



ROOTED: Staying Grounded When Storms Threaten

The wind howled as rain pounded the roof. Heavy rain in Houston, where I live, means only one thing: *Flooding*.

I pulled on my boots, still damp from the last trip outside, and grabbed a ladle. I waded onto my flooded porch and unclogged the drains that were piled with grass clippings from our garden. After a few minutes of scraping, our drains again started to suck down the floodwaters. But I found myself going out several more times, in the middle of the deluge, to unclog them again. If that ain't a picture of life, am I right?

Sometimes storms hit us and don't let up. We grab for umbrellas, sloshing through muck and flood waters that inconvenience us. We're annoyed and irritated.

Other times, storms leave a wake of destruction in their path. Just like tornados and hurricanes tear apart houses, our lives are upended and uprooted. We're shocked, devastated, angered, and filled with despair. We know the clean up process will be time-consuming, messy, and expensive. What storms have you encountered in your life? Perhaps it's a small storm, like the loss of a relationship or friend group. Maybe it's a boss you don't like, a class you hate attending, or a challenge you just can't seem to handle.

Or maybe your storm is more serious. Has your life been upended by divorce? Death? Financial ruin? Accusations and attacks? A tragic accident? An awful mistake? Pictures you never meant anyone else to see? A damaging habit that you just can't stop?

When you're in the middle of the storm, it can be hard to imagine that the sun will ever come out again. You may feel terrified, confused, or lost. You can lose your sense of self, and any hope you have for the future. I imagine this is how Jesus' disciples felt as they faced a mighty storm in their boat. Luke 8:22-25 tells us the story of the wind and waves tossing the group, as Jesus napped:

"One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.

The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. "Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples.

In fear and amazement, they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."

Have you ever felt like Jesus was blissfully unaware of the challenges facing you? Because even though it may feel like it, Jesus *never* sleeps on the job of caring for His beloved people. When Jesus woke up in the middle of a fearful storm, he found his friends anxious. Perhaps they even yelled at Jesus, in anger.

But instead of chastising them or judging their fearful attitudes, he responded in compassion. He calmed the storm, restoring peace, and quietly pointed the disciples back to Him—the source of their faith. How comforting to realize that even in these moments, and even when you may react to Jesus in anger, Jesus is with you. He calms the storm, whatever it may be. He's not going anywhere—*ever*.

Heavenly Father, thank you for being a refuge for me in the middle of the storms of life. You know every emotion I feel as I face chaos around me. Please help me to stay rooted in the knowledge that I am loved, I am forgiven, and I have hope in a brighter future because of Your death and resurrection. Thank you for Your grace and unending love. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Questions for Reflection:

- What storms are you facing right now? Are they small annoyances or major disrupters?
- What comfort do you find in knowing that Jesus is with you, offering love and peace and hope, even in the middle of your worst moments?