

Joy To The World, The Lord Has Come!

Debby Woods

In March, I was walking on the beach with a huge bag of popcorn. My plan ... feed the birds. It is both amazing and entertaining to me to look at a bird-less sky, hold up my hand filled with popcorn and watch dozens of birds appear above my head. Seagulls, literally by the dozens that day, came and took popcorn right from my fingers. The majority of the birds would swarm, fly, land and eat as long as I had food to feed them. However, there was this one bird. It was different ... distant ... aloof ... a part of the group but "separate" from it. Upon closer examination, I discovered that someone had shot this seagull with a miniature dart that remained in its face beneath its eye. It made me sad and I wanted to help it. I attempted to get close enough to remove the dart, but it was afraid of me. "Lord, make this seagull comfortable with me so it can receive my help." Shouldn't this moment be filled with joy in the seagull world? Debby has come! However, it did not have joy. It did not receive my help. The closer I tried to get, the more it moved away from me. It was just as hungry and needy as the others, but knew that if it got too close the other birds would bump the dart and cause him pain. The pain was not worth the risk of coming closer. So there it was, all alone, in the middle of dozens of seagulls, yet unwilling to receive the healing touch of someone nearby.

The Lord used this scene to remind me that we do the same thing. We are hungry, needy and long to belong but we are not comfortable with receiving help from God or those He sends our way. We, too, are pierced with the "darts" of life that deliver pain when they are "bumped" by the people in our worlds. We hang out with our "flocks" but keep our distance. We fear that if they really saw our darts they would reject us. We, like this seagull, miss that in our midst is One bringing joy and therefore we do not ... receive our king. We were never meant to resolve life's pains alone. God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." However, we have erected walls around us and have practiced to perfection the art of hiding, stuffing, running and performing. We long for unconditional love from God and "the flock" ... but we fear that when they see our darts, the pain of their rejection will be unbearable.

It occurred to me that if I, so human and imperfect, could long to heal and help a seagull, how much more must God desire to heal and help all of us? He is constantly walking beside us with a prepared banquet and His invitation to "come unto Him." He longs to remove every dart of life that hurts and keeps us from experiencing healthy, fulfilling relationships with Him and His children. " 'For I will restore you to health and I will heal you of your wounds,' declares the Lord" (Jer. 30:17). Beloved, God sees the things that hurt you and me. He is not mad at us nor is He waiting to hurt us. He knows that we often feel alienated and afraid and He has come to restore us and set us free. He aches to pull us into His lap so that we can lay our heads on His shoulder and sense His unconditional, unmatched love as He gently removes the pains of life and fulfills all of our needs.

I thank the Lord for you and your selfless support of Racerunners as we daily seek to be vessels of His blessings to a world that needs to hear, "Joy to your world ... the Lord has come!" He wants to heal our receivers so that all of His gifts find their place in our lives. I bless you today in His name and declare to you that you are precious, beautiful and uniquely gifted by God. He has a plan for you that enables you to run freely and unencumbered on the beaches of life. I bid you cheer, singing joy to you my companion ... The Lord has come ... Let your heart receive Your King!