

## Soul-Warming Truths for A Snowy Sunday

As I've thought through how to share God's Word with our faith family during this time of not meeting in person, I would guess that most of you have been staring at screens and images a lot more than usual in the last week or so. So instead of filming, I thought it best to write to you a brief devotional thought on the topic of snow, as discussed and mentioned in God's Word – and although I've been preaching for a while and enjoy writing, it's something which I've never preached on or written about! So, I'm going to have some fun with this and write as if I were preaching to you in a blizzard on top of a mountain somewhere in eastern Europe.

So then, what does the Bible say about snow? While snow is a topic/term used in small sample size (roughly 24 times in all of Scripture), when it shows up it is packed with meaning and significance. Like snow and ice, these truths are beautiful to behold, immersive and all-encompassing for the soul, and also dangerous to ignore or treat with contempt. In each, we find that which comes “from above” as being from God and for God's glory.

Let's consider three soul-warming truths about God from various places in scripture that speak of snow:

### ***1. Snow Reveals and Reminds us of God's Power as Sovereign Creator***

- Job 37:5-6 “God thunders wondrously with his voice; He does great things that we cannot comprehend. For to the snow He says, ‘Fall on the earth,’ likewise to the downpour, His mighty downpour.”
- Job 38:22-23 “Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, or the day of battle and war?”
- Psalm 147:15-17 “He sends out his command to the earth; His word runs swiftly. He gives *snow* like wool; He scatters frost like ashes. He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs; who can stand before his cold?”

Like all parts of God's created order, snow is often mentioned to show that God stores, preserves, and dispenses His creation as He pleases for His sovereign purposes. Snowy weather is a servant of God's divine will. Not one flake of snow has fallen without His saying, and not one inch of ice is outside of His command and will. As we look to the birds and are reminded of God's provision, and the mountains to see His power, we catch a glimpse of the beauty and sovereign nature of God on snowy days (and weeks!).

What this helps to remind me (a type-A who loves sunshine and loathes cold weather and restricted planning) is to know that just as God has a reason for seasons in weather and life that may be cold, make us feel restricted, or even feel unproductive – there is a reason and God is not absent. Weather changes, seasons change, life changes, others change, we change – but God never changes, and always brings about His plan for His glory and our good (Rom 8:28). God has a reason for this season, for the earth, and for His people – there is a reason for the season you are in. Just as in life - as seasons change and are different, even difficult - God is always doing something and working out His will in ways we cannot comprehend.

Let us trust in God's power and plans in every season, in every circumstance, and through all of life. As snow and frost so affect the ground and vegetation to prepare for the beauty of spring, so the Lord uses the 'cold and unbearable' aspects of our lives to better fit us for heaven and the glories that await us.

## ***2. Snow is used to illustrate the stain of sin's curse and our need for spiritual cleansing***

Having preached a fairly lengthy study on Heaven several years ago now, I wish I could supply you with several Bible verses that clearly teach that snow and the weather we're having won't in Heaven – but I cannot do so as dogmatically as I'd prefer! However, based upon my understanding of Heaven and how it is described, I highly doubt heaven will be like (or feel like) our current weather conditions (praise God!). That leads me to believe that frigid cold temps, dark and long nights, unhealthy and unsafe conditions that winter brings are in many ways a direct result of the curse sin has brought on the earth – and in some ways a constant reminder. I say all of this a bit tongue-in-cheek, but also with an experiential conviction of belief!

In other passages, snow is used to describe the whitening effect of leprosy, a common ancient disease that turned blotchy skin snowy white. This particular disease was often assigned to those in deep sin and under God's judgment. To have leprosy was a physical representation of the stain of sin and thereby made its sufferers ceremonially unclean and fit for corporate worship. While this eventually became to be misunderstood, misapplied, and even justified a lack of compassion from some in the ancient world – the passages that describe this disease being white like snow serve as another reminder of sin's curse upon the earth, and upon mankind.

For this reason, there is need for a re-making and renewing of what has been stained by sin. Because of sin, death comes. As flowers fall and leaves tumble down to die and go into the ground, the snow and ice of winter powerfully recycle them into the earth to produce life in the future. Because of God's purpose to save, cleanse, and resurrect us, just as flowers bloom after the winter cold, so too do God's children rise from the earth – having been purified and cleansed by the blood of Jesus. This exchange of red for white, filth for clean, and death for life is the good news of salvation and eternal life.

- “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” – Isaiah 1:18
- Following his great sin and transgression in Psalm 51, King David prays and pleads with the Lord, “...wash me (of my sin) and I shall be whiter than snow.”(v.7)

Let us, with David and all of God's children, seek the Lord's constant renewal and removing of sin's stain. As we know our full pardon and forgiveness in Christ is sure, let us live in light of the spiritual cleansing and eternal life He has so graciously imparted to those who believe by taking our sin upon Himself and giving us His purity (2 Cor 5:21).

### ***3. Snow's appearance is used to describe the majestic glory of Jesus, who forgives our sin and cleanses us that we might share in His glory.***

- Daniel 7:9 “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days (Jesus) took His seat; His clothing was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire...”
- Matt 28:3 “His appearance was like lightning, and His clothing white as snow.”
- Rev 1:14 “The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow.”

In each of these scriptural examples of Jesus in His glory, two with an apocalyptic God given vision of Christ in His glory (Daniel & Rev), and one by an eyewitness of the risen Jesus (Matthew), we find that Jesus is described as being something beyond human comprehension and comparison – and so the human authors are forced to use what is common and known to them (snow) to describe what they've seen. The glory, the majesty, and holy beautiful blaze of the glory of Jesus is something we all will one day behold!

While Heaven is spoken of as a place of light, and Jesus is – as we know, The Light, we see similar motifs throughout Scripture of the use of snow to help paint these eternal truths into the minds of God's people. As we likely continue to see this snow and ice for many more days, let it remind us of God's power over creation, His purposes in all seasons, and the coming glory we will inherit because of the Savior who has cleansed us with His precious blood.