

## Personal Winters

Winter finally came this year, although it seems it may have gone just as quickly as it came. I actually enjoy much of winter. (Now understand, that's Texas winters. I've never had to deal with a true, long, hard winter.) We get to snuggle in and enjoy many cozy traditions. I even enjoy the silhouettes of the bare trees, each a beautiful, unique sculpture.

I have to admit, I don't have the same natural affection for my own personal winters. I have been in a long winter of sorts. Three and a half years ago I was diagnosed with my second bout of breast cancer. There have been complications and delays that have stretched this winter, this trial, on for months and years.

But I am learning to appreciate the winters in my own life. It's taken me a long time to be able to see beauty in having life's activities pared down to the trunk and branches, to understand that the Lord often brings times that feel fruitless, but are actually times of rest and preparation for renewal, just like winters are in God's created world.

That's one of the things that I love about "weather-winters": knowing that renewal is coming. And I'm learning that about my own personal winters as well. At each point when I feel the darkness may be endless, when it feels like the cold deep in my soul is never going to thaw, I remember that God tells me He will restore me. He will renew me. He will revive me! And as I look to Him and His Word, He does!

Perhaps you are in your own winter. Look with me at God's Word and His promises:

- *"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me." Psalm 138:7*
- *"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." Psalm 19:7*
- *"My soul cleaves to the dust; revive me according to Your Word." Psalm 119:25*
- *"You who have shown me many troubles and distresses will revive me again, and will bring me up again from the depths of the earth." Psalm 71:20-21*

How amazing that God gives us spiritual renewal and fruitfulness here...

- *"He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers." Psalm 1: 3*
- *"The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green, to declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." Psalm 92:12*

...And that He also promises to give us spiritual, and physical, renewal eternally!

- *"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day, for momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond comparison....What is mortal will be swallowed up by life." 2 Corinthians 4:17; 5:4b*
- *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory." Philippians 3:20-21*

I'm so thankful that you and I can sing with confidence, "When winter fades, I know spring will come" because we know that, "the Lord is our salvation!"