

STRENGTH IN THE STORM

My husband's words brought comfort to my heart. "Don't worry, Honey. God is on my side, and He's my Healer. I'm going to be just fine."

He had been admitted to the hospital the day before with a dangerous, life-threatening condition and had to remain in the hospital for the next several days. I hated leaving him in his hospital room late that afternoon, but Hurricane Harvey, scheduled to be a Category 4 storm at landfall, was predicted to make landfall near our home. The hospital was locking down and was not allowing anyone but patients to stay at the hospital. My husband encouraged me to go home and make secure what I could, resting in faith. He felt terrible about not being able to help me even though I assured him I was up to the task and all would be well.

I felt strength surging through me even though I had hardly slept and my head threatened to explode as I went down all the mental lists of what needed to be done. I silently went through God's Word and all the scriptures I could think of for my situation.

The winds had noticeably strengthened as I quickened my step through the empty parking lot. I could see the highway from where I stood, and the southbound lanes were packed with vehicles evacuating the area ahead of the storm.

I reached our new car and froze. I had no words but a torrent of tears poured down my face as I took in the vandalism that deeply gouged the shiny paint and dented a door. "Really? Really?" was all I could ask while the rain pelted me as I fumbled to get the door open.

My earlier strength deserted me on the drive home. I felt weak and afraid. Through my tears I implored God for safety and protection and for my husband's life to be spared. By the time I pulled into our driveway, I had mascara streaking across my face and every few words of my prayer were punctuated by sobs and hiccups.

Just before I reached the back door, I had a powerful sense of the Holy Spirit. I forced myself to be quiet. After a few deep breaths, I asked, "Who, God? Who do You want to be for me in this? I am ready to listen." And although the wind was lashing tree limbs back and forth and darkness was fast approaching, I stood still and relaxed in His Presence.

The Holy Spirit reminded me of who I was. The identity statement I had written came flooding back to me. My inheritance scriptures rolled from my spirit and out of my mouth. I stood straighter and my voice became powerful. I headed out and quickly moved things and covered things, and made things ready for the storm. I prayed for my husband and had an assurance of his good health.

I felt light and energetic as I finally headed indoors. The Holy Spirit arrested me again. I felt Him say to my spirit, "Go, speak to that storm." The wind gusts were over 70 miles an hour now and it was totally dark, but I went outside into the front yard and spoke to it; commanding it to be still.

The winds still blew, but I felt it was time to go inside. As I turned, I eyed the ancient, towering tree in our front yard, in danger of toppling over. I pointed at it. “And you, you stay put. Stay anchored to those roots that will hold you steady.”

That night, the storm took an unexpected, very slight jog to the north, just enough that we were spared flooding and the worst of the winds. And that night in the hospital, my husband’s body responded to treatment, even better than the specialists had hoped for. That night, what had happened to our car became small in the larger plan God was working, and there is always a larger plan He is working.

When we pray from fear, we cannot come into alignment with God’s plans and purposes. When we pray aligned with our emotions instead of our identity, we cannot partner with what the Holy Spirit is longing to do.

Our circumstances cannot harm us when we know who we are. They can only make us more like Him.

John 14:11- 20 Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My Name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask Me for anything in My Name, and I will do it. If you love Me, keep My commands. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see Me anymore, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Graham Cooke has said to us that our prophetic words and inheritance scriptures must become as real to us as they are to God. Before He laid the foundations of the world in place, He planned our future. He spoke out our prophetic words. He assigned our inheritance scriptures to us. And once He puts something into motion, it cannot return void or fail to produce that which it was sent to produce. You truly are who Heaven says you are. Put it on and wear it like Joseph’s coat of many colors.

1. Do you have an identity statement that you keep upgraded as you see more of how you are known in Heaven?
2. If you do not have an identity statement, perhaps the group can take time for each one to write or upgrade their individual statement.
3. Take time to look back on the last month and write down any challenges that came to you personally.

4. Out beside each challenge, jot a few thoughts about your responses. Anxious? Fearful? Stressed? Run and hide? Binge eat? Be honest.
5. Know that your responses either good or bad brought absolutely NO condemnation from the Father. He decided before the foundation of the world was set in place who you would be. He designed you and fashioned you to reflect Him well. He looks at you from the future because He totally sees the person you are becoming. He KNOWS the REAL you and isn't moved by behavior or responses today.
6. Now, look back at your responses that you jotted down to last month's challenges. Take a few minutes to reframe your responses. This is your opportunity to 'get another thought'! What would have been a GameChanger response to the challenges that would provide strength for the journey?
7. Listen, we have ALL fallen short of the intentions the Lord has for us. The Good News is, He is intentional in His dealings with us and He WILL bring a similar challenge back around so you can respond differently. Go ahead and ask the Holy Spirit to help you with that future test.
8. Share in the group your challenge, your response, and what a better response could be.