

Daily Devotional, May 18, 2020 In the Midst of Life's Storms

"I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life."
Genesis 9:15 (NIV)

It really poured the last few days didn't it? Laura and I had been watching the water stream downhill over our front lawn to the corner street next to us, flooding the corner and the drainage ditch that spills into the inlet across the street from us, which then deposits its waters into Bang's Lake several blocks away. Being relieved to see a break in the weather late Sunday afternoon, and feeling a bit pent up, we decided to take a ride around the neighborhood to survey the water levels throughout our neighborhood.

The past several years we have witnessed much of the flooding that has caused severe damage across our northern suburbs. We have volunteered at different places, filling sandbags, and loading those bags onto the backs of trucks belonging to panic-stricken homeowners, trying to keep rising waters from overtaking their homes. What we saw driving around yesterday put knots in our stomachs.

The water levels around our neighborhood have been high in previous years, but not to the levels that we now experience. Neighbors over more than a full block, starting only 100 feet from us, plus many homes scattered about the U-shaped inlet area, have yards and some basements filled with water. Wherever you drive, you hear and see sump pumps bailing water out into the streets. And there is more rain in the forecast for this week.

Every year, floods, tornadoes, and storms rage across our land, destroying or damaging hundreds of homes and leaving thousands of people homeless. And when asked, "Are you going to rebuild?" The answer heard over and over again is "Yes, we are going to rebuild. We are planning to stay. We're not giving up our home.

"That's America," we say. That's the real spirit of the American people. We don't give up easily; we hang in there. We put up a fight. When we get knocked down, we get up again. When flood, wind, fire, or whatever destroys our homes, farms, or places of business, we rebuild. We make whatever repairs are necessary. We press on.

If only we had more of that same spirit *inside* our homes, *inside* our families. When the storms of nature damage our house, were ready to rebuild and restore it. Yet, when the storms of *life* hit us—money issues, relational problems with family or neighbors, acrid disagreements, marital problems—when storms such as these sweep through our lives, well, we're not always ready to rebuild. In fact, we're often ready to quit.

This is where the Word of God and prayer are so important. And this isn't just my idea; it's also God's. ***"I am the vine, you are the branches,"*** Jesus tells us. ***"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."*** **John 15:5,7 (NIV)** Jesus' message is clear. Only a committed belief in Him—trusting Him as Lord and Savior—can give us the strength we need to overcome the troubled waters that life throws at our family and our faith.

The words of Christ abiding in us and prayer—that's when things really begin to happen by the power of the Holy Spirit. It's His promise; ***"it will be done for you"***. Christ will abide in us, and we in Him. But this doesn't happen in a vacuum, does it? Surely, we can strive to become more Christ-minded in our daily affairs with our family and those we hope to be able to welcome back into our homes.

The family, the household that perseveres in the face of difficulties is the family that is reading and sharing God's Word regularly. It's the family that's studying God's promises, listening intently to and meditating on what God has to say. And, whenever they can, they are speaking to God in prayer. Does that family sound like yours?

THE PRAYER: Heavenly Father, You have given us all things in the life of Your Son Jesus. As we weather life's storms, teach us to turn everything over to You—and rest in the peace only You can give—Life's storm insurance. In Jesus' Name. Amen.