**Expect Joy**

The more I learn of heaven, the more I have come to expect joy. Now, expecting joy is an entirely different thing than deserving joy. I do not deserve joy any more than I deserve heaven. If I simply weigh my deeds in life, and check them in the balance, I stop before I even begin. The entire exercise is discouraging, to say the least.

In truth, I deserve little in the way of heaven. If I judge myself against my Heavenly Father; if I am to be as he is, then I am overwhelmed. My daily follies show me just how short I am of perfection. They shout of my pride, my stubbornness, and my simple nearsighted mortal-ness.

At the same time, I desire heaven. I yearn for respite from the world’s cruelty. I long for peace instead of noise; for light instead of the constant creeping darkness. In short, I look forward to a day and time when fear and pain are distant memories and I am warmed by those I love most. That is the hope for heaven.

But, at the same time, I know I deserve nothing of the kind. My daily stumbles shout to me that I live far too short of that. Even before midday, I am already reminded that I do not deserve to live in the presence of a perfect being. A thousand “I’m sorrys”, or “I will do better next times” cannot escape the small daily reminders that, at present, I am just not heavenly material. So, while I may desire heaven, I do not ever deserve it.

Yet, I have come to expect joy. Both here and in heaven. And not just the temporary kind joy either. I’m not expecting the fleeting happiness that comes from being on vacation. I am having fun but I know that my regular world waits for me on Monday. I know that very soon, my holiday tan will fade away and all I will be left with is photos.

Temporary joy is the annual june-joy that comes when the last exams are taken and school is finally out for summer. But any and all summer fun is lessened by the idea that there is a coming fall; quietly lurking with more teachers and even more exams.

In my heart I yearn for that endless summer. A place of filled with heaven and peace—and joy. A joy without expiration dates or ending points. An unending joy with all entrance exams and time limits removed forever. The joy one would expect living in the presence of loving, healing God. And it is precisely this love and joy my daily actions whisper that I do not deserve.

Yet, I have come to expect joy.

I expect my grandson loves me. He is naturally very loving. The light in his eyes and the way he comes running tells me just how excited he is to see me. And it is always the same with him. I have come to expect his love because I know his personality.

I do not demand my grandson’s love. There are many days I do not deserve that level of adoration from another being. But because I know him, I expect his love to be there. And because it is, I feel great joy. It is a glimpse into the heaven I seek.

In dealing with my Heavenly Father, I expect joy. The better I understand him, the more I realize just how much he wants me to be filled with his joy. It is in his nature. He desires for me to receive a fullness of joy—and it is his work and joy for me to receive it as he intends it. *Not because of who I am, but because of who he is*..

The psalmist pointed out that weeping may endure for a night, but joy—his eternal joy—cometh in the morning.

I expect to be surprised by joy, in this life and the next.