

Pieces of Peace

Inspired by the Readings of Pentecost Day

Katie decided to take a little getaway trip to restore and refresh her spirit. The demands of work were draining her, leaving her spent at the end of the day with nothing left to give. She would sink into her recliner and look around the untouched books and projects she hoped to get to one day.

She was mostly energized by her career that had finally taken off. But, the successful climb had thrown her life way off balance. Hours of work, moments of leisure. Work overflowing into every area. Staleness and stark loneliness sitting heavily in the silence and dark of night. Katie wants to hear the silence, not fear it.

She longs to relax on a porch, paint a sunset, grab a friend and spend the night dancing, ride a bike to an outdoor concert, stroll through a weekend flea market. Those aren't dreams. They are wonderful memories. Katie couldn't quite put her finger on when all of those favorite activities fell by the wayside.

These days, the hours are long and the fun is short. She thought this lifestyle was what she wanted. Now that she had it, she wasn't so sure anymore! Katie boarded the hopper that would take her to the quaint cabin on a remote island. The very place where she had mustered the courage to pursue a career in corporate management. Her dream job. Was it ironic that she craved the same space to discern leaving her dream job?

After settling in, Katie stepped out the bedroom door directly onto the beach. All was quiet except for the soothing rhythm of the ocean. Her bare feet felt the cool sand. Her bare shoulders felt the cool breeze. Her bare heart felt ready to be filled. Katie walked a full hour up the shoreline and back. After a quick shower, she plopped down on the soft, inviting bed. Too tired to eat, she fell fast asleep.....wet hair and all. Thirteen hours later, she awoke to the soft sound of a light rain falling down. She let out a deep, relaxing sigh that ended in a genuine smile. All will be well. She felt centered.

The next two days were very much the same. Silence. Stillness. Sunsets. Sunrises. Serenity. Then one evening a raging storm moved over the island, threatening to destroy all that was beautiful there. Local authorities sent a van to pick up all the cabin guests and residents and deliver them to safety in a storm shelter centered on the island. It was built for just such an event. When the eye of the storm finally approached with its eerie sense of calm, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire building in which they were. The lights went out and the glow of cellphones appeared like tongues of fire glowing on each face. And they were all filled with a spirit of awe.. Each began to speak in different languages, but they were all bonded by

fear. They were dazed and confused, but somehow knew each was expressing the same sentiments -- Are we going to make it through this? What else is there to do but pray?

Katie looked at her new brothers and sisters, each glowing face was filled with worry and distress. There are different kinds of people here, different forms of service, different kinds of work in each community where they belong. But, she could see in their expressions that all were praying to the same God, each begging the same Spirit to grant them the benefit of surviving the terrifying ordeal.

Each body looked different, but felt the same. It no longer mattered who did what, how much money they made, what shade their skin, how they voted, who they held in high esteem, where they lived, what their preferences and lifestyles. They all felt as one, drinking from the same cup. The storm passed and they all parted ways, unharmed but not unchanged.

Katie knew she would never be the same. She now had a different perspective on life and career and time. Living now meant something bigger than herself. Something higher than her goals. She saw everything and everyone differently now. A first glance at a new face surveyed what was good in them, and what they might have in common. She searched for the same Spirit in every face. She now understood it exists in everyone.

On the evening of that first day of the week when she returned to work, where her co-workers were embedded deeply in the busyness behind locked office doors, Katie came and stood in their midst. She had an aura of peace that revealed to them that her time away produced more than her newly bronzed skin. She showed them without speaking. The others saw it. She breathed serenity on them. Some received the spirit and poured it into their work. But, others were unable to open themselves to it and they retained a posture of stress and concern. Katie understood, it is available to all, but not all will receive it.

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