Facing Our Spiritual Hurricanes by Believing in Christ

We face our spiritual hurricanes best by believing in Christ and keeping His commandments.

For the past six years, my sweetheart, Ann, and I have lived in Texas near the Gulf Coast, where some of the largest hurricanes have struck the United States, leaving behind tremendous destruction and even loss of life. Sadly enough, recent months have been no stranger to such devastating events. Our love and prayers extend to all who have been impacted in any way. In 2017 we personally experienced Hurricane Harvey, which dropped record rainfall of up to 60 inches (150 cm).

Natural laws govern the formation of hurricanes. The ocean temperature must be at least 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27 degrees C), extending to 165 feet (50 m) below the ocean’s surface. As wind meets the warm ocean water, it causes the water to vaporize and rise into the atmosphere, where it liquifies. Clouds then form, and winds produce a spiral pattern over the ocean’s surface.

Hurricanes are colossal in size, reaching 50,000 feet (15,240 m) or more into the atmosphere and spanning at least 125 miles (200 km) across. Interestingly, as hurricanes meet land, they begin to weaken because they are no longer above the warm waters required to fuel their strength. You may never face a devastating physical hurricane. However, each of us has weathered and will weather spiritual hurricanes that threaten our peace and try our faith. In today’s world, they seem to be increasing in frequency and intensity. Thankfully, the Lord has provided us a sure way to joyfully overcome them. By living the gospel of Jesus Christ, we are assured that “when dark clouds of trouble hang o’er us and threaten our peace to destroy, there is hope smiling brightly before us.”

President Russell M. Nelson explained: “Saints can be happy under every circumstance. We can feel joy even while having a bad day, a bad week, or even a bad year! “. . . The joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives.

“When the focus of our lives is on . . . Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives.”

Just as natural laws govern physical hurricanes, divine laws govern how to feel joy during our spiritual hurricanes. The joy or misery we feel as we brave the storms of life is tied to the laws that God has set. President Nelson has shared, “They’re called commandments, but they are just as true as the law of lift, the law of gravity, [and] the law that governs the heartbeat.”

President Nelson continued, “It becomes a rather simple formula: If you want to be happy, keep the commandments.”

Doubt is an enemy of faith and joy. Just as warm ocean water is the breeding ground for hurricanes, doubt is the breeding ground for spiritual
President Nelson has taught: “Faith in Jesus Christ is the foundation of all belief and the conduit of divine power. . . . The Lord does not require perfect faith for us to have access to His perfect power. But He does ask us to believe.”

Since April general conference, my family and I have been seeking to strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement to help us “turn [our] challenges into unparalleled growth and opportunity.”

Our granddaughter Ruby has been blessed with a strong, take-charge will. When she was born, her esophagus was not attached to her stomach. Even as an infant, Ruby, with her parents’ help, met this trial with unusual determination. Ruby is now five years old. Though she is still very young, she is a powerful example of not letting her circumstances determine her happiness. She is always happy.

Last May, Ruby faced an additional hurricane in her life with faith. She was also born with less than a fully developed hand that needed reconstructive surgery. Prior to this rather complex operation, we visited with her and gave her a drawing that beautifully depicts a child’s hand warmly holding the hand of the Savior. When we asked her if she was nervous, she replied, “No, I am happy!”

Then we asked her, “Ruby, how is that so?”

Ruby confidently asserted, “Because I know that Jesus will hold my hand.”

Ruby’s recovery has been miraculous, and she continues to be happy. How the purity of a child’s faith contrasts with the foolishness of doubt that can frequently tempt us as we get older! But we can all become as little children and choose to put aside our unbelief. It is a simple choice.

A caring father diligently pleaded with the Savior, saying, “If thou canst do any thing . . . help us.”

Jesus then said unto him: “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

This humble father wisely chose to trust his belief in Christ rather than his doubt. President Nelson shared, “Only your unbelief will keep God from blessing you with miracles to move the mountains in your life.”

How merciful is our God to place the bar for us at the level of believing and not at the level of knowing! Alma teaches: “Blessed is he that believeth in the word of God.”

“Yes, in the first place, God desires that we believe in Him.

We face our spiritual hurricanes best by believing in Christ and keeping His commandments. Our belief and obedience link us to power beyond our own to overcome “whatever” is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Yes, God “doth immediately bless [us]” for believing and obeying. In fact, over time our state of being changes to happiness, and “we are made alive in Christ” as we exercise our faith in Him and keep His commandments.

Brothers and sisters, may we choose today to “doubt not, but be believing.” The right way is to believe in Christ.” We are “graven . . . upon the palms of [His] hands.” He is
our Savior and Redeemer, who stands at our very door and knocks. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES
2. “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,” Hymns, no. 19.
5. See 2 Nephi 2:26–27.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 84:44; see also Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; Doctrine and Covenants 98:11.
9. See 2 Nephi 28:21–26. In contrast, see Matthew 11:28–30 and note the “rest” Christ will give us as we come unto Him.
14. Mark 9:22. Note the father pleaded for Christ to help “us”—parents and child together, seeking the Savior’s love and healing power.
17. Alma 32:16. The full verse reads, “Therefore, blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble; or rather, in other words, blessed is he that believeth in the word of God, and is baptized without stubbornness of heart, yea, without being brought to know the word, or even compelled to know, before they will believe” (emphasis added). Note that the Lord desires that we believe without being compelled to be humble, without being stubborn, without being “brought” to know, and without being compelled to “know” before we will believe.
22. Mormon 9:27; see also 1 Nephi 4:3.
24. 1 Nephi 21:16.
25. See Revelation 3:20. Note in verse 21 the promise made “to him that overcometh.”

Honduras