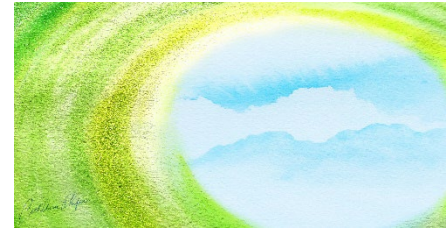




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writings by Beth Ann Phifer



Made for Another World

Windows into Joy

A Short Devotional

December 18, 2021

On Saturday morning, December 18, 2021, I awoke after a long night's sleep to waves of thoughts, all connecting into a powerful revelation that produced joy in me. I grabbed my journal to capture the thoughts. After writing them down, I realized what I so often realize when writing... that the thoughts were not particularly profound in themselves; but rather they were powerful because they were personal. The Lord simply wanted to give me **joy**.

A few days before, I had seen the new movie *The Most Reluctant Convert*, the biography of C.S. Lewis, beloved Christian author. Max McLean plays Lewis in the movie. In the memorable way that only McLean can deliver, Lewis said, "I doubt that anyone who has tasted joy would exchange it for any other pleasures in the world. **Joy is never in our power and pleasure is.**"

In the movie, Jack (C.S. Lewis) spoke of a moment in his childhood when his older brother, Warnie (Warren), built a small toy garden from leaves, branches, rocks, and blooms. The sight of its pure beauty was a moment that remained in Jack's mind, pulling him forward through his youth and education in his search for more of what he felt in that moment – **joy**.

I define joy in two ways:

- **Joy** is a glimpse, taste, or window into that place for which we were made where joy is never-ending. It is a peeling-away of the layers between us and our future completeness in heaven! The Kingdom of Heaven is Joy.
- **Joy** is a river within us, a constant undercurrent, because Yeshua Messiah is Joy Incarnate. He said, "Whoever drinks of the water I will give him shall never thirst; but the water I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life." (John 4:14)

Although joy is always available to us in Yeshua, we don't always experience it. The Lord visits us with joy in surprising ways. We want to hold on to the moment, but barriers and interruptions come. So, I prayed for this joy that is not "in my power" to obtain. And **He gave joy in the knowledge that we were made for another world.**

Many years ago, I heard a pastor share that a baby's formation in the womb is a picture of our formation on earth. The baby's ears, eyelashes, and toes are being formed, not for his/her current environment, but for another world. Likewise, we are being formed for another place. (His bride is being made ready – Revelation 19:7) For this reason, we often feel a longing we cannot identify but that is nothing more than homesickness.

Abraham's life foreshadowed this longing. He left his earthly inheritance to journey to a land he had never seen. He was an alien led by God, looking for The City. He welcomed God's promises from a distance as an exile on earth. He desired a better country, the heavenly one. (See Hebrews 11:8-16.)

Evangeline Paterson was a poet from Northern Ireland who left her homeland later in life. She penned similar thoughts in her poem *Exile*:

The stream in the winding valley,
The knolls and the birches,
And beautiful the mountain's bare shoulder
And the calm brows of the hills;
But it is not my country,
And in my heart, there is a hollow place always.
And there is no way to go back.

Maybe indeed the miles, but the years never.
Winding are the roads that we choose,
And inexorable is life, driving us like cattle
Farther and farther away from what we remember.
But when we shall come at last to God,
Who is our Home and our Country,
There will be no more road stretching before us
And no more need to go back.

No more longing; only complete fulfillment!... Just as Marjorie is now experiencing...

Years ago, I had a dream about my friend, Marjorie, who I had just seen in her coffin, thin and gaunt after a long battle with cancer. In my dream, she was walking and laughing with friends. As I passed her, I was astounded by her appearance and breathlessly said, "Marjorie! But...but... you're dead!" She said, "No, Beth Ann, I'm not dead." She was more radiant than any human being I had ever seen. Her face was full with color and health, and her skin was vibrant with translucence and joy.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Dear friends, I pray JOY over you, flowing up from the Well of Life within you, even Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord! I pray you are surprised with moments of JOY over and over again in 2022! We walk in a dark world, but the reality is, we are hidden in His light. He surrounds us! We are His! We are on our way to the Celestial City!