

“Flowers in Snow”

By Mrs. Sojourner

Have you ever experienced a snow or ice storm late in the spring? Flowers are already blooming, and suddenly are shocked and encompassed by a layer of snow and/or ice. The sight of flowers peaking out from the layer of snow is lovely, but it is sad because, in most cases, the flower dies from the shocking cold, and as a result the fruit or seeds that would have come that season are lost.

There are a few flowers that can survive such trauma. Some types of pansy can live in such conditions. Their color can grace a garden before, during, and after a sudden snow storm.

Before we receive Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are frozen, like those flowers that are encapsulated in the snow and ice, from the storms that the enemy has thrown at us. All of the colorful gifts and beauty God put in us when he created us is in a frozen state so we are not, at that point, able to do what God has created us for. Once we receive Christ’s gift of salvation, we become



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like those hardy flowers that survive the storm and keep on blooming. Instead of dying as a result of the storms, we start on a process of learning who we are in Christ. Those frozen “colors” start to thaw out as we learn how we can use the gifts God has given us for his glory and our colors become even brighter than we thought possible because God’s glory is coursing through our veins with his life-giving love. So let us live by this verse. [Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.](#) Proverb 3:5-6 (NIV) Growing in God’s ways we will, over the course of time, do and be what God has called us to. Let’s not focus on the frozen state we started in, focus on and trust the Lord and see his glory flow.

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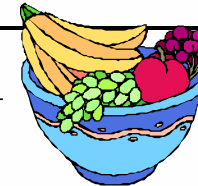
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...with The Sojourner

“I Have Come!” (Teaching Sketch)

John 10:7-17 (NIV)



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There is a striking thread that runs throughout scripture. What is that thread? It is the thread of blessing. This thread is found in God’s desire to be certain that mankind knows of His wish for man “to be fruitful and multiply.”

There seems to be a continual deception which creeps into man’s thinking to prevent mankind from maintaining an accurate understanding of God’s desired relationship with his creation in mankind.

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (3:18-20) reassures the recipients of the fullness of God’s love and power in them:

18may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the meas-

ure of all the fullness of God.

20Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, (NIV)

God’s desire for us is all the fullness he has for us.

All The Fullness

There is reassurance after reassurance given us about what God wants. If we are to experience God’s blessings we must only follow what God says to us and not the deceptive schemes of our enemy. Jesus, in our scripture, addresses this very thing by contrasting evil and godly desires when he says:

10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.^[b]

Why do we find ourselves listening to the biggest terrorist ever? If you knew that someone only meant you harm would you not avoid all

Please note: This is a teaching sketch only and not the complete teaching.

Scripture:

John 10:7-17 (NIV)

7Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.^[a] He will come in and go out, and find pasture. 10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.^[b] 11"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13The man runs away because

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[a]
Or kept
safe

he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. 17The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.

[b] *perissos per-is-sos'* (in the sense of *beyond*); *superabundant* (in quantity) or *superior* (in quality); by implication *excessive*; adverb *violently*; neuter (as noun) *preeminence*:—exceeding abundantly above, more abundantly, advantage, exceedingly, very highly, beyond measure, more, superfluous, vehement -ly].

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contact with that person even to the point of staying out of their neighborhood? Who would not? When we give a greater ear to evil things such as fear, haven't we ventured into the wrong neighborhood, a neighborhood of deceived thinking? Deception is all our enemy has to use against us until we accept evil distortions and fall prey to him.

The words, "to the full"^[b] in the New International Version were translated "more abundantly" in the King James Version, but look at the original meaning of the word used by Jesus. We see the synonyms such as "beyond," "superabundant," "superior," "excessive," "pre-eminence." There is nothing there that is second rate which Jesus has given the believer!

Life Abundant

Jesus came to bring you abundant life, not only in the future in heaven with him, but right now in this life to bless you in ways you cannot even imagine! When he blesses the believer walking in and with him, he demonstrates God's superior power over that of the deceiver!

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