**Dead of Winter Week 1- Isolation**

Sometimes we’re staring out the window waiting for spring to arrive.

The winter in the valley can feel like a LONG battle. Grey skies, continuous rain, wind always, coldish… flu season, cold seasons, everything is dead! ETC!!!

I remember having Allen and Bernine out to check out our city. I warned them that sometimes it can be a little rainy but come check it out… It was CRAZY!!

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Sometimes we feel like winter is hanging on in our faith too. We can go through long periods where it seems that

* There’s no evidence of growth
* Everything feels a little harder
* Things that were alive start dying
* What once was so vibrant starts to be drab.
* Lethargic faith that doesn’t really dream.

Sometimes we know why it’s happening and sometimes we have no clue…

**Psalm 42:5**- Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and my God.

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For the next 4 weeks we’re going to talk about **4 things that we need to stop doing in that season!** This week, STOP ISOLATING yourself.

Let’s look at 2 Bible heroes who even recognized this.

**1 Kings 19:3-4-** Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.”

**1 Kings 19:14-16 and 18**- He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. **I am the only one left**, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

15The Lord said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.  18Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”

**2 Timothy 4:9-12, 16-18**- 9**Do your best to come to me quickly**, 10for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. 11Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. 12I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 16At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. 17But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth. 18The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

 We don’t want you isolated… Join a team!