

March 28, 2021

*Cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7*

Last night a squall line of fierce thunderstorms with the capacity to rain down hail and spin into tornadoes rolled across parts of Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama. The event lasted for hours, and in Mississippi my daughter lay in a rented apartment without a sufficiently reinforced safe-place. As I watched the radar in motion and the predicted path of the storms roll through her town, I was overcome with the paralyzing realization I could do nothing to protect her. It was one o'clock in the morning, and I looked up and began to pray.

A jumble of verses from the Psalms to Proverbs to Matthew flooded my mind. *When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Proverbs 3:24 If you say: "The LORD is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. Psalm 91:9-10.*

I wanted to articulate them all, somehow transcend the humanity that makes up my being and gain the approval of heaven. But in that moment, as I tried to marshal the forces of God, I saw my deep unworthiness and need for mercy.

Who did I think I was, to ask for a pass from the trials of life, when even Jesus suffered on this earth? Every mistake I'd made in the last 24 hours taunted me when set against His perfect example. There was nothing I could do to deserve Him, and nothing I could do to impress Him. All I could do was throw myself on the mercy of Jesus, beg His forgiveness, and believe that He would hear my pleas for protection. The faith I wrapped around me like a blanket last night had nothing to do with anything I'd done or deserved, but everything to do with what Jesus had done.

Despite the overwhelming sense of unworthiness, I fell asleep with a sense of calm assurance. The peace Jesus promised was delivered and when I next woke, the storms had reached me, but had left Mississippi. It was dark and I had no way of knowing for certain that things had been left undamaged five hours to my West, but I praised God for His mercies that are new every morning.

Friends, don't let a sense of unworthiness keep you from crying out to God. He came and died to provide for each one of us a garment of righteousness we can never deserve. We can, however, choose to accept it, and choose to trust in it, over our own filthy rags.

*Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."* Isaiah 1:18.

*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."* Romans 1:17