

Look at the Lilies

Pastoral Devotional
prepared by Pastor Sharon Tidd – July 15, 2020

Our church gardens are looking amazing these days. I guess the combination of rain and sunshine that we've had through the Spring and into the Summer has done its job! We have one garden that is filled with wild-flowers. The seeds were sown four summers ago, and the plants have flourished greatly in that time. Each year the garden is fuller than the last!

Whenever I come to the church I revel in their beauty: orange, yellow, fuchsia, red, and lots of green. So many colours. So many shapes and sizes. The variety of the leaves and petals overwhelms my imagination. They truly are something to behold; a testimony to the creative genius and originality of Creator God.

The other day as I pulled into my parking spot which faces that wild-flower garden I was struck with the truth that I rarely spend quality time taking in the beauty before me. My "to do" list beckons. There is work to be done, things to accomplish, duties to fulfill. And so I forget to stop and "smell the roses", so to speak. Do you ever find yourself in that place? Thinking you should linger, but feeling you can't because you can't afford the time?

As I was reflecting on that the other day, the LORD reminded me that He has invited me to "look at the lilies" (Luke 12:27a, New Living Translation). There is a lesson in their beauty and majesty; a lesson that can only be learned as I take the time to look. Stopping and looking should never be viewed as time wasted. It is, in fact, time invested in hearing and receiving God's Word anew.

Here's the invitation Jesus gave 2000+ years ago and continues to give today:

*"Look at the lilies and how they grow.
They don't work or make their clothing,
yet Solomon in all his glory
was not dressed as beautifully as they are.
And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers
that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow,
He will certainly care for you.
Why do you have so little faith?"
(Luke 12:27-28 NLT)*

I took the time that day to look. God got my attention! I took time to consider the beauty before me, to embrace the wonder, to reflect on the majesty that God's hand had created using sun and rain and some tiny seeds scattered years earlier. It was glorious time well spent!

The wildflowers in the garden are truly amazing. But soon their beauty will fade. And having served their purpose of bringing colour and joy into my life for a time, they'll be pulled up and tossed into the compost. Next year, by God's grace, they will flower again. Their seeds will lie dormant through the winter, but new life will come to them. They are a never-ending picture of renewal and restoration. God makes it happen. They don't toil, they don't spin, they don't work to make themselves beautiful. They trust their Maker to do that for them!

The lesson for me, in just sitting with their beauty for a time, was that I can trust my Maker to renew and restore and create something beautiful in me, again and again and again, just as those wild-flowers do. He's the Master Creator with the power to make it happen! I don't have to toil to become beautiful or worthy. I am worthy and beautiful because I am His creation.

God cares deeply for the flowers, though their lives are short. He takes great pleasure in their beauty. He cares deeply for me too and takes great pleasure in my life! He chooses to clothe me in majesty and beauty so that I can be a reflection of His glory here on earth. Some days I lose sight of that truth. On those days I need to stop and sit with the flowers so that I can be reminded.

What about you? Are you taking the time to "look at the lilies"?