

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES!

CLEVELAND

Here I sit, on the front porch, looking out over rolling hill after hill after hill heavily dotted with “homesteads.” The signs of life are everywhere – kids laughing in play, crickets harmonizing, traffic on the interstate. The wind gently caresses. The clouds are alight with rays from the setting sun. Not on a thousand hills, but cattle graze on the next one over. Just down the road a tractor pulls the neighborhood kids. A lawn mower growls. City lights sparkle in the distance. The horses enjoy their evening niblets, just over yonder. A bunny hops into view.

I am surrounded by the sounds and sights of life. And, yet, I feel so not alive...not a part...languishing. Tears stream down my cheeks, a never ending flow. The wellspring of life drains with each passing day. Why am I so overwhelmed with sadness? I have given up my life to follow You, Lord. Why can I not simply enjoy what You have brought me to? I am soooooo tired of crying!

The moon slips from behind the clouds. It is bright and beautiful, just like You. Tomorrow is another day, full of promise. Help me not to miss it! Step by painful step, I will keep moving into Your plan. Not my will, but Yours. Pursue me, Lord!

“You have been Mine from before the beginning of time. I will not let you down. Every good and perfect gift is from Me. If it’s not good and perfect, it’s not from Me. My Word does not diminish!”

Those words were written on August 26, 2015. I had been in this hauntingly beautiful land for one month – and I felt lost and alone and forgotten. But, I was looking and not seeing. I was a part of the Lord’s breathtakingly landscaped masterpiece – in this place, for this moment.

And, in time, He began to reveal His plan... An “out of the blue” invitation in September to join a first-year course on healing, starting the very

next day. Forever connected-at-the-heart friendships forged with class members – talks and walks and texts, oh my! The “just at the right time” opportunity to volunteer in a senior community, rubbing shoulders and sharing laughter with the best-of-the-best ranchers and town folk in the area. I have been given the opportunity to be the Lord’s hands and feet throughout this year, to share His heart, and to be of help wherever He shows me a need. I gotta say that none of the above was in my original moving plan! But, the Lord had something much richer and far, far better in mind for me, blessing me in ways I could not have imagined—moments in time that I will cherish always.

The Lord took my broken heartedness, my loneliness—and shaped them into a year filled with people, places and events I never would have experienced had I not been willing to follow Him into the unknown. What began as such a heartache for me a mere year ago has become a blessing, times a million! And, He will do the same for you.

All of this to say that my time in this north land is coming to a close. For me, it won’t be long before there will be no more herds of pronghorn eating grass just outside my window in the late of night. No more sweeping vista of grassy hills and valleys; clouds of every imaginable size, shape and hue; cows and horses peacefully grazing; trucks and farm equipment about their business; neighbors living their lives. No more bird refuge, where hundreds of geese rest on the pond, eventually taking flight for points further south, their “V” formations directly overhead. Honk! And, that’s just the surface...

Soon, I’ll be leaving for points south, myself. The Lord is writing a new chapter. I’m excited to see where He leads! And, maybe – just maybe – our paths will cross along the way.

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” James 1:17 (NKJV)