

A MESSAGE OF HOPE FROM THE SNOW

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By Rev. Jennifer Wallace

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago*

The weather forecast had predicted heavy snow, yet I was hopeful that our retreat in East Sussex, England would still take place. However, as the snow began to fall, the weather reports got more alarming, while pictures of heavy snow and traffic on the motorways and roads told a grim story, especially in the area we were to travel to.

I had peace in my heart, though, and felt the Lord had something special for us so we must not cancel the retreat, but brave the weather and road conditions and go. Everyone else agreed, so we set off in several cars, not knowing what the journey would be like or when we would arrive.

At best, I would describe the journey as, somewhat, uneventful. Our route took us away from the motorways, through the back roads and so we encountered no traffic at all. However, it gave us a clearer picture of the amount of snow that had fallen! Everywhere was covered; the fields, trees, roads, etc, were all covered in snow! There wasn't much sign of life, except for the cars and lorries that drove past us. There was no sign of the sun and the atmosphere was still, cold, icy, grey and eerie.

Apart from that, there was not much about the journey worth mentioning except for a comment I made. Out of the blue I said, "Don't be surprised if we wake up tomorrow and it has rained and there is no snow." As I spoke, I looked out of the car window and knew that short of a miracle, what I had just said would never happen. I could also tell, by looking at their faces, that none of the people in the car with me could imagine that happening either.

We arrived at our destination and there was about 12 inches of snow covering the car park, making parking almost impossible! After we had checked and settled in, we had a couple of teaching and prayer sessions, and went to bed at about 1.00am.

We woke up for prayer at 7.00am and, lo and behold, it had rained and most of the snow had melted away, with just a few patches left, which soon melted away. I immediately remembered the comment I made in the car! All day and till we departed the next day, it rained and water flowed and continued to flow, both from the rain and the melted snow. Also, every time I closed my eyes, I would see a picture of water flowing like a big river, but the water was very beautiful and blue, clean and clear. I knew that there was a message or lesson for me to learn, but didn't quite know what it was.

A Word from the Lord

A few days after we returned from the retreat, just before going to bed, I felt a strong urge to read my bible, and the more I tried to ignore it, the stronger the urge became. Since I wasn't quite sure what I was being prompted to read, I did something I hadn't done in ages. I said a quick prayer to the Lord, "I'm going to open this bible randomly and read whichever page it opens to, even if it's the genealogies!" I opened my bible and it fell to Psalm 147, and I read from verses 15 to 19,

*"He sends out His command to the earth;
His word runs very swiftly.
He gives snow like wool;
He scatters the frost like ashes;
He casts out His hail like morsels;
Who can stand before His cold?
He sends out His word and melts them;
He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow.
He declares His word to Jacob,
His statutes and His judgments to Israel.
He has not dealt thus with any nation;
And as for His judgments, they have not known them.
Praise the LORD!"*

Of course, now the Lord had my full attention!!! I began to pray and ponder on the word I had just received and the events of the weekend. I knew God had a message for us and was eager to discern His heart and mind. The more I prayed, the more I realised that this was a message of hope to the Church and to the nation! Hallelujah!

We now live in a nation and world that has rejected God Almighty and His Word, laws and statutes. Rebellion, disobedience and hardness of heart towards God, and the rejection of God and His Word, have become the status quo. There is apathy, coldness and blatant indifference toward God, the Creator of all the earth and everything relating to Him. In the midst of the current situation, we have the Church, disengaged from her Source, struggling to make herself relevant and heard, and baffled by the lack of response and effect, both within and without.

In this dire state of affairs, the Word of God seems to have lost its power and impact. It appears to have little or no effect on the hearts, minds and lives of people. Even in the Church, the Word of God appears to have (temporarily) lost its power to perform and many walk in disobedience, doubt, unbelief, faithlessness and fear.

Like the snow, which is just water that has crystallised due to coldness of temperature, the word of God, in encountering the coldness of human hearts, has 'frozen' and become ineffective in accomplishing what it was sent out for. Like the snow, which freezes to death and stifles life, the coldness of human heart, has created a spiritual state of death, hopelessness and despair. Just as the snow brought everything to a standstill, motorways blocked with traffic, aeroplanes grounded with businesses losing millions of pounds sterling, many have become spiritually bankrupt, ruined and insolvent.

Yes, we are in the bleak midwinter, not long ago, but HERE and NOW!

Revival

Nevertheless, that is not the focus of this message, because in the midst of all that is happening, the Lord seeks to bring hope to the Church and to the people of this land. Hence, this is not a bible study on Psalm 147:15-20, but rather, a declaration of what is on the Father's heart. The essence of the message is that God is going to send forth His word again, and this time His word shall come forth as rain and shall melt the coldness and hardness of hearts. Thus the word of God is going to be restored to and declared by the Church, once again, in this land.

This is the REVIVAL we have been crying, praying and waiting for!!! God will send forth and revive His Word once again. The Word of God is going to be exalted in the Church! God's people shall HEAR and READ the Word. God's people shall UNDERSTAND the Word.

God's people shall BELIEVE the Word. God's people shall OBEY and LIVE according to the Word. God's people shall BOLDLY DECLARE the Word. And God's people shall DEMONSTRATE the Word in power! According to Psalm 147, the Lord will send forth His Word, together with the wind of His Spirit, causing frozen, icy, still and hardened hearts of rebellion, unbelief, doubt, fear, indifference, apathy, etc, to melt and flow like a river of life. Hallelujah!

The bible tells us in Isaiah 55:10-11:

*"For as the rains come down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there;
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it"*

The Word of God comes down as rain, and is powerful and able to accomplish all that God sent it forth for! As we receive the Word, understand, believe and act upon it in obedience, faith will begin to build up in us, for *"faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ"* (Romans 10:17).

Rebellion, disobedience, unbelief, doubt, faithlessness, fear and apathy shall all melt away, as faith builds up through the power of the word of God. As our faith increases we will receive more answers to prayer, which will encourage us to further read the word and stand and act on it. This will give us the boldness to DECLARE the Word of God to all. The power of God's Word will be demonstrated as we boldly declare it, and we shall see life and wholeness created, and change take place in our lives, homes, communities, towns, cities and nation.

Yes, this is the revival we are waiting for!!!

The River of God

God showed Ezekiel a picture of a flowing, growing and rising river (Ezekiel 47). The water started flowing from the threshold of the Temple. The river grew and expanded from ankle to knee and waist deep. Then it became a river so deep that one must swim through it. The river contained a great multitude of fishes and its water brought life and healing wherever the river flowed. There were many fishermen on the banks of the river, spreading their nets and catching exceedingly many fishes! Also, along the banks of the river grew many kinds of very fruitful trees, whose fruits and leaves were for food and healing.

Through the Church, the Word of God shall go forth, like that river, into every area of life, bringing healing, restoration and life. The creative power of the Word of God shall go forth from the Church, causing righteousness, justice, peace, mercy, truth, love and joy to spring forth in the land (*Psalm 85:8-13*). Above all, many souls shall be saved into the kingdom of God.

Indeed, this is the REVIVAL we are awaiting with anticipation!!!

Aslan Has Come!

The scenery on our way to the retreat was totally different from that on our journey back home. Onward our journey, as we travelled through the frozen, cold and barren fields to the retreat, someone commented,

"This is Narnia!"

Yes, it did look exactly like the film's depiction of Narnia from C. S. Lewis's "Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," when the Snow Queen had taken over and turned everything to ice and snow.

However, the scenario on our return journey was totally different. There was little or no snow or ice anywhere, as the rain had melted it all, and the eeriness had also gone. There was life, as we could now see the trees and fields. One of my team members who was riding in another car immediately sent me a text message saying,

"ASLAN HAS COME!"

What a true and appropriate statement! Aslan was the Lion who came and overthrew the Snow Queen and her cohorts, and restored life to all. So, indeed, "Aslan," Jesus Christ, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Word of God has come!

This is a message of hope to the Church, for He has come to deliver, empower, strengthen and enable us. He has come to stir up FAITH and BOLDNESS in us to declare His Word. His coming will cause righteousness, peace, justice, mercy and truth to spring forth. This is a message of hope for the people in this nation and the world because as we declare Him they will all hear, know and believe that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is the only Hope, Light and Saviour of the world.

In this coming year and beyond, whatever you do, receive, believe, live and proclaim the Word of God.

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." – Isaiah 11:9b; Habakkuk 2:14