

INTRODUCTION: IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

A. BRIEF ANALYSIS OF OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

B. A CHRISTMAS CAROL by English poet Christina Rossetti, 1872 (musical settings: Gustav Holst; Harold Darke)

1. midwinter: farthest point from both fall and spring (early February)
2. winter: cold, wind, ice, snow on snow on snow (see Ps.147:16,17)
3. bleak: dark; cold, hard; no travel, agriculture; dreary, miserable, discouraging

C. SEASONS OF LIFE

1. whole life (January, conception; December, death (baby, old man); e.g., “May – September romance”)
2. within life (health, marriage, family, work, church, etc.)

D. OUTER MAN DECAYING; EARTHLY TENT TORN DOWN (2Cor.4:16a; 5:1f)

POINT: BUT GOD! (2nd stanza; see Gen.8:1; Ps.49:15; 73:26; Acts 2:24; Rom.5:8; Eph.2:4; 2Cor.7:6)

A. NOT WINTER FOREVER (Gen.8:22; 50:20; Ps.74:17; 147:16-18; see 2Cor.4:16f)

B. LIGHT INTO DARKNESS (Mt.4:16; Lk.1:78f; Jn.1:4f; 3:19f; 8:12; Acts 26:18; 2Cor.4:6; Eph.5:8f; Col.1:12f; 1Jn.1:5f; see Gen.1:2f)

C. SOFT WARMTH INTO HARD COLD (Mk.3:5; 6:34; 8:2; see Ps.147:18)

D. CALM INTO CHAOS (Mt.8:26f; Mk.4:39f; Lk.8:24f)

E. LIFE INTO DEATH (Gen.1:2,20f; Ezk.37:1f; 2Cor.4:16f; Eph.2:1f; 2Tm.1:10; see Jn.1:4; 8:12)

F. JOY INTO BLEAKNESS (Ps.30:11; see Song 2:10)

CALL: GIVE HIM YOUR HEART! (last stanza; 1Jn.4:19; Mt.22:37f; 26:42; see Mk.1:15; 8:34f)

A. WORK BEFORE WINTER (2Tm.4:21; Mk.13:18; Acts 27:12, etc.; see Jn.9:4)

B. TRUST GOD FOR GROWTH *IN* THE WINTER (Ps.119:67; Heb.5:8; 12:5f; 1Pt.5:6,7)

C. TRUST GOD *IN* THE WINTER *FOR* THE SPRING (Gen.8:22; 2Cor.4:16f; 1Pt.4:19; Ps.30:11)

Brethren, what shall WE DO? (see Acts 2:37f)