



“God in the Perfect Storm”

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And when Jesus got into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing." And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" (Matthew 8.23-27)



I've noticed something, and I've come to believe it, and it's proving quite powerful and helpful in those hard seasons that we all go through—the season of [“The Perfect Storm”](#). This phrase was popularized when it was applied to describe a huge weather event off the coast of New England in 1991, called [“The Halloween Nor'easter”](#) depicted in both a novel and a movie. Simply, three major storms collided at the same time and the same place causing immense destruction and loss of life. While the phrase has meteorological origins, now it is as often more generally applied “to mean any event where a situation is aggravated drastically by an exceptionally rare combination of circumstances.”

Sometimes life can feel like it throws “A Perfect Storm” at us.

Nationally, we're in one, with an intense election, on top of historic racial reckoning, on top of a once-in-a-century pandemic (let's hope!). That's a lot all at once, and we're all sailing in it together!

Sometimes, these seasons come much more personally.

The personal Perfect Storm is a time when diverse and major circumstances and challenges all arrive at the same time, generating a swirling mass of demands and stress that seek to crush you and sweep you away. It's when real difficulties are emerging at the same time in some combination of the major areas of our lives, including our vocations and jobs, family life, personal life, health, finances, or simple practicalities of everyday living. It's a time that generates that old saying, "When it rains, it pours." It's a time when you find yourself asking, "My goodness, what else could go wrong?" or "What's going to blow up next?" And shortly those questions get answered!

These times— and we all go through them— lead you to think, "Wow, I couldn't have made this any worse if I tried to design it myself!" And it's true. Not only would you not want to, you actually couldn't.



I remember such seasons— I've had many now— when the host of demands and complexities was proving just too much to manage. Some of the areas that were proving thorny were a result of much good work to do, some of those areas were deep and important, and a couple were just stupid, but impactful nonetheless.

You've been there too.

We might think in these seasons that God is somehow more distant or even absent, or that something is wrong. Actually, something may be very right.

As I was working my way through one of my most recent perfect storms, trying to get it all done while the winds kept howling and picked up speed, the thought occurred to me, “You know, this actually feels familiar... I’ve been here before. And now, looking back, those were exactly the times when I *had* to rely on God in a conscientious way that became actually pretty sweet, and I grew. And on the other side of the storm, his faithfulness in the midst of it all was actually amazing.”

It dawned on me that in the season of The Perfect Storm, God is actually *more* present, and wants to use and redeem those circumstances in a way that deepens our intimacy with him and leads to more Christlikeness in us. It dawned on me (as it had before but I’d forgotten) that of course this season is not simply one to be endured ‘til it blows over but actually is a very present invitation to go once again as deep into God as I can. Once I did that, while the circumstances took a while to resolve, wow did I have a lot more peace going through them.

Here comes a favorite [Coracle](#) tie-in– the disciples in a boat with Jesus when a storm kicks up. It’s our logo after all. There are several of these “Jesus in a boat” stories in the Gospels, and the one that comes to mind is in [Matthew 8.23-27](#). In this one, Jesus is asleep in the boat. He is absolutely not absent, he is actually very near. The reason he’s asleep is he’s not worried! He knows that he’s got the disciples, and they’d be fine. The disciples were very worried. They were actually never in danger, but they



were scared out of their wits. And when they relied on him, when they came to him, when they called him, they got to see his power and his glory. The storm drove them to reliance, and they got to see something that they hadn't learned yet. And of course the storm was silenced.

I bet when the disciples looked back on that experience— while they might not have wanted to go through it again— they were sure glad that on that particular night the sea wasn't calm and beautiful and easy. Think of what miracle they would have missed. They got to see Jesus come through. They got to see what he can do.

And so can we.

So when life throws you a Perfect Storm— and it will— ask, “Lord, what do you have for me in this?” and lean-in even more deeply to him.

He may feel asleep, but he's very near, and he's got you.



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