

At this time a year ago, I was packing my travel bag with shorts, t-shirts, and of course my favorite – flip-flops! The destination? Palm Springs, California. Each year our denomination (the Evangelical Free Church of America – or EFCA) holds an annual conference for Senior Pastors to gather, round table ideas, ask questions, and of course encourage one another. It just so happened to be in the gorgeous and sunshiny Coachella Valley.

But that was a year ago. This year, as I packed my bag, I had to fill it with much warmer clothing. The destination? Boulder, Colorado. Don't get me wrong – I love Colorado. In fact, the hosting church was where my Youth Ministry career began. So, I was certainly excited. But it wasn't warm by any stretch. The time was good as usual, but without the warm sunshine I found myself a little less refreshed.

I have always loved snow, and I don't even mind the cold (in fact I enjoy it). But this time of year is always a hard time for me, primarily because of how long the season is. It can feel at times dreary, relentless, and even hopeless. Perhaps you're like me, staring out your window hoping for that first blade of grass to emerge from the vast whiteness.

But God is always true to his word. Unless Jesus comes back first, there will be a spring. That time will come. The sun will shine. The inside of my front doorknob will no longer have frost on the screws. My mailbox will be more accessible. And my driveway won't be the world's most boring snow hill. Spring will come. There is good ahead.

But it's not just the weather that we're reminded of. This week, Peter tells us to "set our hope fully upon the grace that will be given us." Peter has been adamant that the greatness of our salvation awaits. It's locked up and ready for us. Like a sailor climbing to the top of the mast on the ship, we look out to the great beyond with hope that our destination is coming. That may feel like forever away. It may feel unreachable. But I promise you it's not hopeless. It will come. There is good ahead. We will experience all Christ has fully promised us. Imagine what that day will be like when we step into his glory!

So, as we wait for warmer weather and the donning of our flip-flops, it's a very real reminder that we wait ultimately for our Savior. But let us not wait passively. Let us fill our time with doing good. Let us each, grab the hand of another, and pursue Jesus together, so that we may be with him, become like him, and live life as he did. Let us each consider our neighbors, where we *live*, where we *work*, where we *study*, or where we *play*. And may we show them how good our Savior really is.

Following Jesus alongside you,

Pastor Seth