

The Winter of Our Content

The other day I was driving back from Alabama into Tennessee, my new home—my new green home. During spring and summer, I typically comment, “I love the green.” And I do. For a green lover, there is no better place to be than Middle Tennessee with its verdant meadows, hills and valleys.

As I was surveying the undulating landscape surrounding I-65, I found myself feeling a bit sad and even a bit put out that winter was sneaking in to steal my green. I saw the signs of it: the trees, not quite in fall plumage, were tinged with an ochre weariness. The shorter days were conspiring to drain the leaves of green and to ultimately consign them, dead and shriveled, to the ground.

Of course, I told myself it was silly to have an attitude toward winter, but that really didn't change my mind. So, I thought, I am going to have to come up with a whole new paradigm, an entirely different way of looking at this

situation. I need to see winter through the eyes of contentment. Didn't Paul say, "I have learned to be content in any situation, whether in summer or winter, whether in green or gray" (or something to that effect)?

So I searched for some thoughts to rival those negative ones in my mind:

(1) See the beauty in all seasons. See the different stages of life in the trees, and marvel at the buds and baby leaves in spring. At the verdant, seemingly infinite shades of green in the summer. At the resplendent regalia of autumn, and at the stark beauty of the trees' nakedness in winter, silhouetted against a slate gray sky. There is glory in each stage of life because God is in it.

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under
heaven. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

(2) Just as the trees drop their dead leaves and then experience the new birth of green leaves in the spring, so we must die to ourselves to experience new birth. And resurrection is a sure thing—spiritually and physically. God displays such a profound analogy to guarantee our own new birth.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1:3)

(3) More than anything, let the constancy of the seasons remind us of God's constancy:

"As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease." (Genesis 8:22)

"Let us acknowledge the LORD;
let us press on to acknowledge him.
As surely as the sun rises,
he will appear;
he will come to us like the winter rains,
like the spring rains that water the earth."
(Hosea 6:3)

(4) Snow even speaks of God.

Showing his involvement in our weather and our world:

He spreads the snow like wool
and scatters the frost like ashes.
(Psalm 147:16)

Reminding us of our total forgiveness, no matter how grievous our sin:

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
(Psalm 51:7)



So, going into the winter, I am choosing to have a different mind set—not to feel like the victim of a verdant robbery, but to be reminded of an artistic, loving, accepting and constant Father who speaks to me daily through his varied handiwork.