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Every Time
the Wind Blows

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Series: Making the Spiritual Switch

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Every Time the Wind Blows

Why did God create the wind?
Why, in His great plan,
Would a God of power and might
Give such a gift to man?

Why that quiet, gentle breeze,
Cooling fevered brow?
Why before a mighty wind
Do even cedars bow?

And why the wind's great mystery?
Its plan to man not showing,
We know not where it comes from;
We know not where it's going.

Why the wind? I'll tell you why,
For as this world we trod,
Every time the wind blows,
We get a glimpse of God.

The miracle of the wind is that agent of mystery that sweeps across the horizons of life often unnoticed; then, on occasions, it unleashes its arsenal of authority with such a vengeance that both man and nature melt beneath its impact. It comes so often unannounced, and at so many different levels of the atmosphere, that what it may be doing in one place is totally unknown to those just a short distance away. The pilot must chart his course in accordance with the wind. The sailor at the helm of the ship dare not misjudge its effects on his journey. Weather "experts" spend billions yearly for equipment in an effort to predetermine its travel plans. Yet, at any moment, it may change direction, intensify its impact, or totally dissolve itself at will.

As we discovered in our last chapter, it was Jesus Himself who described the wind, saying we cannot tell where it's coming from or where its going, but never can we doubt its presence. He was speaking to a man named Nicodemus, making one of the

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most spiritually vital statements ever recorded. He was asking “Nick” to make the spiritual switch. He wanted him to take something he was familiar with in the physical realm and see the hidden spiritual truths that were, in essence, the reason God created that thing in the first place. In this case, he used the wind, likening the behavior of the wind to *how His Spirit works*.

So we have an obligation to study the wind. We have a responsibility to constantly be making the spiritual switch so that *every time the wind blows*, we can be reminded of God’s Spirit and worship.

THE WIND AS EVIDENCE

As we begin our journey through Scripture listening for the wind to blow across its pages, we cannot help stopping first at Acts, chapter two. There we see perhaps the most obvious illustration of *why God created the wind*. It was to give us a reminder of the fact that we have *evidence of God’s residence in our lives*. In other words, *every time the wind blows*, God is saying to us, “Be assured of your salvation; the wind reminds you that my Spirit lives in your heart.” For it was in the wind that the Holy Spirit first descended to inhabit man.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, (Acts 2:1,2a)

Why the wind? Because God wanted to give evidence that His Spirit had come to inhabit the church forever. He wanted the wind to serve as a reminder that the Spirit would be our assurance of His indwelling presence. Paul wrote in Romans 8,

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God and if children, then heirs...heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:16)

God is telling us that He has given us His Spirit as a witness, a reminder, a source of assurance that *we are, indeed, His children*. It is all the evidence we need when the winds of doubt begin to assail us that we belong to God. *Nothing can separate us from the love of God*. Nothing. How do we know? His Word tells us, and His Spirit within us confirms it. So now the Spirit of God is the assurance of our inheritance, and the wind is God’s photograph to remind us that it is so. *Every time the wind blows*, we need to remember that we are children of the King.

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Do you ever get so caught up in the onslaught of spiritual warfare around you that you begin to doubt God's presence in your life? You know that Christ came into your life, and you know that His Spirit has dwelt in your heart; but over a period of time your heart has grown cold, and your spirit has grown stale. You begin to wonder if, indeed, God is there.

Let me give you an assignment. Go outside on what seems to be a calm, clear day. Now look up into the heavens. Watch the clouds. Are they perfectly still? No, the wind is moving them, little by little, across the horizon. But can you *feel* the wind? No, down where you are, there seems to be no evidence of its work at all. But up in the heavens, *where you can't feel it*, the wind is quietly doing its work, moving the clouds of life to where they need to be; dropping the rains of life where they need to fall. When you see that happening, fall to your knees and worship. Thank God that, whether you feel it or not, His Spirit is quietly at work in your life, gently moving life's clouds, quietly controlling life's rains, tenderly bringing you sunlight in just the prescribed amounts. The wind, as it moves in the heavens, is your assurance that God is in control. *So every time the wind blows*, take heart; you have fresh evidence that you are God's.

THE WIND AS JUDGE

Every time the wind blows, we also have a reminder of the judgment of God. In Psalm, chapter one, we read a description of two dramatically different kinds of people. The only difference between the two is that one group belongs to God, the other doesn't, and His judgment on those who are not His own is demonstrated by a mighty wind. You remember the first part:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

He shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water,

(Psalm 1:1,3a)

But look now at the contrast in these verses,

The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

(Psalm 1:4,5)

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Like the chaff that the wind drives away, judgment shall come as surely as the wind blows. God's Spirit shall go forth, and those who are not His shall be banished to an everlasting hell. Another verse that speaks of God's judgment, using the wind, is Exodus 15, which speaks of Pharaoh's chariots,

Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. (Exodus 15:10)

The wind speaks of the awesome judgment of God. Think of those many times in Scripture when it blew selectively to take collectively those who had been in disobedience, or who had pursued God's own apart from His will.

One of the key roles of God's Spirit on this earth is that of conviction. John 16 says,

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (John 16:7,8)

God has sent His Spirit to indwell you in order to *personally* judge your life. It is His Spirit who prods you, who prompts you, who grieves you when you break the heart of God. It is His Spirit who takes His Word and uses it as a two-edge sword to pierce your soul, even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, using it to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. God's Spirit is like the wind. It moves into the world, and it moves into your life. It beats against the facade that covers you, stripping down to the real you, exposing your need to submit to the will of God.

Every time the wind blows take inventory. What has God been saying to you through His Spirit about your life? Are you chafing against His prompting? Are you ignoring His gentle conviction? If so, the wind may yet blow harder against your life in the days to come. For if the gentle breezes do not awaken us to sin, then those currents often begin to increase, and those contrary winds will heighten, until you will find your boat swaying beneath the onslaught of God's convicting power.

Every time the wind blows it's reminder time, as well, that the time is coming when God will judge this earth, and the scales of justice will be balanced once and for all. The wind of His Spirit will one day blow across planet earth, and sin will be judged at last. Those *who appear to be getting away with great injustices*

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will not stand in that day. It is so discouraging to see sin run rampant on this earth and see the wicked prosper, but judgment time is coming. As the psalmist said in Psalm 37,

Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. (Psalm 37:1,2)

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. (Psalm 37:35,36)

Every time the wind blows, it ought to remind us of the judgment of God. He judges us daily, convicting us of our need to be holy, and He will one day judge this world and all that is in it. Righteousness will flourish like a palm tree. So *every time the wind blows*, we ought to lay aside all of our bitterness over the injustices of this world and worship a God of righteousness instead.

THE WIND AS GUIDE

Another great message of the wind is told as we glance across a beautiful lake and view the sunrise or the sunset against the backdrop of the magnificence of God's trees and hills. As we look, lo, upon that lake is a small craft: a sailboat, riding on the wind, led only by the course charted for it by the Master of the wind. The wind may increase, decrease, swirl, change course, or gently die. It matters not. That craft, resting so quietly on those waters, is at the mercy of the wind, and as long as it rests in that fact, it is led by the wind.

The Spirit of God was given to you to comfort you, to convict you, and to assure you of God's presence. But He was also given to you for another purpose, a purpose written on the wings of the wind. He was given to you to guide you across life's vast ocean into the harbor of eternity, where the Master of the port will one day receive you into His arms, and you will enter total peace at last.

There are at least three aspects of *the guiding ministry of the Spirit of God* that are written in the wind. He precedes; He intercedes; and He leads.

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The *preceding* work of the Holy Spirit might be likened unto the swirling breezes that begin to blow just before a change in the weather. Either it becomes incredibly still or suspiciously brisk, but the *change of the winds* indicates something is about to happen. God does that in our lives, as well. We do not often know what is about to happen, but we know something is, for the Spirit begins to quicken us and awaken us and alert us, either to danger or to conflict or to a change in course.

Often we don't listen. We are often so busy *doing for God* we don't have time to listen to God's gentle prompting through His Word by His Spirit. Often, both through the Scriptures and through circumstances, God attempts to get our attention so we will rest our oars in the water and look for the change in the way the winds are blowing, but to no avail. (Read the life of Paul and learn from him.)

Then there is the *interceding* work of the Spirit in our lives. Just as the wind moves in as a fierce storm appears on the horizon and suddenly shifts, blowing away the clouds, even so the Spirit often intercedes on our behalf. Often we don't know what to do next. In fact, we often don't even know how to pray as we ought. So Paul wrote in Romans,

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

(Romans 8:26-28)

The Spirit of God is able to intercede for us because He knows the Father's mind. When we allow Him to, He will pray *through us*, praying for the will of God to be done, knowing that when it is, all things work together for our good and for God's glory.

The Spirit precedes, and the Spirit intercedes. But most of all, the Spirit *leads*. Day by day, hour by hour, the Spirit of God is God's steering wheel gently guiding us around, over, and through life's obstacles. It is here that we see the message of the wind at its clearest.

I believe the disciples understood the leading of the Spirit by

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the guiding of the wind, because they had learned, as fishermen or sailors, that they could get in a boat and set sail; but once they were on the sea, they were at the mercy of the wind. They could move with it and reach the appointed destination, or they could move against it and be crushed beneath its fury. They could move their sails to appropriate its strength and find power, or they could lower their sails and drift aimlessly at the mercy of the waves.

Jesus was at rest on the sea in the midst of a storm because He knew who the Master of the Winds really was. He knew that, *so long as He was in His Father's will*, no wind could blow against Him that His Father had not sent, and no wind could harm Him unless His Father willed it. That is why He faced the Cross with such confidence. The disciples understood the ways of the wind, so they came to understand the ways of the Spirit.

Our problem is that we, in our day, have come into an age of such self-assertiveness, that to rest in a storm is tantamount to slothfulness. To wait on God is considered to be the absence of faith rather than the evidence of faith. We have confused God's plan. He controls the wind of His Spirit; our job is to move our sails to receive the power and follow His leading.

Picture two boats on the lake. One is equipped with a huge outboard motor. The other has no self-provided means of power. It only has sails to capture the wind. The one with the motor feels confident that *in any situation*, if the wind fails to guide or lead or to empower, with the flick of a switch, the one at the helm can provide his own power and move as he chooses. So the wind, to him, is simply *an alternate source of power*. He uses it as he chooses, but he is dependent, not on the wind, but on the horsepower he can generate on his own. Do you see that man's problem? Soon he will depend more and more on his engine and *less and less on the wind*. Soon, the quiet shifting of the winds will go unnoticed as the sound of his own power drowns out the gentle moving of the sails.

So it is with us. If we are not careful, little by little, we will substitute our own power for the Spirit's power, and, in the process, lose our dependence on His guidance. God's leading is our proof of God's presence. Paul wrote in Romans,

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
(Romans 8:14)

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And oh, how He desires that we let go of our own alternate sources of power and learn to rest on the waters of life instead. Yes, there will be times when nothing seems to be happening; but, ah, in the heavens, the winds of God's sovereignty will not have ceased to blow. Yes, there will be times when it seems that the ship is about to be blown apart or sent drifting into a port on a course we did not chart. At that moment, we will be tempted to reach for the switch on the motor of our own abilities and begin to rev up alternate power. If we do, at that moment we will miss the plan of God. Most of us simply have not learned to let the Spirit lead our lives through the Word, without our panicking and giving Him help He does not need. Think about it. It is the primary message of the wind.

When you are on the waters of life, it is up to the Master of the Wind to move the ship and direct the ship *as He sees fit*. Perhaps you didn't want to be led to that job. Perhaps you didn't want to be led to that person. Perhaps you didn't want to be stripped of all the things you possessed, or the dreams you so had built your life upon, which led you in a different direction than the one you had charted for yourself.

You had two choices: You could turn on the engine and give God a little help— fighting the wind of His leading with the energy of your alternatives, or you could quietly settle into the ship and rest while the Master moved you as He knew best. You could plow your way out of that storm or turn your sails to capture the winds the storm generated. You could determine that God wants what you want, and that the winds are just out of His control; or you could affirm that only God knows what you need, and the winds are *never out of God's control*.

One way, you're trying to be God and trying to decide what's best and only using God's power when it seems to be moving your way. The other way, you are actually being *led by the Spirit and controlled by the Spirit*, and whatever way God decides to move your ship, you are at rest. Therein lies the missing ingredient in most of our lives and in most of our churches. We have replaced waiting on God with programs and plans, and we have replaced *letting God direct us by His Spirit* with our doing in our energy what we *think He wants us to do*.

That art of quietly resting as God gently guides and leads is a quality seldom found in today's "hurry and do" society. We are

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not trained to “wait on the wind” before we move, nor to allow the wind to do the moving. We read books, go to seminars, and listen to tapes on “how to” do this or that; then, without waiting on God to apply those principles to our lives, we power up the engines and cruise off into the sunset, thinking that God will never get around to moving us if we don’t help Him out. Fools.

Jesus slept on that boat through that storm because His Father owned the winds. Had the disciples had an outboard motor, they would have missed seeing the God of the wind control the wind. That’s often true of us.

Examine your own life. How much time do you spend waiting on God, learning of God, and beseeching God to lead you? And how faithfully do you move at the Spirit’s leading? Or have you placed an outboard motor alongside your spiritual sails, *just in case* God doesn’t send the wind to blow, or it doesn’t blow the way you planned it?

My prayer for each of us is that this day we will cry “engine overboard” and dump that pile of pistons and spark plugs the world calls power into an ocean of faith and commit our lives once more to the leading of God’s Spirit *wherever or whenever He leads*. Some of us need to go back to the last time we knew we were in the center of God’s will, before we decided to help Him out, and start that journey all over again; this time in His power, not ours.

WRITTEN ON THE WIND

There are other messages we can learn from the wind. We can see how the wind changes direction at will; how it may intensify momentarily, then just as quickly subside, leaving us to wonder when it might arise again. We can learn anew of its power to comfort and to soothe, and its power to judge and to destroy. We can remind ourselves of how God leads as we see the wind leading. God never leads contrary to His Word; He never leads us to confusion; He never tempts us, but He does test us. He never leads us to self-glorification, only to things that glorify Him. We can learn of how His Spirit leads that we might have spiritual barometers with which to test the winds that blow.

Still, the foremost message that is written on the wind is the message of the ship at sea. And perhaps the most needed picture we have of God’s Spirit in our generation might be that sailboat,

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devoid of any other source of power, that quietly waits on the water, only moving its sails to catch the wind. It waits, gently moving, ever so quietly being carried on the wings of the wind, on to the destination set in eternity past by a sovereign God for that particular ship.

Beneath that picture is the inscription: “You’re not the captain, Beloved, God is”. And if you read between the lines, it says “stop fighting the winds that blow upon your life and simply let them move you as the Captain of the Wind sees fit.” It says “throw overboard your fleshly alternatives to God’s power and simply spend your time learning to move the sails of your spirit until they are in harmony with how the wind of the Spirit is blowing in your life.”

Learn that lesson, and you will have learned the message that God has written on the wind. *Every time the wind blows*, you will have a physical reminder of one of the greatest spiritual truths known to man: that God did not call us to be gods, but to let Him be God. He has not called us to be self-driven vessels on the sea of life, but rather sailboats moved along by the gentle wind of His Spirit wherever *He sees fit*.

When we come to that place, we can rest when nothing seems to be happening, because we know that the one who owns the winds neither slumbers nor sleeps. We can rest when the storm clouds begin to gather overhead and the skies turn black, and the winds begin to indicate that for a time we may not see the sun. We can crawl down inside that ship with Jesus and rest. His Father owns the wind and never will it beat against us with more force than He allows.

We need to stop fighting life, as we know it, and let the Master of the winds control our destiny. He will, and He will do it beautifully. Should we decide to take charge again, all we’ll need as a reminder is to go outside and listen for the gentle sound of the wind. It will be saying,

Come to Me, all you who labor, and are heavy laden, and I
will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28 NKJV)

It’s a message we need never, ever forget again, for it has been *written in the wind*.

The winds of life *will continue to blow upon our lives*. That is a promise from God. “In this world, ye shall have tribulation”. We

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shall have storms. But oh, dear child of the King, those winds are not meant to capsize the ship of our lives, but rather to guide our ship safely into the harbor. Our job is not to fight the wind, but to let the wind guide us home.

STORMS ARE RAGING

Storms are raging; floods are rising;
What perilous times we are in!
Is there no refuge from agony?
Is there no shelter from sin?

Will the tumult o'ertake us,
Trapped as though nobody cared?
Or in His arms is there refuge,
Safe in the ark He's prepared?

Take heart! That ark is Jesus,
The one who controls the peace;
The one who can speak to the storm clouds
And cause the winds raging to cease.

Yet oft' He speaks not to the storm clouds,
To silence their clamor and power,
But rather He takes us within His Ark
And calls us to rest in that hour.

So do not be bitter at storms, my friend,
For the rainbow its message will tell;
God granted mercy to Noah,
And He'll grant to us mercy as well.

Rest on the waters, oh child of the King;
Rest, for His message is true.
Till the waters subside (and they always do),
God will take care of you.

He'll feed you; He'll teach you; He'll love you;
He'll lead you through caverns so dark,
And bring you back to the mountain's peak,
Sheltered and safe in His ark.

Rest, blessed Christian, e'en in the storm,
As the billows flood over your soul,;
Rest, blessed Christian, you're safe in the Ark,
And the Captain's in perfect control.

Challenge to Further Study and Application

1- Why do you think God sent a mighty, rushing wind on the day of Pentecost? What was the wind evidence of? Would we know that if He had not referred to it as such in John, chapter three?

2- What can you learn by watching the wind blow the clouds which are high up in the sky? Make the spiritual switch. What does it say to you about how God works on earth when we cannot see it or feel it?

3- Did God use the wind to demonstrate His judgment? When? Why? What does it say to us? What things happen on planet earth to help us make the spiritual switch where God's judgment and the wind are concerned?

4- Think about the *preceding* work of the wind. How has God used the Spirit to prepare you for coming changes in your life?

5- Think now about the *interceding* work of the wind. Can you remember times in your life where the Holy Spirit has interceded for you both in prayer and in circumstances? How can you make the spiritual switch on those occasions?

6- Think now about the *leading* work of the wind. Consider how He takes the sailboat of your life and gently draws you and directs you through His Word and through His promptings. What can you do in the future to keep from revving up the outboard motor of the flesh and interrupting that process?

Memorize: Romans 8:14

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