

Prepare Before Winter!

by Wayne Goff

The apostle Paul was in a Roman prison awaiting execution from Nero. He knew his time was short and he was looking forward to going to his eternal reward. However, life wasn't quite over and he had some planning to do. So he admonished young Timothy to *"Do your utmost to come before winter"* (2 Timothy 4:21). He had already urged Timothy to be *"diligent to come to me quickly"* (v. 9). Part of the reason was his need for spiritual companionship — Crescens and Titus had left to work elsewhere, and Demas had turned away from the Lord *"having loved this present world."* Only the physician Luke remained with Paul. But Paul, in the "winter" of his life, is still working in his *"ministry"*! What he could not do because of his imprisonment, he wanted others to do in his stead.

Winter can be viewed *symbolically* as the end of life. Nature is dead — dead, fallen leaves, colorless grass, the cold, biting wind cutting through the land, and the utter silence as animals do their best to hibernate through it all. The great apostle Paul is in the "winter" of his life. Not that he was that old as we count time (he was probably in his early 60's), but "winter" in the sense of his time on earth coming to an end. The Bible compares nature's seasons to the times of our lives. For example, God said through the prophet Jeremiah, *"The harvest is past, **the summer is ended, and we are not saved!**"* (8:20). Here the implication is that the *spiritual* harvest season passed by and God's people did not take advantage of it in order to be saved. Jeremiah wept for his country.

Solomon admonished us to realize *"to everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven"* (Ecclesiastes 3:1). So "winter" is the **season** of *few or no opportunities*. Be sure you take care of your responsibilities before winter comes.

The Spring Of Youth

Young people, realize that you are in the Spring of youth. You are on the threshold of the rest of your life. Don't waste the privilege of preparing for the rest of your life! It may be difficult to see your current life this way, but that is exactly what it is. Life's "springtime" is the time for preparation — studying, learning, growing mentally, spiritually, physically. It is the time for wise decision-making — who will you marry, what career will you pursue, where you will live, and how independent from man and God you might be. These are the most important decisions you will ever make, and yet they must be made in the inexperience of youth. Amazing! Someone viewed that situation and exclaimed, "Youth is wasted on the young!" But we have all been there. Some foolishly spent their teens and twenties and found themselves utterly unprepared for the rest of their lives. They have to spend the rest of their lives catching up with everyone else, and mending their wasted lives.

The wise young person will listen to the wisdom of parents who once were young like you and can advise you of a few pitfalls. The wise young person will see the urgency of today. And the wise young person will sow to the Spirit more than to the flesh, Galatians 6:7-10, realizing that even youth can come to a sudden end, and then there is the same end for us all — **eternity**. Don't face it unprepared!

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