

Grace and peace be to you, my beloved family and friends. I found this devotion about the season of winter and how it may affect us. This piece is also a metaphor for our relationship with God, and new growth that comes with spring. I hope you enjoy it as much as I have. God bless you all.

### **The season of winter**

As I look out the window from where I sit, I see deep snow covering the ground. Everything is white and beautiful, and the whole of nature seems to be in deep peace. But I know what the garden looked like a few weeks ago, and I know that the white flakes have covered fallen brown leaves, withered grass and plants. It's all there, but it won't be seen now as long as winter lasts.

The winter may seem unpleasant to many, but frost and snow in our country (Sweden) are an indispensable part of life. Without winter, spring and summer wouldn't be what they are.

There are seasons in our lives too. And we often have difficulties in understanding why they are there. Why do we have to pass through winters with barren branches and frozen ground, times without flowers and fruit, without singing and joy? Why?

It's good to learn from the way nature works, because He who created us also created nature, and through His works we can better understand Him, and His ways.

Winter may seem a time of death, but in reality it's a time of rest. When harvest is over, trees aren't ready to bear new fruit immediately. They need a rest, and winter gives them time to do that. Many of us get so easily caught up in a treadmill of producing all the time. 'God can't be satisfied with me if I don't produce anything for Him, can He?' is the way we think. But in His grace God allows a winter season in our lives, to give us rest. He doesn't expect us to bear fruit when it's winter, and we would do well if we could learn not to expect fruit when we should be having a rest.

At the same time winter is preparation for new flowers and new fruit. Under the snow, in the unseen depths something is going on. It's only on the surface that it looks like death. Under the surface life is active and stirring! Roots are filling up with nourishment, and buds are bracing themselves for spring. In late winter it only takes a sunny day, and you see how the buds begin to break forth! They were ready for it.

When you inwardly go through a time of winter, you may well withdraw from many expressions of life, but that doesn't mean your spirit is dying. It only means that for a time you are resting, and preparing for a new season, a season of flowers and growth. God takes you aside to prepare you for what is to come, and without that thorough preparation, you won't be ready for a new season!

So, if you're in a winter season in your life right now, it's not the end! After winter, comes spring. All part of God's plans for His children. Be prepared, one day you'll suddenly become aware of an irresistible pull in your spirit that tells you winter is past, and the time for singing is upon you again (Song of Songs 2:11-12)!

I'll see you in worship and Happy New Year!!!

Rev. Erik Karlson  
Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish