



# FAITH matters

**March 31, 2025**

My husband Fred and I spend our winters in southern California where I was raised and we still have dear family and close friends. Before leaving Michigan last October, our thoughts were already drawn to the unexpected natural events affecting people we deeply care about. After two severe hurricanes, family members in Florida were left to manage for an extended time without even basic services. Longtime Michigan neighbors who live in North Carolina were also hit. They're still dealing with the tedious bureaucracy of assistance for home repairs.

Also, in September, our daughter in California sent pictures of the wildfire in the nearby mountains that forced the closure of the district schools for an entire week. She's the principal of one of the major high schools. The fire reignited a few weeks later, and her school site became an evacuation center for the displaced. As a former educator, I understand. The disruption and loss of learning time for students was significant.

Then, shortly after arriving in CA, we watched in utter disbelief, along with the rest of the country, as thousands of homes in the greater Los Angeles area were incinerated in a matter of hours, then days, then weeks, due to the Santa Ana winds driving more raging wildfires through the deep canyons near the Pacific Ocean. Entire neighborhoods were decimated, the stunned residents left with only the clothes on their backs and nowhere to go. Again, we personally know some of these people reeling from the overwhelming shock of total loss. Their story is heart rending. Most will not or cannot rebuild their former life.

One can't help giving serious thought to the question of endurance in the face of life's trials. Scripture proclaims the need for it, and offers

examples of endurance to learn from: Abraham, the Israelite's 40-year desert sojourn, Hannah, Job, the minor prophets, and certainly the apostle Paul and the early church martyrs, to name a few.

Truthfully, tough challenges can tax even the strongest of the faithful down to their roots: the why, and for how long? Of course, not all who experience catastrophic events or significant setbacks are believers, but it makes a difference. There are clear choices for *how* someone decides to respond to suffering, even when people experience the same circumstances.

One of our grandson's favorite songs is *In the Eye of the Storm* by Ryan Stevenson. It's now become one of mine, too. It touches at the heart of some of life's deepest struggles. If you aren't familiar with it, it's worth a listen.

*"In the eye of the storm, You remain in control,  
In the middle of the war, You've got my soul.  
'Cause You alone are the anchor when my sails are torn,  
Your love surrounds me in the eye of the storm."*

More storms are revealed daily. Just watch the news or go online. If or when it happens, moving forward without a clear outcome is deeply unsettling. We live in an age when immediate answers are common and expected, but when they're not, we're left to choose either anger and despair, or hope. Hope is a natural part of our human condition, planted within by a heavenly Creator, and a necessary component for recovery and emotional healing. Put simply, hope rests in the belief that at some point something broken will be mended: grief, health issues, finances, relationships; whatever the valley is that's being walked.

Endurance isn't easy, but we're not alone. Ever. Jesus said so. "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the world." Matt 28:20b. We're asked to hold tightly to the promise with both hands. The journey may not be according to *our* preferred plan, but it's solidly wrapped in the powerful arms of a loving Savior. When the believer's hope is rooted in *that* firm and comforting truth, the situation, however challenging, is in safe hands.

*"Be joyful in hope, patient in tribulation, faithful in prayer."*  
Romans 12:12

~Written by Char Kamper

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