



# TRUSTING IN THE STORM

By Midge Houghtaling

It was a warm summer day and my grandson, not quite three years old, wanted to go for a walk on the hillside. "Okay, Wyatt," I said pointing to the dark clouds forming overhead, "but we can't go too far. It looks like it is going to storm." About halfway up the hill we were startled by a loud clap of thunder. Suddenly Wyatt wanted to be carried and he thought we should go back to the house. I agreed. As the wind picked up and the first few drops of rain began to fall, another crack of thunder louder than the first rumbled through the valley. I felt him stiffen in my arms.

I knew that he was frightened so I calmly and casually remarked, "It's okay, Wyatt. I know the guy who controls the thunder. He's a friend of mine."

"Who is He?"

"God," I stated.

"He's your *friend*?"

"Yes," I answered. "He controls the thunder...and the wind and the rain...and He's my friend. So, we'll be okay."

Wyatt relaxed and we continued down the hill along the well worn path. I told him we could have a snack when we got back to the house. A brief discussion of snacks currently available was sufficient to distract him from the next thunderous roar. The rain continued to sprinkle gently until the moment we stepped under the roof of our back deck - and then it poured! As the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed, Wyatt asked if we could eat our snacks outside on the deck. He was no longer afraid.

"*Kids are so trusting,*" I mused. I arranged some apple slices and crackers on a tray; then carried his little table and two chairs outside. Wyatt chattered happily as my thoughts began to drift. The storm around us was subsiding but in my heart a tempest raged. My stepson, Chris, had been missing for nearly six months.

My husband and I had filed a missing persons report and then contacted the National Center for Missing Adults. Our days were spent searching. Nights were long and tortuous. No matter what we did, it never seemed like we were doing enough. All of our efforts and reasoning left us still without answers. *Where is Chris? Where IS he? When and how will this end?* Fear, like thunder, rolled over me and I wondered: *If God is in control, how could things have gone so wrong?*

I thought about it for quite awhile that day after Wyatt left. If I had been nervous about the thunder, he would have continued to worry about the storm. If I had panicked, it would have given credence to his fears and he would have been terrified. But I was strong (in my grandson's eyes) and because he trusts me, he allowed my words to calm him.

Thinking about Wyatt and how he asked to be carried, I envisioned myself reaching for the Arms of my Father God. Just as I was not nervous about a little summer thunderstorm, I was sure that God was not nervous about my situation, and yet I struggled to find courage and faith. I wanted to emulate the composure of God. *If God doesn't give credence to my fears, why do I allow them to remain in my heart?*

Suddenly it occurred to me that I was acting like a dysfunctional child - a child raised in a home where promises are broken and adults can't be trusted. If such a child had been in my arms when the storm approached, it would have been difficult or perhaps impossible for me to dispel his fears. So, I was treating God as though He was not *worthy* of my trust. Maybe that's why the Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please Him?

Jesus told His disciples that not one sparrow falls to the ground without getting God's attention. The analogy is simple: If God is concerned about a sparrow then He most certainly cares for you and me - and He is certainly watching over Chris! In the middle of a terrible ordeal I was finally able to hear God's Voice and He was saying, "*Trust Me.*"

What God was asking of me was the very thing that my grandson had shown - childlike faith. Faith enough to trust Him even in the midst of a storm. In every storm He speaks. In every storm we have a choice: to act like a child who cannot trust or to act like a child of the Almighty, Wonderful, Awesome, Never-failing, Faithful God!

I cannot control the storm. I did not begin it and I cannot make it go away. I cannot control the wind and the rain, the loud claps of thunder or the way my stomach tightens in fear. But I can run to the Arms of my Father, trust in His Word and allow His Voice to calm my soul.

I would never choose the storm. I prefer sunny days, quiet walks on the hillside and problems that are within the scope of my ability to solve or fix. But if I could handle it

on my own, I would never reach up and seek Him. And if I were never afraid, I would not long for the comfort of His Voice.

Almost three years later on January 16, 2009, the telephone rang. "This is the United States Embassy in Tel Aviv; we have your son here."

"What?" I asked in disbelief.

"Your son, Chris," she stated, "Would you like to speak to him? He's right here."

And right there he was - sojourning in Israel - walking along the Sea of Galilee seeking to know God - to discover if God was real and if the Bible was true. He had to find the answer for himself. It was something that he said he had to do. Something he was at a loss for words to explain.

Fortunately, my husband and I did not feel a tremendous need for explanation. We were just happy to have him home - to be able to wrap our arms around him once again, at last!

In every storm He speaks and in every storm we have a choice: I choose to run to the Arms of my Father God and have confidence in the Word He has spoken over my life.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.

Proverbs 3:5 NIV

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.

Isaiah 26:3-4 NIV



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