



## 4. Is it always winter?

God is relational and intimacy is the goal of every relationship. In the second part of this two-part study we will explore what intimacy means to a Christian.

### NOTES & QUOTES FROM PODCAST

Two weeks back I mentioned to Shammi and my pastor Rev Mark Derry, “I feel I am in the ‘valley of dry bones.’ I was experiencing a season of complete dryness – physically, mentally and yes, even spiritually.

Last week, as I received greetings on WhatsApp for Advent Sunday, my mind lingered on a sentence in C S Lewis’ novel “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.” In it the beavers describe Narnia to the children, “It’s Always Winter and Never Christmas.” What a dreadful description!

But not too far from how I and I suspect, many others feel from time to time. How about you? Do you ever feel ‘under attack’ from powerful forces? Forces like overwhelming fears, major anxieties, deep sorrow, powerful temptations, or doubts due to uncertainty? These are all, in my experience, spiritual attacks.

Though mostly invisible they are not necessarily irrational. They affect us physically and mentally and the root cause for them is that the world is under the curse of sin and control of the evil one.

As the apostle John writes, “*We know that we are children of God. We know that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*” (1 John 5:19)

The beavers give a similar explanation to the children about the condition of Narnia. It was always winter due to the curse and spell of the evil White Witch.

### 1. What is Advent?

Where does Advent fit into all of this? Actually, it fits in beautifully as the true importance of Advent comes in right here. Christians celebrate Advent which means “a notable arrival” as a time to look back when Jesus came into this world on Christmas day.

It also is a time to look forward to Jesus’ apocalyptic Advent when He arrives again in all His glory and establishes a new heaven and a new earth.

### 2. Why is Jesus Advent a matter of joy?

One of most familiar Christmas songs of Isaac Watts is about Jesus’ advent and is called ‘joy to the world’. Why is it a matter of joy? Well because Jesus comes and breaks the spell of the evil one.

“He comes to make His blessings flow, far as the curse is found.”

Where? As far as the curse is found!! Joyfully that “where” includes whatever place you and I are.

### 3. Aslan and the story behind the story?

Let's go briefly go back to the Narnia Chronicles and hear what the author C S Lewis says about how he started writing it. "Some people seem to think that I began by asking myself how I could say something about Christianity to children and then fixed on it a fairy tale as an instrument.

This is all pure moonshine. Everything began with images - a picture of a Faun carrying an umbrella and parcels in a snowy wood. This picture had been in my mind since I was about sixteen.

Then one day, when I was about forty, I said to myself, "Let's try to make a story about it." At first, I had very little idea how the story would go. But then suddenly Aslan came bounding into it. Once He was there He pulled the whole story together, and soon He pulled the six other Narnian stories in after Him."

In case you are not familiar with C S Lewis series of Narnia books, Aslan is a Lion who represents Jesus Christ.

### 4. When Jesus comes bounding into our lives

Yes, once Jesus comes bounding into our lives, He will pull all our stories together. With the arrival of the season of advent 2021, the wonders of Jesus' love have once again gripped me. He met me in my valley of dry bones and He has clothed me with flesh and breathed His holy spirit into me. I am back again!!

I pray that if you are in a similar valley that the wind of God blows on you and the spirit of Jesus breathes on you this advent season and while we may experience winters, may they all be filled with Christmases.

### REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY

- Write down a short 250 to 300-word reflection on your thoughts about this video and your life today.
- Do you need the breath of God to blow into it? If yes, look up to Jesus and invite Him to do so.

### THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES (Ezekiel 37:1-10 abridged)

God's Spirit took me up and set me down in the middle of an open plain strewn with bones. He led me around and there were bones all over the plain—dry bones, bleached by the sun. He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Master God, only you know that." He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones: 'Dry bones, listen to the Message of God!'" I prophesied just as I'd been commanded. As I prophesied, there was a sound and, oh, rustling! The bones moved and came together, bone to bone. I kept watching. Sinews formed, then muscles on the bones, then skin stretched over them. But they had no breath in them.

He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath. Tell the breath, 'God, the Master, says, Come from the four winds. Come, breath. Breathe on these slain bodies. Breathe life!'" So, I prophesied, just as he commanded me. The breath entered them and they came alive!

### CONNECT WITH US

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