



Can you sleep while the wind blows?

"Years ago, a farmer owned land along the Atlantic seacoast. He constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms along the Atlantic. They dreaded the awful storms that raged across the Atlantic, wreaking havoc on the buildings and crops.



As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received a steady stream of refusals. Finally, a short, thin man, well past middle age, approached the farmer. "Are you a good farm hand?" the farmer asked him. "Well, I can sleep when the wind blows," answered the little man.

Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, hired him. The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man's work.

Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore. Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand's sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, "Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!"

The little man rolled over in bed and said firmly, "No sir. I told you; I can sleep when the wind blows." Enraged by the response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead, he hurried outside to prepare for the storm.

To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down. Nothing could blow away. The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to also sleep while the wind blew.

When you're prepared, spiritually, mentally, and physically, you have nothing to fear. Can you sleep when the wind blows through your life? The hired hand in the story was able to sleep because he had secured the farm against the storm.

We secure ourselves against the storms of life by grounding ourselves in the Word of God. We don't need to understand, we just need to hold His hand to have peace in the middle of storms." – Author unknown



Like the hired hand in this story, Gene was well prepared *before* an unexpected storm came into his life 14 years ago. He had spent his life saturating his heart and soul with God's Word and nothing, not even a stroke, shook his faith. One of the greatest treasures I have is Gene's 10 journals of his walk with God. He reminded me that "**when we can't trace the finger of God, we can always trust the heart of God.**" What an incredible example he was to me! We often sang, **Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus**, because he wanted me to keep my eyes on Jesus no matter what the future held. He was ushered into His Saviors presence on January 27, 2009. We can't prepare for a crisis after the crisis, we must prepare ahead of time and that's what Gene had so faithfully done.



I have been praying for many of you who are currently going through a storm in your life. Jon Redmond shares some great insights into the types of storms we may encounter in our lives. I hope these thoughts will be an encouragement to you. I've shared portions in the past but sensed from the Lord that I needed to include it at this time. If you are not currently going through a storm, maybe this will be helpful for a friend who is.

If you are in a storm, may you rest in the Lord's tender care, experience His Amazing Grace and find His Abundant Peace guarding your heart. **In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.** Psalm 4:8 As Mary Beth Chapman so beautifully expresses . . . "May God give you a profound sense of His presence and the real light of His hope in the dark places."

4 Types of Storms - by Jon Redmond



"Storms are a part of life. That is true in nature, and that is true in our lives as well. In nature, there are different types of storms. There are thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, and blizzards. In the lives of people, there are also different types of storms. Storms sometimes appear in the form of an illness, an accident, and the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, a divorce, or some other tragedy. Some storms, like tornadoes, come suddenly and unexpectedly. A phone call from the doctor can suddenly change your life. An automobile accident can instantly take the life of a loved one. A declining economy can cost you your job. A change of heart by one person can

literally tear an entire family apart.

One of the most important parts of successfully riding out a storm is learning to identify the nature of the storm. Remember, not all storms are the same. Blizzards require one type of response while hurricanes require another. The same is true with the storms you face in life. Before you can respond properly to the storm, you must determine the nature of the storm." – Redmond



Storms of Correction

Some of the storms we face in life are the direct results of our own sinful choices. Not all storms fall under this category, but some storms do. Do you remember the prophet, Jonah? God told him to go one way, and he went the other way. He disobeyed God and as a result, he ended up in a serious storm at sea. So serious, in fact, that he ended up in the belly of a great fish. After three days at the "University of Whales," Jonah learned a lesson: *Disobeying God never pays off.* In that whale, Jonah had a change of heart. He sought and found God's forgiveness, and God gave Jonah a second chance. The prophet then obeyed God and preached to the people of Nineveh. As a result, thousands were saved. And so we can say that Jonah's storm was a storm of correction. God used a storm to get Jonah's attention and to correct his behavior. God forgave Jonah, and God will forgive you. God gave Jonah a second chance, and He will give you one, too!



Repentance is the only way to properly respond to a storm of correction. But even after his disobedience, when he repented, God graciously guided Jonah and brought him back on course. Use wisdom and allow God to direct you the first time. Don't cause Him to have to use drastic measures to get you to the proper destination.

Storms of Connection



Sometimes we face a storm not because of our own sins but because of someone else's sin. Such was the case of the men onboard the ship with Jonah. Jonah sinned and not only did he end up in a storm, but they did, too! They were in a storm because their lives were "connected" to Jonah's life. Sometimes we suffer because someone else has chosen to sin. Our connection to them places us in a storm even if we had no say in the matter. I think about Joseph in the Old Testament. Thrown in a pit, sold and taken to Egypt, falsely accused of rape, ended up in prison. **"The LORD was with Joseph"** in his situation, and He is with you in yours as well. Genesis 39:2, 21

Perhaps you are in an emotional storm because a child or grandchild is away from the Lord. Your heart is broken, and you feel like there is nothing you can do. But there is! You can love that child. You can pray for that child. And you can trust God to change his or her heart. And then you can wait on God to work in His own time and in His own way.

Storms of Perfection

Some storms in life are designed to perfect our faith. The Bible teaches that God uses difficult circumstances to strengthen our faith. The apostle Peter encourages us with these words: ***"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."*** | Peter 1:6-7



The disciples were in a storm, and Jesus was the One Who sent them into it. They weren't in a storm because they were **out** of God's will. They were in a storm because they were **in** God's will. Sometimes we end up in a storm for the same reason. We are trying to follow God, but our faith is weak. Doubts dominate our thinking. And God knows that one of the best ways to remove our doubts and strengthen our faith is by allowing a storm into our lives. In a storm, we are forced to make a decision: *"Will I trust God or will I not?"*

God wants you to be like Jesus. And if a storm can accomplish that goal, then the storm can become an effective tool in God's hands. Remember, ***anything that brings you closer to God is a good thing.*** It may well be that God has allowed this storm into your life for that purpose. Maybe God is "perfecting" you.

Storms of Reflection



Some storms are intended only to reflect God's grace and goodness to others. I think of the apostle Paul who had a thorn in his flesh. God didn't take Paul's problem away, but He did say this to Paul, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."** II Corinthians 12:9 **"When I am weak, then I am strong."** II Corinthians 12:10 Perhaps yours is a storm of reflection. If so, in the midst of your storm you have an opportunity to reflect the grace of God like the moon reflects the light of the sun. When you are facing difficulties in your life, you have a chance to be a witness for God that you wouldn't otherwise have. When you are in a storm, people are watching you. They are watching how you respond and in your right response, God is glorified.

Finding Strength in Life's Storms

God is with us in the storms of life. Gene and I felt His presence and grace during those 5 weeks. The Lord woke me up at 4 AM the morning following Gene's stroke and gave me a promise from John 9:1-3: **As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him."**

I couldn't wait to go to the hospital and share this with Gene! We were both so encouraged, and it brought us great comfort knowing that God was going to use this journey so that his greater works might be displayed in our lives.

After his first week at Mayo Hospital, Gene was transferred to HealthSouth Rehab. His second night there, Gene said that the Lord's love was rolling over him wave after wave, he could hardly breathe, it was so intense. Before the children left the next morning to go back to California, Gene told them, *"If I don't see you again, I want you to know that God does all things well. I don't want you to be angry with God. I want you to keep walking closely with Him and I want you to keep telling others about Jesus."*

On the morning of January 26 Gene shared with me that he had been awake the entire night and had experienced the most amazing time talking with the Lord! He was excited to have prayed for so many people during this time. Later that day he started failing and had to be put on oxygen. Jonathan, Myriam, and Jennifer immediately flew home.

That night he asked us to come to his bedside and one by one he put his hand on our heads and prayed a blessing over each of us. I was crying so hard when he prayed for me because I knew the end was coming. Even in his pain Gene was focused on reminding us about what was important in life--wanting his children and me to know that his heart's desire was for each of us to continue to fall more in love with our Savior and to never stop telling others about Him. His final thoughts were to entrust us into the Lord's care.

God has a Purpose in our Storm

That Jesus might be glorified: Just like diamonds which are best displayed on black velvet, our message is sometimes best displayed on the backdrop of trials and storms. Anyone can rejoice when experiencing blessings but when we go through storms, people are watching to see how we respond and how we will react. Our message becomes a megaphone to the world and God will always take the route that brings Him the greatest glory.

That we might give thanks in all things: When the doctor came out to tell us that Gene was gone, through our tears we began to pray and thank God for Gene's life, confident that God was going to walk us through our season of grief. We turned our eyes upon Jesus, and He sent us His peace and His hope. We were grateful for the precious 5 weeks we had with Gene following his stroke.

Through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in God. I've learned to depend upon His Word. I've had many tears and sorrows I've had questions for tomorrow, there've been times I didn't know right from wrong, but in every situation, God gave blessed consolation that my trials only come to make me strong. So, I thank God for the mountains, and I thank Him for the valleys, I thank Him for the storms He's brought me through, cause if I never had a problem, I wouldn't know that He could solve them, I wouldn't know what faith in His Word could do. - Andre Crouch

That we might learn to focus on Jesus and not on the storm: On January 28, 2009, the day after Gene transitioned to Heaven, the Lord impressed upon my heart: *"You trusted me 35 years ago when you said yes to Gene's proposal for marriage by faith and I've been faithful to you. I want you to trust me now in this new season because I will continue to be faithful to you."* He's kept his promise. He's been faithful to me every step of the way during these 14 years since Gene has been gone. He is not sometimes faithful; He is ALWAYS faithful! He is not sometimes sovereign; He is ALWAYS sovereign! **"A vertical focus will keep us from a horizontal panic."**



"Thank you for speaking at our Christmas Luncheon. You were inspiring and entertaining – a beautiful blessing!!" Florie Eudey - Women's Ministry Director
 Florie's friend who came to the luncheon had recently lost her husband and this was the first time she attended something since her loss. I'm thankful she came because she identified with my story.



It was such a sweet blessing to be part of this luncheon! The women were delightful!
"I want to thank you so much for the wonderful message you shared with the ladies. They absolutely loved you and your love story with Gene, your family, and the STOP to Pray ministry. Many of the ladies wished they had a pen and notepad to write down some of your cute little sayings. I'm sure we will be calling you in the near future to come and grace us with your words of wisdom and your lovely smile again."
 Debbie Rivera - Event Coordinator



I had a precious time with Jen when she came home for Christmas. Jonathan, Myriam, Henry, and Charlotte celebrated Christmas in Japan and had a great time! Jen and I enjoyed the beautiful Christmas Eve service at North Valley Community Church. We always have so much fun together and were blessed by the friends we got to see during her time here, including our dear friend Cathy. Jen always wants to help me "declutter" and since I'm a "pack rat" I need her help. I'm so thankful she enjoys doing this – we tackled the garage this time! 😊



What a blessing these women are in my life. We laugh together, we cry together, we stand in the gap with each other on behalf of our children. Even though all our children are grown, and many are now parents themselves, as long as we have breath, we are going to keep interceding for them because we will always be **Moms in Prayer!** Please contact me if you are interested in joining us. We resume on Friday, January 13 and meet every other Friday 8:30-9:30 a.m. at my home. This was our end of the year prayer and brunch. Three moms (not pictured here) left our group to start a new MIP in the North Valley! 😊

Desert City MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) - February 8, 2023

I am looking forward to meeting these precious young mothers on February 8! What a joy it will be to encourage them in their role as moms and in their walk with Jesus. Please pray that the Lord will use what I share to minister to the hearts of these mothers.



"Though no one can go back and make a brand-new start, anyone can start now and make a brand-new ending." – Carl Bord

Here's to God's Grace and New Endings,

Sara