

## Tornadoes and Restoration

The devastation in Joplin, Missouri and other areas hit by severe storms this week has captured our attention. Now these communities are faced with the daunting tasks of the aftermath. When the storm passes and the skies clear, it is then that the time of restoration begins. The enemy hates restoration. He will often try to fill the quiet with impending doom or hopelessness and lies that you will never recover or be restored.

I'm reminded of Lot's wife who looked back to the devastation rather than the promise and hope that lay before her, and she became a frozen pillar of salt. The spirit of fear is like being frozen in one place. When we are frozen in fear it overshadows hope and we are not able to be comforted or hear the voice of the Spirit clearly.

If you have been through a season of hardship or trauma, you will often find there is a grace which God provides that carries you through it. Some would say that the storms are God's wrath being poured out in judgment. But that is not the nature of a perfect, loving Father.

*For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing. 1*  
Thessalonians 5:9-11 (New Living Translation)

When we begin to lose hope, we need our brothers to encourage us with truth and comfort. There is a reason that the enemy works so hard to keep us from connecting with one another and divide us. It is because we need one another so very much.

The enemy comes like a thief to steal your hope. Now is the time to nurture the relationships and connections that the Lord has given you within His Body. Find out where the Lord desires to plant you and then grow there. Our Lord Jesus surrounded Himself with intimate relationships during His time on earth, and we must do the same.

Let's look forward with hope. Though the earth around us shakes violently, there is a hope set before us that is unshakeable. Restoration has already begun. Some days it seems just beyond our reach, but in those moments we must reach out to one another and to the Giver of Hope and know that He bridges the gap between hope and fulfillment.