

The Cherry Tree

It was a long time ago, but the memory will live forever...when, just before dawn, I sat by the window and stared out at the cold, bleak winter morning. Why was I awake? There was nothing to do, nothing to see. Our cat, a large, gentle creature, leaped up onto my lap, settled herself there and began to purr, perhaps believing that if she purred loudly enough, I would return to bed.

Outside the window stood a cherry tree, and there was just enough light to mark the contrast of its black trunk and bare branches against the gray November sky. It was a stark reminder of the time of year, cold, dark, and forbidding.

This is not a scene into which I was expecting God to enter. If truth be known, I probably wouldn't have asked Him to show up, even if I'd thought about it, but...God doesn't always wait to be asked...nor, as I've often seen, does He always do what's expected.

The sun began to climb above the horizon and all the intervening, man-made structures that stood between it and me...until, finally, its light shone through the branches of the tree. And then, suddenly,

Time stopped.

Silence...Beauty...Love...and Peace...remained.

And, every branch of the cherry tree was covered with tiny blossoms of...Light! It was as if I was seeing the tree in some *other place*...an incredible

place were it was springtime, instead of winter. And I was surrounded by the knowledge that '*In the Kingdom of God, it is always the right season to bear fruit.*'

What a message of life in a season not known for such things! If I'd been an artist, I could have captured it on canvass so that someone else could have seen it. If I'd been a composer, I would have written a song so that some one could have heard in their mind and heart...the beauty and gentleness of it all. How can there be so much despair when the Kingdom of God is so close at hand? When all you have to do is *reach out*.

But, we do despair. Things that we want to accomplish don't always happen. The fruits of our labors don't always ripen in the time expected. But, that night, so long ago, continues to remind me that miracles DO occur...and if our hearts are in the *right place*, then each and every dream, each and every hope is like a blossom of light on that cherry tree...waiting for the right season in this world...but always in season, blooming where and when it counts.