"MOVING FROM WINTER TO SPRING"

THE WEIGHT OF WINTER

As we are now beginning to see the "budding of spring," I am reminded that it was only a few months ago that I stood in the kitchen of our home in Cleveland, Georgia and watched as huge trees were breaking off or falling over in response to a coating of ice that had blanketed everything the night before. These trees couldn't bear the weight that had come upon them. Shortly after that ice storm I was sitting in my living room looking out over the many trees still standing on our property, and I started to think about how the different trees responded. I began to see how these trees could be representative of how we as people respond to the "weight of winter," and would like to share a few of these thoughts with you.

HOW THE TREES RESPOND TO THE WEIGHT

As I looked out at the effects of that storm on trees, I saw a wide spectrum of responses. As I mentioned, there were trees that broke off at different places as well as trees that just simply fell over, with roots and all coming out of the ground. Surprisingly, there were other trees that were very bent over on the day of the storm, yet they remained standing. Some of those trees still are a little bent over from that event—yet it occurred four months ago. There were yet other trees that seemed to stand upright during all of the weight of that storm. They "weathered" it well.

OUR RESPONSES TO THE WEIGHT

Having ministered to many people over the years—particularly in the "winter season" of many of these individuals—we have seen how the "weight of winter" can exert its toll. We have seen it in our own lives as well. Many of us have desired to "stand tall" in the midst of on-going struggles brought on by a variety of factors, yet we have unfortunately found ourselves, at a minimum, "leaning severely" and in some cases, "breaking" or "falling over" under the weight of it all. Maybe it was accumulated disappointments that brought on this "accumulation of weight." Or maybe it was the prolonged "waiting" for things to come to fruition that you believed were (and still believe are) from God. Or maybe it was the recurrent struggle to obtain healing in a particular area, and you've tried and tried to find that healing—yet the issue still remains.

THE FATHER'S RESPONSE TO OUR WEIGHT

As I think about the different trees and how they responded to the weight of the winter ice storm, I am aware that one of the main practical issues is how deep their roots were planted in the soil underneath them. Most of the trees that gave way were pine trees with a very shallow root structure. Whereas those that stood strong were generally hardwood trees with roots that go much deeper. I could extend that metaphor at this time to us as people, knowing that the greater degree (the deeper) we are "rooted or planted" in Father God, the less serious will be the effects of the storms of winter. Although this is sound advice and true, I don't sense the Father wanting me to emphasize that right now. I simply sense Him inviting us to acknowledge openly our condition—good, bad or indifferent—and ask Him for His

help. He is less interested in the "why" of our condition and more interested in responding to it from a heart of restoration. Oh yes, He may reveal one or more "why's" at some point in order to bring about greater healing for the future, but whatever the "weight" you may be experiencing as you make this transition from winter to spring, I know that the Father's response is simply to invite you to yield to Him and let Him sustain you. There is no other way.

I encourage you to read the following prayer, and if it is applicable to you, I invite you to pray with me . . .

Father, I thank You for the signs of spring that are now coming forth. I thank You that You say in Your Word that the "winter is past" (SS 2:11). Father, I want to embrace You and all that "spring in You" has to offer, yet this "winter season" has been particularly difficult. The weight has been significant. I acknowledge and offer this to You and I again ask for Your life to strengthen and restore me. I again give You my heart and receive all that You have for me—especially Your love. Thank You for hearing my cry. Thank You for responding. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

From the Father's Heart,

Jerry Basel