

A Cure for the January Blues

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[0 : 00] Hello there, my name is Robin Gray and I'm the Minister at Gardentown New Church in Gamery and let me first of all wish you a happy new year.

However, I'm aware that this message might not find you as happy as you'd like to be. After all, it is January and January is known for the January blues.

After all the joy and the excitement that we have at Christmas, we come into January and we can tend to hit a kind of slump. We feel tired and worn out before the year has even properly begun.

The weather is often not too good either and it's dark and it can feel like the next thing to look forward to is still a long way off. Added to that, by the middle of January, some of our ambitious New Year's resolutions have maybe already started to fall away and that can make us feel even more low.

Newspaper articles this week tell us that counsellors and therapists are bombarded with requests for help at this time of year. So what's the antidote to the January blues?

[1 : 19] Well, I'm going to make a few suggestions. The first thing is to remember that whilst we have our ups and downs, our highs and lows, God is unchanging.

He's unchanging in his love and mercy and compassion. So we can remember that even on our worst days, God is good all the time.

The sun is always there. It's just that sometimes the clouds in the sky, especially in January, can make us forget that. Even on a gloomy day, remember the sun is still there.

God is still there and he rewards those who believe he exists and who earnestly seek after him. The next ingredient in the antidote to the January blues is that in Jesus, we have a friend who can sympathise with what it's like to feel low.

Jesus was described as a man of sorrows because he saw all the sadness and the distress in this world and he had deep compassion on the people that he saw suffering so much.

[2 : 33] But more than that, he experienced sadness himself. He was acquainted with grief. He wasn't just a spectator of our sadness. He shared in it.

That means in prayer you have someone you can go to who understands what it's like to be low and who can tenderly and compassionately lift you up again.

The hymn, What a Friend We Have in Jesus, contains the lines, Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness.

Take it to the Lord in prayer. Now there's a third ingredient to the antidote for the January blues and it's this. You can be happy in a way that doesn't depend on your circumstances.

It doesn't matter if the weather is bad, if the nights are long, what time of year it is or if there isn't much to look forward to in the calendar. It's a happiness that comes from knowing God.

[3 : 37] Now there's a difference between knowing about God and knowing God. The first, knowing about God, is having some information in your head.

The other, knowing God, is a relationship that goes into the deepest places of your heart. The Bible tells us that God is love, God is life and God is light.

And so knowing him makes us blessed. And blessed means happy. So, how can we know God in this way?

A way that makes us happy, whatever our circumstances. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, Now this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

That's the key. We can know God through his Son, Jesus. Jesus means saviour. And if we trust in him, we are going to a place where no one will ever feel low again.

[4 : 45] Heaven is described as a place where there will be no more mourning or crying or pain. Instead, there will be happiness and joy forever.

An unchanging God, a sympathetic saviour, and an eternal happiness through knowing God. Now, that's an antidote to the January blues.

Thank you for listening, and may God bless you.