

## **Obedience is Better than Sacrifice**

My family and I are indeed thankful for God's mercy unto us and the Bahamas.

We had been watching the report of Hurricane Matthew. No one really knew the exact path it would take but we were told it would affect us. Everyone was getting prepared as best they could. I am so thankful I was in perfect peace. I told someone that had they met me a few years ago, I would have been freaking out because fear was something I had struggled with in the past. I am so thankful to God for his deliverance.

God has been teaching me about fear. He said perfect love cast out all fear. His Christ is the true representation of perfect love. When I am afraid, I am saying the fear of that circumstance or situation, is bigger than God who is sovereign and the creator of all things. That thing then takes the place of God. I should not place anything above God. As a result of making a god out of that thing, it is used to teach me humility. We shall have no other gods besides the only true and living God. Hurricane Matthew was not my God. My faith rested in The Lord.

This did not mean the hurricane warning shouldn't be taken seriously. I simply made the necessary preparations and whatever, I prepared for myself I made sure it included my mother and sister. I decided to ride out the storm with them and this I was very prayerful about because I knew they did not take this storm seriously. They were very nonchalant as usual. In the past I would be fussing them to get ready but this time, I had very little to say.

My mother had a few windows that could not close. Before the storm I told my sister they should batten up the windows. She said they couldn't do that because the Land lord didn't want anyone to mess up his walls. So I told her she couldn't worry about the Landlord because their safety came first. I told her to call me back so I could know what to do. Days passed and not a word from them. Then the day of the storm, realizing how serious the storm was, she decided to call someone out of the phone book to fix the windows. Usually during times like this, people tend to price gouge. So the person she called charged them double for the work. I asked her why she didn't call me, so I could find someone. I showed her if she had listened to what I had said, she would not have to sacrifice paying all that money. She was very quiet and said to me that she realize that everything I had been telling them was true and that they wish they had listened

While I was securing my place to leave for my mother's, my next door neighbor called me frantic. She said she had moved all her furniture to her parent's house because of the storm surge prediction. The street that we live on is two corners from the beach. They said anyone that close to the beach would experience storm surges of up to 20 feet. They told us to move to a shelter or higher ground for safety. My neighbor asked me what I was going to do. I told her I was going to my mother but as far as my place was concern, there were no plans. Because, the windows are hurricane impact, I just placed sandbags around my door. My heart was at peace. I told her to receive the peace of the Lord and all would be well. After I got off the phone with her, I prepared some food, so my family would have a hot meal. I called my sister and told her to come get the food I had prepared. She asked me when I was coming over, I told her soon. I just knew in my heart I would be shown when it was time to leave. During that time, I was quiet and just prayed. At nine...I was shown it was time. I got my bags and headed to my mother. Shortly after I arrived, the winds started to pick up.

We were awakened at 7am the next morning to what sounded like a freight train. That's how loud and fierce the winds were. I told my sister, Matthew is here. Because the windows were not protected, we could see everything that was happening outside. Things just kept hitting the window. I said Lord have mercy. The word of the Lord came unto me "obedience is better than sacrifice."

I could see the fear in my mother. She said "I didn't know it would be like this." I said "yes mummy, this is why I showed you both to prepare, but no one would listen to me." She was literally shaking. Then all of a sudden something hit the window so hard it broke. As a result the winds started coming in. At that point, I started to become afraid. I took a basket that was in the kitchen and placed it against the window. My sister said, "oh we have a piece of wood." We took the wood, placed it over the hole and placed the basket against it for reinforcement. We got the couch and placed it against the basket. I said Lord I know you are in this storm but I am afraid. He said "fear not, my strength is made perfect in your weakness." My sister said we need to pray. I told them they should first repent for their disobedience because as a result, this was the sacrifice, we had to make. She and my mother repented and went before the Lord in prayer.

After the eye passed, the winds got stronger BUT nothing hit against the window that was broken. God kept us.

My mother and sister said that they were so thankful that I was there and they didn't know what they would have done if I was not there. I told her it is the mercy of the Lord to all of us including myself that I was there.

When I got back home all was well at my place. Not one drop of water entered my home. Apparently two trees fell across the entrance of the road leading to the beach. These trees blocked the water from coming into the road. So no water flooded our homes on that street. God is indeed merciful. On the road behind the trees, you could see the devastation and how the sea wall had risen. So much so that the sea boulders had been torn down by the sea. And the road was impassable. God is indeed merciful.

Sister Ellen contacted me shortly after the storm passed. I knew the storm was headed their way. She asked me how we were doing. It wasn't in me to give her any words that might bring fear to her regarding the storm. I told her that all was well and that the God that kept us safe will keep them safe through this storm and to remember God's strength is made perfect in our weakness."

So many lessons came out of this storm. I am ever so grateful to God for his mercy and take courage that he will keep us in perfect peace, with our eyes on him. He is sovereign. Obedience is indeed better than sacrifice.