

Walking Through Our Rainclouds Toward The Sun

By Ken Woodley

Blessed are the winter trees, for they shall see leaves.
Blessed are the fallow fields, for the harvest is theirs.
Blessed are the empty skies, for they shall be given wings.
Blessed are the darkened days, for the light is coming toward them.
Each of us has winter trees inside us, even if they are rooted in the past.
At various times in our lives just about all of us are going to feel like a fallow field.
As if our spiritual journey is over and didn't really lead where we hoped that it would.
And very lucky indeed is the human being who hasn't felt a moment of desolation beneath a sky that seemed too empty for words.
And we just stand there, unable to take another step.
Sometimes a sharp spearpoint of pain stabs us out of the blue, turning azure into obsidian.
And rooting us to that moment in time.
Something of deep sadness happens that we just didn't see coming and we don't simply cry inside, or with tears streaming down our cheeks.
There are days when we rain, our sadness erupting like a cloudburst, drenching us in mourning for what we have lost.
Or, even more painful, what has been taken from us in ways that never should have been allowed.
But, we are not alone.
"Blessed are those who mourn," Jesus said, "for they will be comforted."
That is one of our most common English translations of that famous line from the Beatitudes. But a French translation of the New Testament that I have doesn't employ the word "mourn." Instead, it uses a word that is a form of "rain."
"Blessed are those who rain..." Whether that is literally an accurate translation, or my own interpretation, it speaks a profound truth.
Those who have truly mourned will immediately relate to "rain." If we "rain" we aren't simply crying. When we are so inundated by sadness that we "rain" then we are like a cloud that is capable of one thing and one thing only: rain.
We have become the rain—we have become sadness—itself.
But Jesus doesn't make an idle promise. Those who rain will be blessed because they will be comforted.
In such moments of desolation our guard is down and we are utterly vulnerable. Completely vulnerable to the darkness surrounding us, yes, but also totally vulnerable to the promised light of comfort and consolation.
Even the darkest days that surround us are a blessing, in their own way, because they do set the stage and draw back the curtain for the promised light.
It is darkness, after all, that illuminates light.
True, when the light comes we will see our own shadows. But we mustn't act like spiritual groundhogs and run back into our holes of hurt and sadness because that will only bring us six more weeks—or longer—of whatever is wintering our souls.
Our shadows, when the light comes, are only shadows.
They testify to the darkness which has fled and the light which now embraces us.
But reaching that "now" doesn't happen all at once. It takes time. One step, one moment, one day, and then one week, at a time.
We've got to keep walking down that spiritual road.

Like the slow but inexorable approach of spring.

Winter is still all around us but the days are growing a little bit longer and the longest night is slowly receding.

Just as our “rain” gradually clears into sunshine.

The inner journey takes time but our spiritual footsteps don’t represent the only movement. We can take heart, knowing the “light” of comfort and consolation is on its own intersecting journey toward us.

The light is coming to meet us.

So.....keep walking.