

Through the Storm: Joni Lamb's Life of Surrender

Few voices in media carried the same boldness and unwavering faith as Joni Lamb. Through decades of ministry, she encouraged millions to pursue the presence of God, stand firm in truth and believe that no life is beyond the reach of His redemption. As we reflect on her extraordinary legacy, Charisma is honored to share this excerpt from her writing as a reminder of the passion, perseverance and Spirit-led conviction that defined both her message and her life.

When you're in the middle of a storm, the one thing the enemy will try to do is keep you from running to Jesus. Fear, panic, and anxiety set in. You have trouble keeping your mind from conjuring up the worst-case scenarios. A storm will do one of two things: it will drive you closer to the Lord, or it will drive you away from Him. The choice is yours.

Some people get angry and bitter, even at God, because of the painful circumstances they find themselves in. When they don't understand, they pull away and shut God out instead of reaching up through the turbulent waves for His hand. The enemy wants to keep you in fear or distracted by your situation because drawing closer to the Lord in those hard times is how we ultimately find comfort and strength. Those who call out to Jesus let the turbulent waves push them closer to God. Often, they learn to do this after going through multiple storms in life and experiencing God's faithfulness time and again.

I'm just a down-to-earth Southern girl. I have flaws. I've made my share of mistakes. Yet one thing I have done consistently throughout the storms in my life is talk to the Lord.

I don't always know what the Lord is doing or understand things that hit me out of left field, but I've learned that I can trust Him because He's come through for me so many times. Trusting God is not a theoretical concept for me; it's my life. God is so alive to me in my everyday life, which is why I talk to Him like I'm talking to my best friend. He is my best friend.

I stay in an attitude of prayer, so I'm in an ongoing conversation with God, one that never stops. The Bible says to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). God doesn't want to be part of your life; He wants to be your life, "for in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

God lets us ask Him anything. I often say, "Lord, here we are again. I need to hear from You. Where do we go from here?" I know that wherever I go, He is with me, guiding me. Just as the Israelites followed the cloud by day and the fire by night when they were in the desert, I want Him leading me, every step. I'm not leading Him; He's leading me, and I'm following Him because He knows where I'm going and I don't.

One indication that you're walking with God is that you feel His supernatural peace—a peace that passes all understanding (Phil. 4:7). That means it's a peace that doesn't make sense at times. Peace isn't the absence of difficulty or pain; it's the presence of God amid those difficulties. Peace is a person in the storm with us, holding us, carrying us, and calming the turbulence within us. The Bible says, "For He Himself is our peace" (Eph. 2:14). And the psalmist wrote, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea" (Ps. 46:1–2, ESV). Jesus is God. He is our peace. Run to Him for refuge, strength, and peace. He's real, alive, and fully present, even though our circumstances often scream the opposite.

Only the Lord can give us peace and strength in the midst of

our storms. If I were to tell you otherwise, I'd be misrepresenting myself and the Lord. From an early age, I started walking, talking, and singing with Jesus. I thought that was just a normal thing for Christians to do. I assumed if He loved me and lived inside me, He wanted to talk to me. And I was right! If Jesus wants to live inside me through the Holy Spirit, why wouldn't He want to speak to me? Henry Blackaby wrote in his classic book *Experiencing God*: "God speaks to His people. When He speaks, what does He reveal? Throughout the Scriptures, when God spoke, it was to reveal something about Himself, His purposes, or His ways. God's revelations are designed to bring you into a love relationship with Him."

A love relationship with God. It sounds so simple because it is simple! God's ways are not complicated. Jesus said unless we become as little children, we can't enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3). The kingdom of heaven is more than an eternal realm. It's a love relationship with Jesus here and now. Praying to the Father, Jesus said, "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). Real, eternal life starts with knowing the Lord and is sustained through knowing Him, and to delve into the depths of that relationship with Him, we must become as little children. That doesn't mean we are to be childish or naïve. There is a difference. Being like little children means running to Him, hopping in His lap, enjoying His presence, and talking to Him. I guess I've always been a child at heart when it comes to my faith. I often say, "Lord, it's Joni here—Your girl."

As we grow older, however, and life gets tougher and more hectic, we make our relationship with God more complicated than it should be. Just talk to Him and continue to talk to Him. That's what He asks. He sees and hears. He can handle our questions and emotions. He created us to be in a personal relationship with Him. Don't shut Him out. Run to Him and talk

to Him, especially during the storms. This is how we develop the kind of intimate fellowship with the Lord that will empower and guide us through every storm we will face.

If you are reading this and don't know Jesus intimately, take a moment and invite Him into your heart. Repeat this prayer:

Jesus, forgive me. Come into my heart. Be my Lord and Savior. I surrender my life to You. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

He Is So Much Bigger Than You Think

Another amazing thing about God is that He can take the most unexpected things, even tragic things, and use them to miraculously change your life to accomplish the new and fresh purposes He has for you. God isn't surprised by anything that happens to us. He has a purpose for our lives and uses the storms to build His character in us. God is infinite and all-knowing, and He does not fit into our little boxes. He can do far more than we think He can do—"exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

I never could have imagined my life or ministry without Marcus. Yet when Marcus had completed his race on the earth, the Lord called him home. Through that heartbreaking storm, God did something I could not have dreamed up. It was as if one day I was facing the most difficult journey of my life, and the next I was surprised by what God revealed for the next chapter of my life. His plans are always amazing and always good. We just have to trust those plans. Talk to God and listen. His ways and ideas are far better than the ones we have for ourselves. As God said in Isaiah 55:8–9, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways.... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

I've always wanted the Lord's best for my life, from way back

when I was a child picking up kids for church on the bus with my dad to when I was twenty years old writing that letter surrendering my life to Him. God is faithful to fulfill that which concerns you. If you commit your ways to Him, He will take you at your word. And when He speaks to you, He wants you to obey—not out of fear but out of love for Him. Even when we mess up, He, the almighty God, can turn it around for our good. It's crazy how He can do that.

God's grace, His ways, and His plans are far greater than we can comprehend. He is always at work and never sleeps. As I said earlier, I don't understand how He does it, but God is able to be fully present with every other person and me throughout time simultaneously without being diminished one little bit. It blows my finite mind.

My other secret weapon when going through a storm is worship. I'm talking about throwing up my hands and praising God at the top of my lungs. It takes faith to believe God is in control and acknowledge Him in the midst of chaos and pain.

It's next to impossible to praise God with your whole heart while harboring fear, doubt, or unbelief. David thought worship was so important that he had worshippers in the temple around the clock. This kind of worship brings joy. When we worship Him, God shows up in our storms, just as He did for Paul and Silas in Acts 16.

After the residents of Jerusalem had finished rebuilding the wall under Nehemiah's leadership, they were all gathered for a day of worship and dedication to the Lord. It had been a long, hard battle as they built with bricks in one hand and swords in the other because of the enemy's constant attacks. Nehemiah exhorted the people, saying, "Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10). Other translations say, "Do not be grieved" (ESV, MEV), "Don't be sad" (CEB, CEV), or, "Don't be dejected" (NLT). People who were building a wall while keeping one eye out for the enemy, sword in hand,

might not have expected to hear a message about joy. But Nehemiah said, “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (emphasis added). Get this now. It’s important.

The joy of the Lord equals strength. No joy, no strength—just like no worship, no joy. Nehemiah said this in a situation in which the people were facing grief, sorrow, and relentless attacks from their enemies. Of course, Nehemiah wasn’t telling us not to grieve or feel sorrow when we experience tragedy or the death of a loved one. Nehemiah was saying our strength comes when we go to the Lord and experience His joy, even in the midst of our grief and sorrow. If we lose our joy in the Lord, we lose our strength. But what does it mean to have joy? It’s not being happy and chipper all the time or walking around saying, “Praise the Lord,” in heartbreaking situations.

Joy is different from happiness. Happiness is dependent on our circumstances, but we can be filled with joy even in the most turbulent times.



To order Joni Lamb’s book, Through the Storm, visit .

Joy comes from the presence of God, so our strength likewise comes from the presence of God. “In Your presence is fullness of joy,” David wrote in Psalm 16:11. We don’t have to be moved when the storms rage around us. Our flesh can rest in hope. If there is “fullness of joy” in the Lord’s presence and “the joy of the Lord is [our] strength,” that means our strength for life and surviving storms is found in God’s presence. David knew this well. He knew how it felt when storms and caves and enemies tried to take him out, yet he always sought God’s presence for joy and strength.

In Psalm 42, David wrote: “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? *My tears* have been my food day and night, while they

continually say to me, 'Where is your God?'" (vv. 1-3, emphasis added). David shed tears while those around him were saying, "Where is your God?" That's what the enemy will whisper, and your flesh will scream when it looks like you're going under. David knew better than to give up. He knew his joy and strength came from being in the Lord's presence, so that's where he ran.

Running into God's presence and finding strength and joy in the middle of the most difficult and painful trials is not some pie-in-the-sky, self-help, positive-thinking gimmick. It's for real life. I'm reminded of the late Corrie ten Boom, who, along with her entire family, was arrested and imprisoned during the Holocaust for hiding and protecting Jews. The ten Boom family was sent to a concentration camp in Scheveningen, and all but three were released: Corrie, her sister Betsie, and their father, Casper. Corrie's father died only ten days after their arrest, but Corrie and her sister, like so many prisoners, were herded onto cattle cars like animals, stripped, and starved. They witnessed people being exterminated and knew they could be next. Betsie eventually died in prison.

I once read a series of quotes attributed to Corrie ten Boom that is incredible considering all the suffering she endured: "Jesus did not promise to change the circumstances around us. He promised great peace and pure joy to those who would learn to believe that God actually controls all things." "When we are powerless to do a thing, it is a great joy that we can come and step inside the ability of Jesus." "Joy runs deeper than despair." What incredible words written by someone who experienced torment most of us can't even fathom. Could this be true? Corrie ten Boom was sustained in the most unimaginable horror by joy that came from the Lord's presence.

If you're in a storm and are at your lowest point, shift your focus to the Lord. Begin to thank Him for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do! I think about the situation

with the tower in Dallas. Marcus and I were moving forward in obedience and faith. God had a tower hidden away just for His purposes, to reach people with the good news of Jesus Christ. Although most people thought we were crazy for attempting to build a station in a market as challenging as Dallas, God supernaturally made a way. He is the waymaker. Our thankfulness throws open the door for the hand of God to move. Never underestimate God's supernatural power to accomplish what He has called you to do.

God has us in the right place at the right time for His good purposes, and He has equipped us to do the work He has set before us to do. Through the storms, God revealed things in me that I had not seen or known. I can look back and see that through the storms and snakebites, God had a master plan for my life. He was guiding and preparing me for what was coming. Ask the Lord to show you the gift He has put within you, and let Him develop it. It may surprise you. All you have to do is surrender all and be obedient; He will do the rest.

When the storm clouds begin to clear, you will see that God has something new for you. Storms give us an opportunity to learn and grow. They may give us a new direction for our lives or a new perspective on our business or ministry. Maybe a new season is around the corner, and you just acquired the tools you need to navigate it. God loves you and wants His best for you. He is working in and through all things to bring about that good thing.

Pause and Listen

You may know what it's like to go through storms of personal betrayal or to think God has let you down. After those kinds of experiences, you may feel as though you'll never trust again. Your flesh screams out for someone to validate how deeply you were wronged. It's in those times that you need to take a little pause and listen. Give the Holy Spirit an

opportunity to speak to you. His voice is so quiet and still that you can't hear Him if you're indulging your anger. I don't mean to say you shouldn't feel angry; I mean, you shouldn't act out in anger. Ask the Lord what you should do, and listen to Him. Surrender the situation to Him. Pray in the Spirit, and follow His promptings. This makes all the difference in the storm.

One final lesson that the Lord has taught me over and over again while walking through storms is that He will never ever leave me or forsake me. People, friends, coworkers, and even family will disappoint you while you're in the storm. That's why you must keep your eyes on Jesus. He, not the opinions of those who surround you, is your source. You may see seasons shift, changing your relationships with certain individuals. Just as the leaves fall from the trees during winter seasons, change inevitably happens, and people naturally fall out of our lives. Not everyone can continue with you on the journey God has mandated for you. That's OK. Bless them and release them. As I've already said, God works all things for our good. That includes the relationships in our lives.

Losing Marcus was a huge storm in my life. Although I knew he was in the arms of Jesus, his death was just so shocking and painful. Then I felt such loneliness. Those who have lost loved ones understand these feelings. All I can say is that God gave me supernatural grace and strength to continue the ministry despite my grief. My family and friends held my arms up along the way.

I thank the Lord for the prophetic words I received that encouraged and fortified me. The Holy Spirit was truly my Comforter. I pray for each person who is hurting that the Comforter will touch you in a way that encourages you and brings healing to your soul. You can trust God. He is faithful.

Really, it all boils down to this: in John 15, Jesus calls

those who follow Him His friends. What did I do in my storms? I called my friends. We cried. We talked. At times, we just sat in each other's presence. That's what friends do. That's grace. That's Jesus. He's always the first friend I call, and He's never too busy to answer.

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain.

Joni Lamb was the president of Daystar Television Network, co-founded with her late husband, Marcus Lamb. The network reaches over 110 million homes in the U.S. and over 5 billion people worldwide. She was executive producer and host of her daily talk show, "Joni Table Talk," which earned 10 Telly Awards, three Lone Star Emmy Awards and five Daytime Emmy nominations. Lamb also co-hosted Daystar's daily, live flagship broadcast "Ministry Now," with her husband, Dr. Doug Weiss. Her book, *Through the Storm*, is available on .