

JANUARY DEVOTIONAL: *Whiter Than Snow*

We have two Scriptures for today. The first is Isaiah 1:18 NIV:

“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”

And Psalm 51:7 NIV:

“Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.”

Years ago, many children learned that if they used bad words, Mom might wash their mouth out with soap. Can anyone relate to that? And although modern parenting methods may disagree, it certainly got the message across!

Still, soap has limited cleansing power.

As Christians, we know what true cleansing is. We cannot wash away our own sin. Only God can do that. Through His grace and the forgiveness we receive through Jesus, He cleanses us and makes us new.

And that brings us back to those two Scriptures.

In my experience, snow is very white—so bright that you may need sunglasses if you’re outside in it for long. That’s why the wording of these two passages has always stood out to me.

Isaiah says our sins can become “white AS snow.”

But David asks God to wash him until he is “whiter THAN snow.”

Think about that for a moment.

Whiter than snow?

Imagine the whitest, cleanest thing you can picture. David longed for God to cleanse him so completely that even snow didn’t seem white enough to describe it.

David understood something we sometimes forget: sin leaves a stain we cannot remove ourselves. We can try harder. We can promise to do better. We can make everything look pretty good on the outside.

But only God can truly make us clean.

That idea of being washed reminds me of another person in the Bible — good ole outspoken Peter.

When Jesus began washing His disciples' feet, Peter wanted no part of it.

"You shall never wash my feet," he told Jesus.

But when Jesus explained that Peter needed to be washed by Him, Peter quickly changed his tune:

"Then, Lord, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

That's Peter for you. He went from "You're not washing my feet!" to "Just go ahead and wash me all over!"

And yet, being washed by Jesus didn't mean Peter never failed. Later, Peter would deny even knowing Jesus — not once, but three times.

Yes, Peter failed. But Peter's story didn't end with his failure.

Peter repented, and Jesus restored him. The same man who had been afraid to admit that he knew Jesus became one of the boldest proclaimers of the gospel.

There may be a lesson there for us.

When we first came to Christ, He forgave us and made us clean. But that doesn't mean we never stumble, never get distracted, or never allow things to creep back into our lives that shouldn't be there.

Sometimes we need a good “re-wash,” too.

Not because we need to be saved all over again, but because we still need to come honestly before God, confess what needs to be confessed, and allow Him to renew our hearts.

So as we begin this new year, maybe this is a good time to ask ourselves:

Has the busyness and craziness of life caused me to drift away from Jesus a little?

Have other things begun taking priority over my time with Him?

Am I still connecting with God’s people?

Am I still serving and loving others?

A fresh blanket of snow has a way of making everything look new.

And maybe that’s a beautiful picture for the beginning of a new year.

The God who promises to make scarlet sins white as snow is still in the business of forgiving, cleansing, restoring, and making things new.

So let’s take a quiet moment and ask Him:

“Lord, is there anything in me that needs a re-wash?”

Note: Allow a moment or two for quiet reflection. Soft music during this time can help create an introspective atmosphere. If your group enjoys the old hymns, consider having someone play or sing “**Whiter Than Snow.**”

Closing Prayer: Father, we thank You for the incredible gift of salvation through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank You for forgiving us, cleansing us, and making us new.

Like David, we ask You to continue to restore and renew us. Search our hearts and show us anything that needs to change. We also thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who lives in us and provides daily guidance as we strive to become more like You.

Give us the strength to follow You faithfully, the courage to make changes when we need to, and the wisdom to recognize the things that may be drawing us away from You. Renew our hearts, guide our steps, and help us begin this new year with our eyes fixed on You.

Thank You for loving us, forgiving us, and making us new.

In Jesus' name, Amen.