

December 2021

Dear Friends,

A most heartfelt Merry Christmas and Christmastide to you and yours! If you receive this by post I'm not sure when it will reach you, but wherever you are in the holiday season may joy be yours in abundance!

After year two of the pandemic I think all of us are longing for beauty and love and sacred moments this December. So let's remember, friends, beautiful things like love and joy and sacred moments do not just *happen*. They are something we *contend* for, something we help usher in through our choices and prayers. I felt Jesus move me in this Christmas letter to give you something wonderful to help you navigate the holidays and protect the joy he has for you.

The phrase I have been praying, invoking, and comforting myself with lately is, "Your Glory, Your Love, Your Kingdom." Let me share why...

First, the hope we celebrate in the coming Messiah is the hope of the arrival of a great and victorious King, who will usher in a great and glorious Kingdom:

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end." (Isaiah 9:2,6-7)

Christmas is so much more than Bethlehem. Bethlehem is thrilling because the King we love and long for has come to retake this world, unleashing the Kingdom. I think we forget that Christmas is about the triumphant invasion of the Kingdom of God! We rejoice because it is *only* in God's Kingdom we can find the lasting joy, love, and all the sacred moments we long for.

Next comes Love. We've been living in a stressful time for almost two years now, and folks are frayed at the edges. Friends of ours were not able to gather with their families for Thanksgiving either because of travel restrictions, or because various family members were drawing lines about who is admitted depending on their vaccine status. The holidays have always been a time to navigate relationships, but all the more so this year. If we're going to find our way to everything Jesus has for us, we need to live in the authority and ethos of his Kingdom this holiday season, and the ethos of his Kingdom is *always* love. Jesus is the Prince of Peace because he rules through love, and love brings peace into social tension and frayed relationships.

I find I'm having to choose love a lot more this season, and even to *invoke* love through my prayers into our various gatherings and relationships.

Lastly, let me add the wonder and power of the Glory of God.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you." (Isaiah 60:1-2)

What is this glory? Why is it important for us just now?

Remember the wedding at Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine. Christ has the attendants fill six stone jars with water; each jar could hold up to 30 gallons. Then Jesus turns every drop into wine—and fine, sumptuous wine at that. One hundred and eighty gallons of exquisite wine poured into the party at the end of the evening. After telling that story, the Gospel says, “What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him” (John 2:17).

What exactly did Cana “reveal”? God’s supernatural power to overcome shortage and deprivation with overwhelming abundance! That’s his glory; he did it by the power of his glory.

Paul, writing in the book of Romans, is trying to help us understand the availability of the power of God for us, *in us*. He turns to the resurrection, and he says, “It was by the glory of God that Jesus was raised from the dead.” The glory of God—the regenerative, resurrecting, glory of God. “The whole world is filled with his glory” (Isaiah 6:3). Think of the sun, how absolutely wonderful the sun is! Its radiance, beauty, and cheerfulness; how much life it gives! It is pulsating with the glory-power of God. Think of the oceans and the forests of the world—how vast they are, how filled with life. The whole world is filled with the glory of God. It is the life-giving, life-sustaining, generative power of God.

So, for our purposes here, when you think of the glory of God “risen upon you,” think of the sun, the ocean, water turned into wine, and Christ raised from the dead. Think of *Eden*.

You’ve heard me talk about Desolation in my letters and podcasts. If you follow the flow of Scripture and human history, you can see that our enemy wants to make everything a desolate wasteland, from society to the human heart. But this King of Bethlehem intends to make everything a restored Eden!! So when it comes to the resilience we need against Desolation, part of that provision is our Father’s *Eden Glory*—the glory of God in you and around you, giving you supernatural resilience and guarding you like a shield.

So here’s what I’m suggesting for your holidays: that you invoke the glory of God, the love of God, and the Kingdom of God into every aspect of your life.

*Your Glory, Your Love, Your Kingdom, Lord, in my heart and soul. In my family and household. In our Christmas observances. In every joy and gift of happiness you have for me. Your Glory. Your Love. Your Kingdom.*

I think you’ll find it to be very, very helpful!

Offered with Christmas love and blessings—not only from me, but from all your friends here at Wild at Heart.

Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'John' written in a cursive, flowing style.