

When the Storm Roars: Picking Up the Pieces

God's Word tells us that in this world we will have tribulation (see John 16:33). We will pass through difficult times, not because this is God's will and plan for us, but because we live in a fallen world. But even during these very troubling times in life He promises to be with us. He says in Isaiah 43:1-2, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through waters, I will be with you.

And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame kindle on you.

Some of you are thinking, "What about those who passed through literal floods and flames and even lost their lives because of it?" Where was God in all of this? Psalm 23:4 reveals to us just where He was, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." Even though these are very painful things for us to consider, God was with them. He did not abandon them, He remained faithful to them.

But for those of us who remain, how do we move forward after the storms of life hit us? Here are three basic steps to help pick up the pieces again.

1. **Choose life.** Deuteronomy 30:19 says, "I call heaven and earth to witnesses against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live." God didn't tell us this would be easy, that's why this is a choice. It is a decision to move forward, and the first step that one must take is to live again, not just for yourself, but for the well-being of your

children and your children's children. We need to choose life for the sake of others. You may be the very one that God uses to bring life and healing to another.

2. **Choose joy.** "This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24). Joy is a choice, and according to Nehemiah 8:10, it is a supernatural strength. "Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Sometimes people feel guilty to smile and laugh again, some believe that to happy again would dishonor the memory of their loved one, but if truth be told, your loved one that has passed on would want you to be happy again.
3. **Choose to trust.** I believe this is one of the most difficult challenges for people that have suffered great loss. Proverbs 3:5-6 instructs us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." Feelings, human reasonings and even demons try to convince us to remain in the present sorrow and give up on life. But God desires to carry you through that dark valley and into His promised land.

A friend of mine who went through many challenges in life once said to me, "I will not 'could have,' 'should have,' or 'would have' on myself today." What was my friend declaring? That she had made the choice not to remain in the past sorrows, but to move forward, to choose life, not just for herself, but for the sake of her children and her children's children, and to learn to trust again.

Jesus will help you do the same.

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