

Endless Mercies

By Sheila Johnson

Over the last year, I've noticed that most of my friends and acquaintances that were born in the 'Baby Boomer Age' spend a lot of time talking about 'years gone by' and 'how life used to be.' I am no different. I find myself telling complete strangers about the hot, lazy summers I so joyfully spent in Texas with my immediate family and relatives (many who lived far away). I speak of how wonderful the dirt smelled after a gentle rain, how I played jacks on our front porch, why I loved to catch fireflies in the darkness of the night as a young girl, and how I listened to the 'June' bugs sing lullabies that ushered me into my dreams. These stories often cause me to make new friends and listen to their stories filled with childhood joys and wonders, and their accounts of fears and traumas. But at the end of the day, I realize that my life could have been much worse in those 'years gone by,' and I survived those struggles, challenges, and pitfalls with some degree of sanity and an un-measurable amount of gratitude. Yes, life continues to move forward with new mercies every morning.

I have an ever growing, steady flowing, always un-expected, cherished bounty of mercies. Collectively, they are known as my Calling. My Calling comes from God who has a wonderful, creative sense of humor and allows me to bounce back from disappointments, smile through my pain, run through the rain disguising my tears, and encourage a dying world.

My bounty allows me to: live in the Spirit; teach a Word that brings eternal life; experience an immediate, intimate relationship with people who are nearing death and embrace them while their soul takes flight; bring together two hearts who strive to beat as one; assure parents that they have done their best with that little spirit who is now singing with the angels; watch once nimble fingers hold a needle for the first time and create a work of art; lead with confidence; comfort grieving communities; speak truth to power with a strong, free voice; give a 'thumbs up' to my little buddy who is autistic and sees only the good in others; discern evil spirits; recognize and honor the pain in others; experience the present tender joys of a second generation whose parents I birthed; and finally to know that one day I'll be dancing to music only heard in heaven.

My bounty is always unexpected and can only be as big and as deep as life will allow, and I pray that it is endless.