the healing and restoration the Lord will accomplish for the land **and** His people. His is not a weak and wimpy attitude toward their desolation. Verse 4 says, "Behold, your God will come with a vengeance." Vengeance refers to strength, unstoppable power and determination. This promise was completed in the coming of Jesus Christ. Like the rain lily, when we experience the refreshing found in intimate relationship with God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we cannot help but lift our heads in praise!

Whether we know it or not, we have been redeemed to enjoy that relationship and "walk in the Way of Holiness". It is a destiny prepared for us before time began. Satan stands accusing; labeling us as unworthy to bask in the joy of the Lord. He would like for us to believe we are responsible for our own salvation because Jesus wasn't **enough!** That God expects perfection and we can never make the grade. But the accusations are all lies, spewed by the mouth of the great Liar.

So what is the truth? We can choose the gift of redemption and restoration God offers us through the life Jesus lived in this messy, dark world. He was tempted, in every way that we are tempted, to participate with the darkness. Yet he clung to the Father's Truth of who he was. He stayed connected and remained sinless. Jesus died an agonizing death in order to restore our broken relationship with the Father. Then he returned to the Father as our advocate. We have been given LIFE! How can we not accept it?

When the shame of who you thought you were has been erased, there is no place for "sorrow and sighing". You are FREE to be your true self, filled with the Father's joy over who you are. Like the rain lily, what other response can there be but praise?

Take a moment to meditate over this entire passage and ask the Lord what new things he might desire to show you.

Joy of the Redeemed: Isaiah 36:1-10

The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.

Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;
say to those with fearful hearts,
“Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you.”

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.
The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.
The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.
No lion will be there,
nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.

But only the redeemed will walk there,
and those the LORD has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.