

The Big Freeze

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Wow! What a week! I lived in northeast Ohio for thirty-three years and I never experienced anything like last week. Like so many families across Texas, we were without power for forty-six hours. During that time, temperatures plummeted to eleven degrees. Some are still without power and water. As we begin to thaw out, we are learning the extent of the damage that has been done. Our church building sustained busted pipes and another flood.

The winter storm is an additional hardship during a trying time. Do you remember we are still enduring a pandemic? In light of events of the past year, what could I say that I haven't already said? As Christians, we know the course we are to take. We are to remain faithful to God and be servants to our neighbors. The pattern of pulling together in times of crisis is not unusual to us. We will move forward.

The saints to whom James wrote lived under tremendous stress and anxiety. They were persecuted. We would be wise to remember the reassuring words of James: "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him" (Jas. 1:12).

During trials, we can lose perspective of God's unchanging control. To this end, James reaffirmed, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (Jas. 1:17). Jesus once said of God's provisions: "...he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). Not only do the blessings we receive come from God, but they also draw our attention to Him.

Of course, there is a specific blessing from God which is intended to elicit our obedience: His Son. To this point, James wrote, "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures" (Jas. 1:18). Jesus is the Word of Truth (John 1:1-14; John 14:6). May we never lose faith in Him.

Our world is fragile. Life as we know it can quickly change. We are inadequate to make our way in the world. We cannot properly control a power grid, much less the weather. We need help. The Creator points us to His Son. Like a shepherd, Jesus will safely guide us if we are willing to follow Him.

Remember that we have an adversary. He wants us to lose heart. He wants us to abandon our faith. We must not give up. By the grace of God and the help of each other, we can make it home.

"The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him."

Nahum 1:7