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## I LOVE A GOOD STORM

*"A storm brings out the best in many -- and that's what I enjoy most".*



I love a good winter storm. Now I realize that some have difficulty using the words "good" and "storm" in the same sentence, but not me. Howling winds and driving snow produce an adrenalin rush second to none.

As the white stuff accumulates and covers our world, it also *uncovers* levels of neighborliness that lie dormant for much of the year. It brings out the best in many -- and that's what I enjoy most.

As my son and I rode our snowmobile down our community Main Street (yes, you read that correctly) after a recent storm, we stopped frequently to assist drivers who were mired in drifts. Without fail, complete strangers joined us, taking their place at the bumper of the one in need. We grunted and heaved until the vehicle lurched forward,

leaving a rag-tag group of Good Samaritan's grinning at each other. Complete strangers were unified by the distress of another. How strange is that?

The majority of regular church-attendees were absent that Sunday morning -- and I'm glad. For many, *being* the church took precedence over being *at* church. They lived out the biblical definition of "church" in high-definition clarity -- that the true church is more than a mere building; it is Jesus-followers living out their faith in the trenches of life.

Al fired up his snow-blower and trudged his way into neighbor's hearts, one driveway at a time. Lewis, a shut-in, was shocked to hear his doorbell ring at the height of the storm and to find a frosted friend delivering some slightly-cooled sustenance. Jessica rescued a young family cocooned in an immovable sedan, and delivered them to their doorstep. Candace went to answer phones at a local business, when the regular receptionist couldn't get out of her driveway.

Yes, the church unleashed is nothing less than inspiring. It has little to do with cross-ordained buildings, pews and sermons. It has everything to do with an empowered people responding to needs on the rutted playing field of everyday life -- where the only pew is caused by flatulence and the only sermon proclaimed by actions.

In the midst of the storm I noticed that life seemed to slow down. Those crazy enough to leave the sanctuary of shelter, made a bee-line home as soon as possible. Dust was blown off board games as families gathered around kitchen tables. Kids listened and rejoiced as radio announcers proclaimed that buses were not running. Employees phoned work and were told to stay put. Popcorn makers whirred to life and long-forgotten movies flickered on screens.

Thousands unintentionally discovered the joy of rest so frequently highlighted in Scripture. How oft we forget that God created humans to naturally function in a six and one rhythm -- work six days, then enjoy a day of rest. Hmm, maybe He did know what He was talking about.

And perhaps He also has deeper motives when the literal storms of life bombard us. I suspect if we listen carefully in the midst of wailing winds, we will discover God's still small voice whispering the life-transforming paradox: it is in the interruption of life that we discover life.

And that, my friends, is why I pray for good storms.