



Suffering in the Snow

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In my years, I don't recall a white Christmas, I don't even recall much of the white stuff in December, yet a winter storm is forecast for this evening and tomorrow. As a child I loved snow! It was a rare occurrence for Sumter, SC, but when it snowed, time stood still--truly! Everything closed. It was never more than an inch that fell, but we would scrape up the entire front yard's worth of snow to make a knee-high snowman. The sun would then melt our poor snowman by noon. It didn't matter. If it snowed again the next year, we were excited and would do it again.

My experiences with ice are not nearly as pleasant as those with snow. The only bone I've ever broken was due to a slip and fall on ice. I wore a cast on my leg for 8 weeks. Once I was driving to work in ice, and my SUV slipped. My whole, brief life flashed before my eyes.

We are currently under a winter storm forecast with a mix of sleet, snow, and freezing rain resulting in an accumulation of ice. The company that generates electricity for our area added a PSA to the forecast..."Prepare to be without power for several days." How does someone prepare for this? In September and October, we prepared for hurricanes, with the expectation we would be without electricity, but this winter storm is different. The potential for suffering is much greater. If I get too warm in my house without air conditioning, I would go outside, take a walk and feel the nice, cool breeze. If I get too cold in my house without heat, and it's colder outside, and there's ice on the ground...more socks?

Suffering comes in many forms and it exists to varying degrees. We will all experience suffering in some way over the course of our lives. I'm stressing about potentially being cold, while there are people who are suffering in the cold right this minute. Some have no home, and some people have no heat in their home. There are people who have not recovered from the hurricanes, who may be hearing the same forecast I've heard. The thought of our potential suffering is worrisome, but suffering is real.

We must understand that although we suffer, God is still present in our lives. He is with us through our suffering. Hebrews 4:12 tells us, "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." We may feel as if God does not hear our prayers during times of suffering, but He does! His Word is active, not stagnant, and He knows our needs and the desires of our hearts.

We read of David's suffering in 1 Samuel. He believes Saul will kill him, and he has even eluded spears Saul threw at him (v. 19:10) on more than one occasion. During David's suffering we read that God's favor is still upon him. He is successful (v. 18:15). He has a very close friendship (v. 18:3) and a loving wife who cares deeply for him (v. 18:20). When we are suffering we have a tendency to give little notice to the positives in our lives, God's favor, but we must be mindful of the positives as evidence of God's unfailing love. During his suffering, David wrote more than half of what we read in the book of Psalms. In particular, Psalms 34:19 tells us, "The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all; he protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken."

Stay positive as you try to stay warm!

Thank you for reading!

Kim