

Jesus Is Always There, Even in Midst of Darkness

We lived in Colorado, where the skies seemed to change every two minutes. One day, my husband, Terry, and I were out doing our errands. Terry was driving with his eyes intently focused on heavy traffic, and I was riding with my eyes drawn to the expansive sky. A cloud above us was forming into a most unusual shape. "Whoa!" I exclaimed.

Terry heard my cry and reacted, suddenly applying the brakes. Through my side-view mirror, I saw a line of cars reacting to our car, screeching to a sudden halt.

"Oh dear!"

"Don't tell me," Terry mustered a smile, still ashen from the false alarm. "You were on one of your Nellie cloud missions."

My 80-something-year-old Aunt Nellie was recovering from surgery following a bad fall. Her days of recovery were spent reading and cloud watching through her front window. When I called to pray for her each week, she would update me on the week's latest amazing cloud formations. The night before she had exclaimed, "My dear Sandra, guess what cloud I saw today? A dancing hippopotamus!"

Nellie always ended our weekly phone call by challenging me to see if I could top her unusual cloud sighting for the week. My discovery just moments ago in the car—two dolphins leaping and swimming across the sky—would surely bring a smile to my aunt's face.

As Terry's face regained its color, he resumed his safe driving, and I resumed my dolphin watch—only to discover an ominous cloud growing darker and larger than life by the second. In front of the rampaging cloud were two smaller

clouds, mere remnants of my dolphins. By this time my imagination was in full throttle, as my little clouds appeared to sprout legs, running to escape being swallowed alive. *OK Sandra, I thought, you are definitely projecting you and Terry and the past months on those little clouds.* So I firmly declared out loud: "Now stop that!"

Before Terry could slam on the brakes again, I quickly shared with him the grim picture in the sky and how my cloud scenario reminded me of some financial challenges we had been facing the last few months. We of course knew we were not the only people facing economic challenges. The television news programs and newspaper headlines made it difficult to escape the topic.

As we drove on in somber—and I must admit, *tense*—silence, a shaft of the sun's light broke through the clouds, flooding our car with vibrant warmth. In that moment I heard from somewhere in and around me that still small voice of the Lord: "Be at peace, the Son has always been here, even in the darkest of moments."

I was reassured suddenly of the power of the triune God Almighty—forever faithful (see Heb. 10:23; 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:9), reigning as the head above all His creation (see Col. 2:10), with Christ our hope of glory (see Col. 1:27; 1 Tim. 1:1), giving us always victorious outcomes and the abundant life, despite what the enemy threatens to steal, to kill, or to destroy (see John 10:10). If you or someone you know feels overwhelmed by grim financial forecasts, I invite and challenge you to turn to the power of God's Word and His pathway—to true and lasting peace and strength for your day.

Press on. "Walk by faith, not by sight" (see 2 Cor. 5:7). Turn to your great, loving and faithful Lord. After all, His heart knows the load your shoulders are carrying. If you turn to Him, His hand will take that load and carry it so you won't have to.

PRAYER POWER FOR THE WEEK OF 2/10/2014

This week thank the Lord that no matter how grim or dark our circumstances may be, He never leaves or forsakes us and “He is always there.”—Pray for those experiencing great financial loss through unemployment and homelessness. Remember those affected by the winter storms. Thank Him that His mercies are new every morning and that there is hope for each new day. Ask God how you can partner with others in prayer to see His hand move on their behalf, and be part of their solution. Pray for the safety of those participating in the Winter Olympics. Continue to pray for the persecuted church and the peace of Jerusalem as commanded by God. Pray that our leaders would seek God for wisdom when making decisions affecting the nation and the world. Eph. 3:20; Matt. 7:7.