



I. INTRODUCTION

We are deep in the cold of a New England winter. Many of you are proud members of Pats Nation—the cold never seems to slow your spirit. You wear the black and gold of the B's, and you'll sit in any rink or stadium to cheer on a victory.

But even the most loyal fan knows that weather and wins don't change everything.

Winter has a way of touching us all—our routines, our moods, our sense of hope.

Today I want to talk about how the season that chills our bodies can also reveal where we need warmth for our souls:

- the warmth of God's presence,
- the warmth of one another,
- and the steady hope that carries us through the long nights.

These are all real challenges for us in the winter.

"the cold of the enemy's cold embrace!"

Overcoming Winter's Cold with the Hope of God's Spiritual Warmth

Job offered this that, “The tempest comes out of its chamber; the cold from the driving winds.” – Job 37:9

What is the risk we say... I am doing okay. A bit cold but okay

Yet Jesus offered a thought in REV 3

15 “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither [a]cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— REV 3:15-17

Awful circumstance to be found in what the church of Laodiceans isn't it?

This morning I am hoping to offer a plan to avoid that coldness... to avoid the lukewarm or even the cold of winter's spiritual doldrums

- By reaching out...
- By pressing in...
- By trusting more...
- By walking with faith believing....

To start overcoming winter's cold with God's hope involves finding spiritual warmth through faith, prayer, and scripture!

To never forget even when the winter cold blows, and remembering His unfailing presence even in darkness

To actively seek His light!

II. Spiritual Practices for Winter Warmth

A. Seek His Light

You know how it is in winter—you step outside “just for a minute.”

- No gloves. No hat.
- At first, it's uncomfortable... but manageable.
- Then suddenly your fingers stop feeling cold.

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- And that's when the danger starts.
-

I am big Everest fan and yet it is a challenge to all who go there.



The 1996 Mount Everest disaster was a tragic event that occurred on May 10-11, 1996, resulting in the deaths of eight climbers due to a sudden blizzard and poor decision-making during a summit attempt.

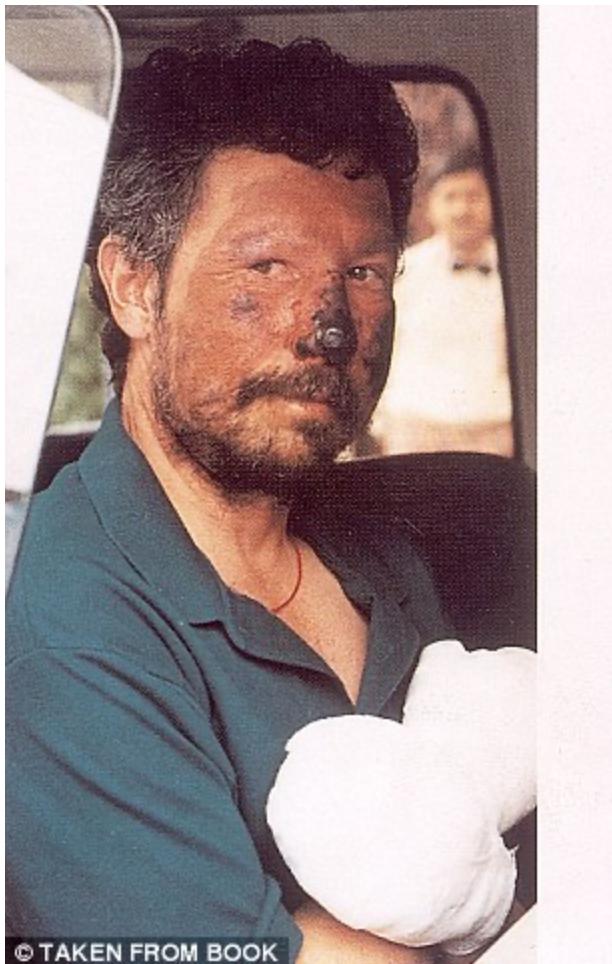
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Beck Weathers was one of the few who survived and yet in his book LEFT FOR DEAD he accounts he was hallucinating so bad due to lack of oxygen he removed his gloved and even his parka.

After being presumed dead in a hypothermic coma, Weathers was left for dead by fellow mountaineers who believed he couldn't survive the night.

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- But against all odds, he awoke half dressed and managed to stagger back into camp.
- He suffered severe frostbite that turned his skin black,
 - leading to the amputation of his right arm below the elbow
 - and the removal of all the fingers on his left hand.

Spiritually, that's what happens when we get used to the chill and maybe if happen to be on Everest without any more O2 left....

And spiritually we too like being in winter's grasp - Like a leper with no feeling we don't notice the numbness anymore.

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That's why Jesus doesn't say, "Try harder."

- He says, "Come to the Light."

Because when you can't feel the cold anymore,

- you don't need willpower—you need warmth.

And that brings us to Jesus' words:

- "I am the light of the world..."

"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." John 8:12

So why would Jesus even say this?

If you read further into chapter 8 Jesus then stated that, "Before Abraham was, I AM,"! which carried echoes of an ancient name of God and that of the creator!

Never doubt by Jesus, all things were created!

- including the light from the sun.

Sunlight powers all life on earth and even during the winter!!

Plants, animals and people require sunlight to live.

The food we eat depends on light. Without sunlight, life on earth would die in darkness.

Jesus is so much better than that sun and as the Light of the World if we follow Him to find hope, even when darkness seems to be prevailing!

We need to reach for that light...

Pre-COVID my office was 25 yards from an outer door

- and in the deep winter to clear my head I would step out of that building onto the sidewalk and stand with my face towards the sun.

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- Funny I was cold with no coat on but what the sun was touching on my skin was warm!



Think of the crocus that breaks through the snow in the late winter.

She reaches for the sun or a person walks toward shelter, trusting that spring (renewal) will come, but also recognizing God's work in the present stillness.

That is how we are to be!!! Stretching toward Jesus the Light of the World!

Jesus' message of God's spiritual light shines in the darkness of this world.

- Those living in the dark don't understand it, yet neither can they overcome it (John 1:5).
- The mysteries of God are far beyond our human ability to comprehend (Isaiah 55:8).

Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. 10 But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light." John 11:9-10

Jesus was stating that by the tomb of his good friend Lazarus and trying to explain how he was just sleeping and Jesus would raise him from the dead.

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When we can't see in the dark, we need to seek the Light of the World!

Without the light of Christ, we are just stumbling in the spiritual darkness!

This spiritual journey of seeking the light of Christ means leaning into His overcoming promises!

10 The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My **purpose** is to give them a rich and satisfying life. John 10:10

It is the same with my word.

I send it out, and it always **produces fruit**.

It will accomplish all I want it to,

and it will **prosper** everywhere I send it. Isaiah 55:11

13 I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you **will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit**. Romans 15:13

These overcoming promises, provide purpose, there is produced fruit and prosperity and there is a overflow of Hope through the Power of the Holy Spirit

Turning to the Light of the World... will bring something supernatural when the winter circumstances look so gray and so bleak!

B. Victory Planning for this Winters Doldrums!

Light is powerful—but only if you stay in it.

You can sit by a sunny window in February, but the moment you walk away, the cold creeps back in.

Faith works the same way.

Following Jesus isn't a moment—it's a practice.

And winter requires a plan.

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Because if we don't plan for warmth, the cold will plan for us.

So how do we stay in the Light when winter drags on?

We need a victory plan.

1) Pray His Promises

13 I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

We shared this moments ago and when we pray to God and because we trust him, we are provided with such fruit of that action!

- Filled with Joy
- Filled with peace
- Overflowing with hope!

Who does not need these elements in their winter emergency kit, right!?

2) Speak God's Word, and find Trust in God

Ever gone out on a cold morning and the car won't start?

The battery didn't die overnight—it weakened slowly.

Prayer is like the jumper cables. And God's Word is the engine.
You need both.

Prayer connects you to power. And The Word keeps you moving.
That's why Solomon tells us:

We are to be immersed in God's Word, to bring about the alignment your heart with His will and find comfort.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
6 Seek his will in all you do,

and he will show you which path to take. Prov 3:5-6

Solomon shared this: Trust in God and not leaning on our own understanding." Becomes foundational to help us bring our dulled down thought life back to something healthier.

To allow for us to find God's guidance and to then step into that with actions.

These lead to comfort foundational trust helps you align your thoughts and actions with God's guidance.

Meditating on God's Word helps us to better grasp and to clearly understand His plans and purpose for your life.

This helps you align your heart with His will

3) Cultivate Stillness:

After a heavy snow, there's a moment—before the plows, before the traffic—when everything is quiet.

- No chaos.
- No noise.
- Just stillness.

That silence doesn't mean nothing is happening.

It means everything has been covered.

God often works the same way.

That's why He says: "Be still and know that I am God."

- Stillness isn't giving up.
- It's giving God room to work

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Embrace winter as a time for spiritual rest, allowing God to work in you, just as He designed roots to endure.

This was one of my mom's favorite verses to quote to me

Yet there is along happening here that David is addressing in Psalm 46.

6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
 he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
7 The Lord Almighty is with us;
 the God of Jacob is our fortress.
8 Come and see what the Lord has done,
 the desolations he has brought on the earth.
9 He makes wars cease
 to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
 he burns the shields[d] with fire.
10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
 I will be exalted among the nations,
 I will be exalted in the earth."
11 The Lord Almighty is with us;
 the God of Jacob is our fortress. Psalm 46:6-11

If you've ever driven in a whiteout, you know the worst thing you can do is keep guessing which way to go.

The safest move is to stop—and then reorient.

Turning toward God doesn't require a big leap.

Sometimes it's just stopping long enough to face the right direction.

- Prayer.
- Scripture.
- Attention.

One step toward warmth changes everything.

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What is the uproar in your life that your life that you might need to be still and know He is God?

This winter find time to just sit in His presence and find yourself lifted above the circumstance to have the Lord Almighty with you!

We need to be about embracing an idea that God knows what is best!

And in the stillness, we can start to realize, that God knows what is best for you.

The enemy is about creating chaos, looking to seek and even destroy you.

The more we are idle with no real Godly stillness the more we are picked off by his tricks!

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
James 4:7 NKJV

James offers up two key actions:

- submission to God and resistance against the devil.

It suggests that by aligning ourselves with God and His will, we gain the strength to oppose evil influences in our lives.

Recognizing that our struggles are not merely against physical challenges but against spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Eph 6:10-13

We should submit ourselves before God!

In doing that we can then RESIST and then the devil will flee!

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We can be able to stand against the devil's schemes and be enabled to stand our ground!

AND AFTER YOU HAVE DONE EVERYTHING BE STILL AND STAND!

4) Turn Towards Him:

Actively seek God through prayer, reading the Bible, or simply turning your attention to Him, much like walking towards warmth in a frozen field.

5) Find Warmth in Creation & Community:

One stick by itself burns out fast.

But put logs together—and the fire lasts all night.

God never designed faith to survive winter alone.

- Creation reminds us God is present.
- Community reminds us we are not.

And when believers gather, warmth multiplies.

That's why Acts tells us the church didn't just grow—it thrived.

Enjoy God's creation (snow, evergreens) and connect with others to share His light.

- The Word of God demonstrates God's design for community, emphasizing the relational nature of God and humanity (Genesis 1:1, Genesis 2:18).
- God's love is the source of warmth, and this offers us comfort and support in our lives (Romans 8:38-39).
- The community of believers' nurtures warmth through love, support, and mutual care, and in us should reflect God's love!

46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity[a]— 47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. Acts 2:46-47

- Warmth in creation signifies God's nurturing the presence of the Holy Spirit, and in community, it embodies the joy and unity of believers

26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. John 14:26

God created the Earth and the Family of God to remind us of the comfort and support we can find in both creation and the community of faith.

C. The Promise of Spring

He doesn't hibernate; He's at work, and His love is always near, even when you feel distant!

And if you look close enough you see God's unfailing presence!

Winter's struggles are temporary; spring and renewal (like Easter) are coming.

Spring symbolizes new beginnings and renewal, reminding us of God's promise of spiritual growth and hope.

Just as nature awakens after winter, we can find revitalization and transformation through faith in God.

The Bible emphasizes that through Christ, we are made new, and God's promises of new life and hope are always present.

As we embrace these themes, we can feel confident that God is with us, guiding us to thrive even in challenging times.

Just as nature awakens after winter, our spirits can find revitalization and growth through the power of God's Word.

There are wonderful insights from the Word of God about spiritual transformation and hope!

The fact is that there is a wonderful parallel between physical spring and spiritual rebirth in Christ.

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1) The Promise of New Life

At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! 17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 2 Cor 5:16b- 17

These passages capture the transformative power of faith in Christ.

When we accept Him, we are changed at the deepest level—

- we are no longer defined or bound by our past sins, failures, or regrets.
- Instead, we become new creations,
 - given a fresh beginning and empowered to live according to God's purpose.

Jesus told his good friend Martha that

“I am the resurrection and the life.[a] Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. John 11:25

This spiritual renewal goes beyond forgiveness alone;

- it is about becoming genuinely new and increasingly aligned with God's ways.
- In Christ, transformation is both immediate and ongoing, shaping how we live, love, and hope.

Together, these scriptures also offer a profound promise!

- Death is not the end, but a doorway to eternal life with God.
- Jesus' words inspire confidence in a future beyond this life and remind us that belief in Him assures spiritual rebirth, renewal, and everlasting hope.

2) Renewal of the Spirit

Create in me a clean heart, O God.

Renew a loyal spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

This verse is a heartfelt prayer from David was part of a confession of a multi-layer sin... and it was for inner renewal and purity.

David's plea reveals the deep human need for God to cleanse us and continually renew our spirits.

acknowledges that true restoration begins within the heart, where transformation takes root.

By asking God for a loyal and steadfast spirit, we are reminded that spiritual renewal is not a one-time experience but an ongoing work of grace.

It is a continual process of surrender, repentance, and growth.

This renewal calls us to align our hearts with God's will, allowing His Spirit to guide our thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

As we yield to Him daily, we are reshaped from the inside out, strengthened to live faithfully and obediently in His presence.

5 he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5

Paul addresses the mercy of God that brings us into a new relationship with Him.

Salvation is not something we earn through our own efforts, but a gracious gift freely given.

Through this mercy, we are washed clean and reborn, experiencing a spiritual renewal that only God can accomplish.

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The Holy Spirit plays a vital role in this transformation, continually renewing our hearts and guiding us into a life that reflects God's will.

Our new life in Christ becomes a living testimony—evidence of God's grace at work and His love made visible through us.

3) Hope in Times of Renewal

Spring brings the promise of new beginnings, just as God brings hope during seasons of renewal in our lives.

These verses remind us that in times of change, God's promises and presence sustain us, offering hope even when we face uncertain or difficult circumstances.

The renewal of hope in God becomes an anchor for our faith, bringing us joy and peace.

“The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.” Lamentations 3:22-23

This passage from Lamentations reveals the enduring, renewing nature of God's mercy.

Every day, His love and faithfulness remain unwavering, offering us fresh mercy and grace.

As spring brings new life to the world, this verse encourages us to trust that God renews His mercies for us each morning, sustaining us in every season with His boundless compassion.

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, 1 Peter 1:3

Peter is speaking here of the powerful hope we have in Christ's resurrection.

Being “born again” through His mercy allows us to live with an expectation of God's goodness and faithfulness.

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The resurrection serves as a foundation of our hope, reminding us that even in death, God brings new life.

Our future is filled with anticipation, knowing that His promises will be fulfilled.

III. CLOSING

Spring begins underground.

- Buds look dead.
- Roots grow unseen.
- Faith is forming beneath the surface.

“Honor the Lord... then your barns will be filled.” (Proverbs 3:9–10)

Stewardship begins now—in winter.

- In stillness.
- In trust.
- Through Christ, life comes after darkness.

So this winter, let's not just endure.

Let's grow.

Let's make it a season of hope, renewal, and God's endless love.

No farmer waits until the harvest to prepare the soil.

- Preparation happens before anything is visible.
- Faith in winter is an act of trust.

So, the question isn't: **Will God bring spring?**

The question is: **Will we stay faithful until it comes?**

Spring represents renewal and hope.

Can you close your eyes now and be still... right where you are...

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Slow down your breath...

<pause pause pause>

Where are you this winter? What are you waiting on from God?

Never doubt that God's mercies are new every morning!

And just like the world feels new in spring.

He is always ready to forgive us and help us start fresh.

<pause pause pause>

Can you feel the warmth of God's mercy? He loves you like a good good Father should.

Let's close in prayer...

FATHER, we want to honor you...

We truly this winter desire to align our lives with your wisdom,

We look to you to provide a place and time for the harvest for us to experience your provision in abundance.

We look to you for this place of overflowing vats and full barns that represents a life filled with your favor.

We desire to commune with you in prayer, in your word, in worship daily and to be like the farmer who is not even idle in the winter... and like that to daily do your will.

In stillness and expectation...

waiting for you to Fill us afresh and anew with a clean heart and a loyal spirit within us!

<pause pause pause>

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We ask this all in our name.

Through Jesus, we have the promise of eternal life and the chance to be made new.

So, as we sit in the dead of this winter, can we look towards the hope of spring?

And let's remember God's goodness and the new life He offers to us every day.

This winter let's make it a season of growth, hope, and God's endless love.