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'Til the Storm Passes By

*In the dark of the midnight,
I have oft hid my face,
While the storm howls above me,
And there's no hiding place.
'Mid the crash of the thunder,
Precious Lord, hear my cry;
Keep me safe 'til the storm passes by.*

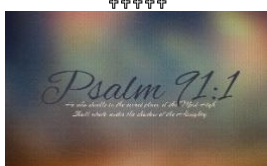
*Many times Satan whispered,
"There is no need to try,
For there's no end to sorrow,
There's no hope by and by."
But I know Thou art with me,
And tomorrow I'll rise
Where the storms never darken the skies.*

*When the long night has ended
And the storms come no more,
Let me stand in Thy presence
On that bright peaceful shore.
In that land where the tempest never comes.
Lord, may I dwell with Thee
When the storm passes by.*

Refrain:

*'Til the storm passes over,
'Til the thunder sounds no more,
'Til the clouds roll forever from the sky,
Hold me fast; let me stand
In the hollow of Thy hand.
Keep me safe 'til the storm passes by.*

**WORDS: Mosie Lister (w. 1958)
MUSIC: Mosie Lister (w. 1958)**

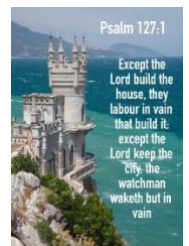


True Shelter

What does it mean to find shelter? In a physical sense, we often think of shelter as a house, sturdy and well insulated from the elements, a place of safety and warmth. But can we find shelter in the mental and spiritual aspects of our lives as well?

Certainly, we all throw our best efforts into finding shelter for our souls and minds. Whether that means constantly tweaking our routines to find the optimal way of living our daily lives, or enhancing our physical environment in hopes of finding more mental tranquility, or throwing ourselves into hobbies in order to feel a sense of fulfillment, we all spend vast amounts of time erecting shelters around our inner lives. We build strong walls of interests, opinions, hobbies, routines, and relationships, and buttress the walls with control, perfectionism, power, and sometimes even fear- whatever it takes to maintain the structures we've created. And yet, we find that all this work, all this effort, is still unsatisfying. We live in our shelters, but find them to have cracks in the walls that let in the rain and pain of the world. Our human-created shelters offer no true rest and peace to our inner lives.

In the Bible, we find a different picture of where we ought to look for shelter. Psalm 127:1-2 says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for He gives to His beloved sleep." What a picture! All our anxious toiling to produce a shelter for our souls and to maintain the rickety walls that we have erected is revealed to be utterly vain in these few words. Our houses of temporary, earthly things, built without the Lord, can never stand.



In our heart of hearts, in our deepest parts, we all know this. In quiet moments, we've all heard that small, quiet voice that whispers, "None of this will ever be enough." The question is, what do we do with that realization? Do we push past it, ignore it, and keep desperately patching the walls of our flimsy shacks? Or do we listen to that voice, and go in search of something better, something beyond ourselves? If we listen to the voice and seek out the Lord, then we will finally find true shelter for our souls. We will come to see that our lives, our efforts, everything down to the very core of our being, must rest in the bedrock of God. We must surrender our strivings, every aspect of our lives, to the will of the Father, and allow Him to build something beautiful with our lives. If we can spend our lives surrendering, and surrendering again, to the will of God, then no matter how the rain pours or the wind howls or the thunder roars, we will rest secure in true shelter. We will have peace that passes all understanding, and joy beyond measure. We will find a shelter beyond anything this world can offer; a home of true safety, comfort and love – a place in which we are eternally wrapped in our Father's arms.

Victoria Shank, Rolla, MO

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Until the Storm Passes By...

We are living in unbelievable times. Who would have dreamed even a couple months ago, that businesses would be closed and people would be staying in their homes all day?

At first fear drove us to stay away from others, but something wonderful has come out of this whole ordeal. People are talking about God and faith. It's not unusual now to see scriptures posted on Facebook instead of ugly talk of politics. People are posting pictures of their families and their together time. How long has it been since families took the time to be together and do activities together?

The news is talking about the heroes on the front lines instead of school shootings and mass murders. Neighbors are looking out for one another, and churches are now meeting in their cars. Members are so happy to see each other (even if it is just a wave).

This pandemic is but another "storm" of life, and we know Who is with us as we go through it. I sincerely hope that when this passes, we will continue to see

a renewal of faith, hope, and love. I hope families will continue to spend time together and that the family bond continues to be made strong.

I pray members will continue to look forward to meeting together in fellowship as we hear from God's word and join in singing together.

Let's all look forward to the rainbow, after this storm passes by.

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, TX

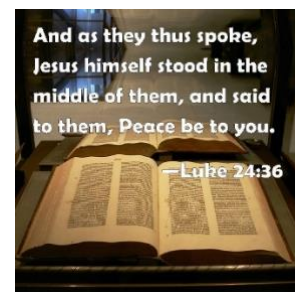
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THE TORNADO OF LIFE

We've all seen tornados on TV or up close and personal. Missourians live in Tornado Alley and have our share of destructive storms. In pictures, on television, or in real life, we have seen long, snake-like clouds dropping down to the ground, swallowing up everything they touch. There is great power in these storms evidenced by the aftermath of these beasts and the destruction they leave behind. Their power to destroy everything in their path leaves us awestruck. Sometimes people lose family members, or they are left with destroyed homes and unrecognizable streets.

Is your life ever like a tornado? Physical, emotional, and spiritual storms can rock our world, tearing our lives and hearts apart and leaving behind great destruction. God never promised a "rose garden" in life. He did promise us His presence, and He will see us through whatever comes.

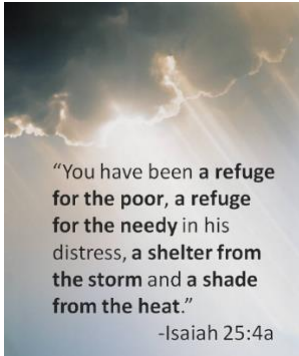
Christians have something the world does not. On the evening of the day of Jesus' resurrection, the disciples were in a room behind locked doors. They had heard the Lord was alive, but they just couldn't believe it. They had seen Him die; they had seen Him buried. They witnessed the earthquake and the darkness. **How** could He be alive again?! Can you imagine what was going through their minds? Grief, shock, anger, hurt, disbelief? But there He was, alive! Jesus' first words to His beloved disciples were, "Peace be with you!" (Luke 24:36). He knew that peace was what they needed most (Luke 24:38-49).



I've been there, haven't you? That's life. I have pictured myself in the center of a tornado with devastating winds and debris flying all around me. But in the midst of all that destruction, not a hair on my head was blowing. The

debris wasn't touching me; I was uninjured! All I felt was peace and calmness because when I looked up, a beam of light shined down from the heavens through the very center of that storm. As long as I looked up toward that beam of light, the swirling destruction did not touch me. That is the peace and calmness our Savior gives His children.

That swirling destruction is the world. How often we forget that light is there! How often do we fail to trust Him? This world is a fallen world. Sin, evil, and death are all around us. Sin caused the fall; and as long as the world stands, disease, heartache, sorrow, and death will be part of our world. As Christians, our world need not be affected like those who have no hope. Christians have forgiveness, mercy, and grace; the world does not.



As Christians, our world need not be affected like those who have no hope. Christians have forgiveness, mercy, and grace; the world does not.

We have life eternal; the world does not. We have a peace the world cannot know. Even when life seems to throw its worst at us, we still have the *“peace that passes all understanding”* (Philippians 4:7).

Romans 8:28 is one of my favorite scriptures. *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, and who have been called according to His purpose.”* What awesome news! This verse brought me through some very hard times in my life as I clung to that hope. Eventually in all situations, I saw how my Father worked it out for good.

Romans 8:37-39 says, *“³⁷ No, in all these things we are **more** than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (emphasis added)

The Holy Spirit is available to us. Are our lives filled with worry, doubt, and anxiety? When bad times come, how do we react? Do we react with worry and wringing of hands like the world does? Or do we react as Christians should, with childlike trust, peace, joy, and grateful hearts—no matter what?

As Jesus said to His disciples then and to His disciples now, *“Peace be with you.”*

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, Missouri



Afraid of the Dark?

I frequently live in the dark. I know that the most beautiful moments are sometimes so beautiful because of the darkness I endured to get there. “The shadow proves the sunshine,” according to Jon Foreman of the band Switchfoot. But sometimes the dark is scary, sometimes for very real reasons. One night I went in search of a sunrise. I intended to hike in Rocky Mountain National Park only to find out that it was closed like so many other things. I ended up snowshoeing through two feet of fresh powder into the Indian Peaks Wilderness at 2:30 in the morning when my headlamp died. I told myself that I am not afraid of the dark, so I continued.

At 5:00, still hours from sunrise, I approached the top of Niwot Mountain, just above timberline. My goggles iced up in the terrifically frigid wind. Without a headlamp and my goggles covered in frost, I was completely blind. I needed to find shelter and wait, so I turned to go back to the trees. On my approach to the mountain the wind had been at my back, but now it was stinging my face and was biting cold. Crazy cold. Three or four steps was all I could manage without goggles before my eyelashes froze up. With ice crystals from the ground blizzard stabbing my cheeks, my wind jacket zipper maniacally whipping my face, and my eyelashes frozen, I fought my way through the blackness to the closest stand of trees. There I dug a hole in a five foot drift of fresh powder snow and hunkered down. I stuffed my goggles inside my coat to defrost, and sat in the dark.

By the time I could traverse the flank of the mountain through the trees to the east side and maybe get out of the wind, I also realized that the drift was there because it was where the wind was piling all the snow on the leeward side of the trees. My hole was rapidly filling up with snow with me in it! It was time to move on. With the wind to my back again, I was able to stay on the edge of the tree line, and make it around to the leeward side of the mountain and out of the worst of the wind. A deep red glow had just started forming above a shroud of fog draped over the plains. Not long afterward it got very quiet and still. The wind descended, and glory rose.

What should we do when we are afraid and in the dark? Being lost is not a circumstance; it is a state of mind. Laurance Gonzales offers a list of twelve suggestions in his book [Deep Survival](#). His words are italicized, the rest is my interpretation.

1. *Perceive, Believe* (he also calls this *“Be Here Now”*). - It is good to photograph sunrise; it is bad to freeze to death. Practice being

mindful of what is really going on around you—all the good stuff, but also all the bad. Be fully aware without being overly judgmental.

2. *Stay calm* - Dig a snow cave and rest awhile. It is helpful to stop and breathe. There is so much calming power in learning to focus on your life-giving breath. Stop filling your mind with gloom by rationing your intake of news and social media. Yes, it is important to know what is actually going on (see rule #1), but don't dwell on it.
3. *Think/Analyze/Plan* - Flailing about blindly in a ground blizzard is no time to think. People who are lost lose their ability to think clearly. They panic and make decisions that make their situation worse. So stay calm, then make a rational plan.
4. *Take correct decisive action - (Survivors) deal with what is in their power, moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day.* - Be flexible. Go around the mountain instead of over it. You may not be able to get exactly what you want, but maybe you can make something that is really bad less bad. Maybe you can discover something even better than what you originally wanted. You are not in control of many things in your life, but consciously identify the areas that you can influence.
5. *Celebrate your successes* - Find joy in the small things, no matter how small!
6. *Play!* - Keep your mind open, active, and creative.

PRAY!

The last six of Gonzales' list are under this one heading

7. *Count your blessings* - All good things come from God, and we are all so richly blessed. List all the things you are thankful for.
8. *See the beauty* - Recognize God's goodness, and the beauty of His creation (including YOU!)
9. *Believe that you will succeed* - Pray for the wisdom to make good decisions. Pray that

regardless of your external circumstance, God will give you success.

10. *Surrender* - Ask for God's miraculous intervention. Pray that God gives you and those you pray for the things that you ask, but always within His divine will. Accept that whatever happens, it happens for His glory. If the answer is "Yes," "No," or "Maybe Later," trust God.
11. *Do whatever is necessary* - Pray for the strength to do what you have to do.
12. *Never give up* - Pray for patience. Being patient during uncertainty is a discipline that takes practice. Sometimes it is okay to not know. Turn off Google and Siri and relish in the joy of the mysterious. Have the faith to keep moving forward through the dark as if you know exactly where you are going. Give God time to do His work. The sun will come up.



"For I Know the Plans I Have for You,' Declares the Lord, Plans to Prosper You and Not to Harm You, Plans to Give You Hope and a Future." - Jeremiah 29:11
Dean McCollum, Colorado

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