

TORNADOES RAGING!

I had not watched TV on Saturday, so I had no idea that ninety six tornadoes were sweeping across six Northwest states leaving devastation in its wake. Therefore, I was totally caught off guard when I received a phone call Saturday evening from my daughter, Becky, who lives in North Carolina, and I could tell from her voice that she was scared. Although she was trying to hold it all together, I knew something was definitely wrong. Fighting the panic trying to rise up within me and trying to keep myself calm, I asked her if she was okay and what was going on. She told me there was a horrific storm raging outside and she was sitting in the house terrified—without any power; then she started crying.

My granddaughter, Erica and her family came over to Becky's home to wait the storm out. The power was still out and they were only getting bits and pieces of what was happening around them through texts being sent. Power and phone lines were down and the cell phones were cutting in and out as batteries were getting low, so calls had to be short and quick. Now they're used to strong winter storms in Oregon, but a tornado was out of their league, and the hit and miss communications was terrifying.

Becky lives in Broadway, NC just outside of the town of Sanford and my granddaughter and family lives in Sanford. She told me that at 3 pm tornadoes touched down in Sanford, NC and continued its path of destruction for four miles down the middle of Sanford before lifting and passing on to the next city of Fayetteville. The town of Raleigh was also hit hard by the tornadoes.

Then she proceeds to tell me that her husband had come home from work and wanted to go to Lowes to buy some things. She didn't think it was a good idea as it was storming outside. He tried to talk her into going, but she held firm. She just knew they needed to stay home, so they didn't go. They found out later that the tornado hit Lowes store at just the time they would have been there. As she was sharing this with me, my tears were falling, as I knew God had given her a miracle of safety and I praised God that she heard and listened. Together we gave thanks to God for the warning in her spirit that told her not to go—to stay home.

The story about the tornado hitting Lowes made the news. They said that the manager had just stepped outside to check things out when he turned and saw the tornado heading straight for the store. He had about 6 seconds to act. He ran back into the store, got on the intercom, ushered everyone into the back of the store and through the heroic actions of the manager not a life was taken although the front part of the store was totally destroyed. The news called him a hero.

The aftermath of it all hit Becky hard as she talked to me a few days later. She truly believed God had given them a miracle in sparing their lives and yet she was heartbroken over the lives of many that were taken. She said it was one thing to read about or see on the TV such catastrophes and quite another to be in the midst of it. She said the roads into the towns hard hit were closed the next day. Clean up was being started and to drive along the road and see the destroyed home and the destructive path of the tornadoes was heartbreaking.

For the next week I followed the news reports on TV about the states that were hit by the tornadoes. They talked about tornadoes being common in the Northwest, but said that it was not common for North Carolina and they called the tornadoes hits there “historic” and that more could come. I was in NC last year visiting and to see the aftermath wreckage in these towns was difficult to watch and to realize how close my daughter and husband came to being in the midst of it was unsettling.

April 16 was the date the tornadoes touched down in Sanford. It has been ten days since Sanford and surrounding cities were hit and as I talked to my daughter today, she said they were in a tornado watch at the moment. She said she realized that tornado watches and warnings were not the same, but it is still scary and the storms have not let up. They are predicting this year to be one of the worst years for natural disasters.

We are seeing the “*signs on the wall*” so to speak. Nations across the earth are and will be dealing with catastrophes, wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters as the earth seems to be groaning deep within, and also extreme issues in our lives; issues that would try to steal our joy and send us into a place of discouragement and often deep depression. But, I would remind you of this truth that has stood steadfast throughout all time:

Nahum 1:7 (NKJV) - *The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.*

Hebrew 10:23-25 (NKJV)—*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*

I am praising the Lord for His goodness to His children. I know that He watches over His children and although many of us may go through disasters, He is faithful to keep those who trust in Him. My sister missed being in the Japan earthquake and tsunami by only a few days. Then Becky and family went through the multi tornadoes and as I sit her writing this, I am lifting my hands and voice in praise to the One who keeps us. He doesn't promise us that we will not have to go through troubles, but He does promise to be with us through them.

Take courage for God has heard your cries. Keep your eyes on the Lord, stay the course, stay on track and hang onto your spiritual hope, the One who is the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus. This is not the time to pull into ourselves and neglect the company and companionship of others. We must hear the Lord speak to our hearts to NOT GIVE UP! We must remember that God is a God of Hope, and He sent to us the Lord Jesus Himself; he is always near to those who trust in him and call out to him.