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# Embracing Seasons

Today I feel fall beginning. As I sit outside in the early morning; it is cool – very cool. I hear a woodpecker in the distance hammering away at a tree. I see a squirrel jump from branch to branch. Crickets are still singing. I breathe in the experience. The first whispers of fall.

Yet, I know that following fall is winter. And winter means death. Fall is the beginning of a season of death. What spring birthed and summer boasted of, fall now begins to kill. Less daylight means less growth and eventually the advent of winter and then death. The death of beautiful flowers and green leaves. Cool becomes cold. Refreshing winds become bitter winds. The welcoming arms of nature will eventually motion for me to stay inside to avoid the inevitable coming of death.

In the natural, I enjoy the change of seasons. I anticipate the upcoming changes. I prepare for the season. I know they will come – one after another – year after year. Birth, growth, dying, and death. And I find that they also come in the spiritual. Yet, I often don't anticipate their arrival very well. Many times I'm not prepared. But they come anyway.

The dreams of my heart are subject to the seasons, too. Some of them have lain dormant for years. Then something springlike happens and summer comes. The dream lives. It grows. It shows forth its beauty. I take satisfaction in the glory of the beautiful dream's reality. Suddenly, the air cools. I didn't expect it. I try to adjust to the changes. Then my dream is met with death – cold and harsh – unforgivingly bitter. I try my best to avoid the cold reality. But the season rushes on without my permission. I just wish it to be over. But the winter is so long. Day after day without any hope of new life. No hope of resurrection. No signs of beautiful flowers. No green sprouts on the trees.

I am angry at death's arrival. My heart is sick. It was my dream. It was God's dream within me.

"So where are you anyway, God? How can you allow death to take my dream? My heart was entwined in the dream. And God, HOW CAN YOU BE SILENT?! You are letting part of me die in the cold, dark season. WHERE ARE YOU?! I don't hear You and it feels like You don't care. I'm freezing and You are not warming me!"

Then, almost without my expecting it, the sun begins to shine on my dream's grave again. The ground warms.

Little sprouts shoot forth. I rush out to cover them up because I fear winter's return laughing at my sprouts. A few don't make it to spring. Then almost without notice, one day green leaves are everywhere again. Winter winds have given forth to spring winds. And new life brings hope.

I know summer's heat will follow and fall and winter will come. And I find that in the season of death, some weeds have died. My dream has become stronger, more resistant to disease. My dream has deeper roots. It is somehow more glorious after surviving winter. I question the wisdom of seasons of death. I resist them and they still come. The seasons are out of my control. So I am carried from one to another often without embracing them. But my life goes on – birthing, growing, falling and failing, and dying.

Then birthing...

To everything there is a season,

A time for every purpose under heaven:

A time to be born,

And a time to die;

A time to plant,

And a time to pluck what is planted;

A time to kill, ...

And a time to heal.

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