

the shadow of death we come out where?

How does Psalm 23 finish; “You prepare a table before me... Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Of course death isn't the only winter we face; we face conflict with friends, family, work mates. We face relational upheaval in all sorts of ways. And in the midst of this where is Jesus? Right there with you; stop, ask, listen, pour out your heart, accept his grace and mercy, apply his forgiveness. Never

believe the devil's lies that it won't get any better, or you deserve better or you deserve what you've got. Use Jesus' authority and bit up that rubbish and throw it out where it belongs. The stop, ask, listen to the Holy Spirit and let Jesus navigate all your relationships.

I know I'm tempted to navigate my relationships according to how I feel, which quite frankly when I'm feeling rotten is the worst guide I have. In Jesus thankfully I have a safe person to pour out why I'm feeling rotten, and invite him to pour his grace and mercy into my life, knowing he's with me,

and he's been down that path. Jesus knows the way, I'm in good hands, the only hands I want to be in, no matter the season of life.

Let us pray. Jesus in the winter of life reassure us of your presence. Help us keep your perspective on life. May we always take the time to stop and talk with you being open your leading. May we pour out our souls to you and know your love, your grace and mercy. Jesus we always want to be in your hands. Please us these winter season to grow us intimately closer to you.

21 August 2011
Walking With God—4



Today was we continue our series; ‘Walking with God’ we look at the season of winter. Winter; finding God in our losses, in the mundane, and sustaining our hearts over what can feel like the long path of obedience. In the winters of our life God is not absent, God is not silent. How do we know that?

Jesus' winter was the cross, where he prayed; “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matthew 26:39) Here the Father is with the Son in an amazing depth of intimacy. Here we see Jesus trusting his Father enough to pour out what is in the depth of his heart.

We don't see Jesus telling the Father what

to do to meet his desired outcome, or why he should act a certain way. John Eldredge reflects this same thought as he discusses how he faced the impending death of his family pet, their god Scout. John wrestles with God, not wanting to lose Scout, but still wanting to be in harmony with God's will. So he asks; “Jesus, do you want to heal Scout? Is that what you want to do here? I sensed the answer was NO. Not this time.” John continues; “This is crucial – hearing God requires surrender, giving all things over into his hands... Not expecting what I want to hear, but being open.”

John didn't hear what he wanted, but as he heard God he was able to use the time of

Scout's death wisely. Giving his wife and children and himself the time to share their love for Scout, to finish well living with Scout in Jesus' grace and themselves in Jesus' grace.

What was Jesus' answer? No my will but your will, and so Jesus walked to the cross secure in the Father's hands. It wasn't going to be a picnic, in fact you could say it was his darkest moment. There Jesus in complete agony, physically, emotionally and spiritually cries from the depth of his soul; “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)

That's Jesus tasting the horror of hell so you don't have to. That's

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

Jesus paying the price of justice so that when you are declared forgiven they're not empty sentiment, but based on a real act that saw justice done.

And then notice what happens. In the depth of winter Jesus does what; "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit." (Matthew 27:50) Jesus places his life into the Father's hands, choosing not to believe in the hate and pain of the situation but to believe in his Father's love and grace. Jesus doesn't die in despair but full of hope.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians; "Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be unformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest, who have not hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God

will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him." (1 Thess. 4:13,14)

Here in the depths of winter we can hear Jesus' wonderful words of hope. Not empty sentiment, but words of hope because they are based on a very real action, which ushered

Jesus is with us in the depths of winter.

in a very real reality. Jesus promise of resurrection, new life in his kingdom.

As John buried their much loved pet, Scout, there was sorrow, but also a real sense of God's grace. A real sense of hope and trust, as he also place the one he loved into the hands of the one he trusted with his life, into the hands of Jesus.

I certainly believe all of my life is lived in the

hands of Jesus. I don't want to be anywhere else. Yet I know that the good times have a way of dulling this sense, of leading me to find life in a comfortable, financially secure existence.

Wealth, pleasure, worldly success all have the potential to deafen me to God as they lure me into a false sense of security. 'I'm comfortable, all is good in the world'.

Have you ever felt that way?

How soon I forget God's world view. How soon I forget what God has plainly told me in Genesis three. You don't have to read far into the Bible before you hit Genesis three. And what do we read about in that chapter? Disaster. We live in a dangerous world. A world that is under a curse. We live in paradise lost, and no amount of pleasure seeking can recover

what was lost. Only maybe falsely mask the real pain till it all comes crashing in in some winter storm. My bank balance is no security. My work success is not guarantee against pain and lose. My positive sense of self worth, and all the good I've done won't stop death.

The Devil loves it when we loose our God given world perspective. Then he can begin to tempt us with; 'It's unfair', 'Why me, I haven't done anything wrong', 'Jesus has abandoned me', 'Jesus doesn't love me', 'Jesus doesn't work'. When I loose God's perspective I leave the door open for the devil to sow seeds of doubt.

Do we live in a fallen world that is under a curse, the curse of death? Yes. Do we have a promise that this fallen world will be fair? No. We live in a fallen world where the

only choice we really have when left to ourselves is to dig our own hell hole.

But we know the Fall isn't the whole story, for Jesus has been born, Jesus has lived and disciples us, Jesus has given his life so that we might be forgiven, restored and healed

Jesus wept.

being able to live in his kingdom, and we know without a shadow of doubt that Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead. We know that Jesus will return to declare you as one of the Father's children whom he loves and delights to share his life with. For in Jesus that is who you are.

So I don't face life simply in my own strength and wisdom, but now when the seasons of winter come

I can stop, ask, listen and walk with Jesus through this season. A season which now has the potential to deepen my relationship with Jesus, for as two friends face a lose together their relationship is matured.

For Jesus isn't just a fair-weather friend, but he is a friend who stands with you in the winter of your life. A friend you can turn to and pour out your heart and soul to him, and he will listen and be there with you.

That reminds me of the shortest verse in the bible; 'He wept' (John 11:15) When Jesus felt the pain of Mary and Martha at the lose of Lazarus he wasn't aloof feeling nothing, he was with them in their pain. And then he raised Lazarus. New life, for in Jesus death doesn't win. New life, for when we walk with Jesus through the valley of