



**BEHOLD!
I BRING YOU TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY!**

*A SHORT PIECE OF ENCOURAGEMENT IN A SEASON WHERE IT IS EASY
FOR MANY TO SLIP INTO A PIT OF DEPRESSION*

Christmas time. It's a festive time of year. Pretty lights strung up. Excitement in the air. Extravagant decorations. Time especially focused on family. Expanding hearts towards friends, family and our fellow mankind. Special celebrations. Busy, busy, busy, but a purposeful busy. Parties. Extra yummy food. Special music we only hear once a year. Why should anyone not be happy, right?

For us believers, it's also the time we celebrate our Lord's birth. It's a beautiful time of contemplation and appreciation for his coming to earth and what he did for us. And why he did it. For love.

We celebrate what and who he is to us – our savior, our healer, our very present help in times of trouble. He is our protector, our defender, and our warrior God who walks beside us, always, in every circumstance. The good shepherd who guides us and cares for us. Our comforter. The one who gives us hope, wrapped in love.

But for some, who may be going through rough times, Christmas is the push over the edge. It sucks to have to live through it. You'd just like to skip it and hide somewhere till it's over. The happy times outside does not reflect your inner sadness. And no amount of glitter and revelry make the outer and inner realities match up.

For any of you who find yourself and your life in a bad place, a place where you feel your life has been turned upside down, a place where nothing seems to be going right and you're being blind-sided every which way, everything has fallen apart, you're lost, or you have suffered loss, and it's just one thing after another – if this is you, I have good news and I have bad news. But mostly good news.

God has not abandoned you. He is not punishing you. Have you considered the idea that you might be going through boot camp? God's boot camp, to be specific. That's the bad news – kind of. It's painful to be going through boot camp. It's not fun.

Hang. In. There.

Here's the good news. He is doing something necessary and good and right in your life.

Here's more good news. He is moving you out of this place you are in.

Walls need to come down. Chains need to be broken. Prison doors need to be kicked open. Poisonous lies and distorted beliefs need to be drawn up out of darkness and exposed to his light so they can be vanquished.

You will come through this. He is with you every step of the way. Hold on to him. Hold on tight. Surrender to boot camp.

Because the best news is that you are being healed. The best way out is through. And you will come through it, because he's walking you through it. You will know him in a way made possible only because of this journey. You will be strengthened. Your faith will deepen. Your trust will grow.

He will show you who he is.

And you will be grateful, because you are being loved.

You will become unstuck and able to move towards what he has planned for you. And his plans for you are always good.

Step into your healing. Believe it.

And the beauty of Christmas, the time when love came down, will be reborn into your heart.

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