

Reflection for 4th August

In the garden in the cool of the evening

This has been my favourite time of day for as long as I can remember. No matter how busy, how frustrating, how successful, boring, interesting or just plain ordinary the day has been, no matter how hot when we lived in the south Texas desert, this was the time to pause, to relax, to just be; and in the garden to sense the presence of the Creator. In this country we have beautiful gardens. On the borders of the Rio Grande in Texas we had carpet grass that had to be watered with sprinklers for twenty minutes each day in summer to keep it green, and the view out front was of sandy desert with stunted mesquite bushes and prickly pear cactus, and the cool of the evening was in the mid 70s F, but that is cool when the mid-day temperature is between 95 and 104F in summer.....

Here or there. In the cool of the evening, I could always find peace, love, and patience. Here we can know that "All things bright and beautiful, all creatures, great and small; all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all."

We live today in a busy, impatient world, even in lockdown. But the gardener knows he must have patience. We sow our seed in the dark earth of garden plot or seed pan, and then "vainly we wait for the harvest time till God gives life to the seed". Many in this time of lockdown have rediscovered the joy of growing things, of sitting in the garden, of just being out there surrounded by the beauty of so much that is given to us. Some love the dawn chorus most of all; others of us love the song of the birds in the evening. And both have a lesson to tell us always-in-a-hurry people: begin the day with praise and end it with praise.

"As long as the earth endures,

seedtime and harvest.

cold and heat.

summer and winter.

day and night

will never cease." (Genesis 8, v. 27)

Take time for just a few minutes to go outside in the cool of early evening, (or if you prefer, early morning) stop and listen, enjoy the peace after (or before) a busy day, and know that the One who created the beauty around you is also the one who died for you, and rose again. And in that resurrection He showed us the reality and the promise of eternal life.

From another much loved old harvest hymn words that often run through my mind when I am on my knees weeding my garden:

"Wheat and tares together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown, first the blade and then the ear, then the full corn will appear. grant oh harvest Lord that we wholesome grain and pure may be." Amen.