

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I'm Julie Lefebure, your host. Life is remarkable, sometimes raw and always real. And some days we could use a little extra encouragement for our real lives. Here, you'll find that, along with personal life impacting stories, helpful life hacks, timely inspiration, biblical insight, and a fresh perspective.

The Encouragement for Real Life podcast equips you to be a light in this world and to shine bright wherever God has you. I'm glad you're here today.

Julie Lefebure: Plenty of people in my life are weathering storms right now. Not necessarily storms that have to do with weather, but more of maybe physical or spiritual or even emotional kind of storms. And I'm guessing that you have people in your [00:01:00] life too, that are walking through similar things. And quite possibly, maybe you are one of these people who are walking through a storm.

You know, Jesus warned us that we would have troubles in this world, that we would have troubles in life, and boy was He ever right. The storms of life are sometimes the biggest troubles that we experience and that we face. But you know, in that , very same verse, Jesus also said to take heart, that He has overcome the world.

It's so refreshing and so encouraging to cling to that promise in that verse. But you know, God knows exactly what storms that we are facing, and He also knows that we can find peace in them. We aren't on our own through them. And we're discussing this in today's episode as we continue on the theme [00:02:00] of having an anchor for our souls and an anchor for our lives.

He is our anchor who keeps us steady when we are overwhelmed in the storms of life. So this episode is filled with God's hope and promise, and I pray that you find encouragement for your real life right now through it. So without further delay, let's get right into it.

Like you, I have had my fair share of life storms, and I paused actually to look back at some of these storms when I was preparing for this episode. What's been the most difficult life storm that you've [00:03:00] experienced? You know, I would have to say mine was many years ago when I was contemplating ending our marriage of seven years.

It was decades ago, which kind of seems like a lifetime ago, and because many years have passed since that time in my life, I sometimes forget about , this situation and this storm. I sometimes forget the awfulness of that season

because I guess I've chosen to cling to the good that God brought through that season of my life.

But this time as I looked back, I allowed myself to feel all the feels of the experience of it back then. And truly, it was an awful season. That storm nearly wiped me out. It, it almost felt like , it knocked me to my knees, and I really thought for sure that it was gonna overtake [00:04:00] me. But thankfully, however, God had a different plan. He and His peace met me in that storm, and I'm still here today. Thank you Lord. And I'm still married to the man who I consider my love of a lifetime.

God was bigger than that storm, you know, and, and has been in every storm in my life since. Storms of life affect all of us through different seasons of life. You know, they come when we probably least expect it. , They come when we're not ready for them, and they appear in varying forms, maybe such as loss or financial hardship, or relationship struggles or illness, and even through real life disappointment. They don't play favorites and they don't play nice.

You know, I've heard it said that [00:05:00] either we're , just coming out of a storm or we are in the middle of one, or one is just upon the horizon. That's really nothing to laugh about, and it's nothing really to, to, to get caught up on because that's life. But it's not a real encouraging thought, is it? That, you know, we're just gonna have storm after storm after storm in this life. But, this is life, right? We live in a fallen world, so we will experience fallen circumstances. None of us are immune to these storms, immune to these circumstances, even though we wish we were, and even though we think we should be. But even when we are in the storms of this life, if we could remember this one truth while we're in them, it would greatly help.

You know, if we would remind ourselves that we are not in these storms alone, it would really be a big [00:06:00] help. So if you're in a storm today, I pray that knowing that you're not alone in this storm, whatever storm you're facing, I pray that it encourages, encourages you, and blesses you with hope and peace.

Friend, you are not alone in the storms of life. Do you remember the story in the Bible of when the disciples found themselves in the middle of a storm while on a boat, on the lake, on the sea? Well, it's found in three of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and Jesus was sound asleep in the stern on a cushion as the disciples battled the wind and the waves. And it says in Mark chapter four, verse 38 in the New International Version, that the disciples woke Jesus and said, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" Well, the text [00:07:00] continues in verses 39 through 41, and it says that, "He got up, rebuked the

wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet, be still.' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?' They were terrified and asked each other, who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him." Hmm. Yeah. Even the wind and the waves obeyed Him. Who is this man?

Well, when the storms of life come, I try to recall this story. Because if Jesus can calm the wind and the waves for the disciples, He can calm the storms in my life too, even if it seems as if He may be asleep on a cushion in the stern.[00:08:00]

But am I willing to invite Him into my storm? You know, think about that. What if the disciples didn't invite Jesus into their storm? What if they didn't wake Him and and say, do you not care that we drown? What do you think would've happened? Well, they were already struggling already, but I think they would have struggled much longer and harder had they not asked Jesus for help.

And you know, the same goes for us. When we, for whatever reason, don't choose to invite Jesus into our storms, the storms that we face in our lives, well, I believe we struggle on a whole lot longer and harder than if we would've just paused and asked Him for help in the first place.

Jesus may speak to that storm like He did in this story and as He does, the wind and the waves may [00:09:00] calm down. Or maybe He won't. But either way, He is with us in it. We are not left alone to strain and strive against the storm to get to safety on our own. Oh goodness. Thankfully, we are not. We are always safe in His presence and where His presence is, so is His peace.

Wow. The peace that surpasses anything that we can understand or comprehend. His peace is a beautiful gift and it's what awaits you and me in the storms that we face. Not the peace of this world, because the peace that the world gives is temporary. Like immersing ourselves in a distraction or numbing out with some form of escape. These don't bring us lasting peace. They allow us to [00:10:00] escape for a moment, but not lasting peace. Only God can give us lasting peace. Peace is actually a gift from Him.

John chapter 14, verse 27, in the New Living Translation reminds us of Jesus' words. He said, "I am leaving you with a gift. Peace of mind and heart. And a peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid." Don't be troubled or afraid. I love that, that He just continues to remind us that. But the thing is, if we're focused on the storm, we might miss this gift of God's peace.

So what are you focused on right now? The wind and the waves that are whipping around you or are you focused on Jesus?

In Matthew chapter 14, we see [00:11:00] another instance of Jesus and the wind and the waves as He's out on water. The disciples were on a lake one evening and Jesus walks to them on water, on top of the water. So of course, they were terrified and thinking He was a ghost. But Jesus , attempts to calm them by stating, "It is I don't be afraid." There it is again. Don't be afraid. But brave Peter asks to join Jesus on the water if it really is Jesus walking on the water and Jesus invites him out. So Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. But do you remember what happened? Starting in verse 30 we read. "But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink, , cried out, 'Lord, save me.' Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. 'You of little faith', He said, [00:12:00] 'why did you doubt?' And when they climbed in the boat, the wind died down." Hmm. Did you catch that? Did you catch what happened here? As long as Peter was focused on Jesus, he could walk on the water. But when he saw the wind, when he took his eyes off of Jesus and focused them on the storm, he began to sink.

Friend our focus and the object of our focus matters, especially in the storms of life. So will we focus on God and His peace, or will we focus on the raging storm around us? We do have a choice and it matters.

Friend, invite God into the storm. You know, I don't do this perfectly. I wish I could say I did. But there's a couple tangible things that I [00:13:00] do do to invite God into the storms that I'm facing in my life. And one is to seek out scriptures that speak to my situation. I have a tendency to search for Bible verses that encourage my heart in the storm that I'm in or in the situation that I'm, I'm walking through. And I've created quite a wonderful list of , these scriptures over the years. And I thought, why don't I share this with you? So I am sharing this list over in my free resource library on my site. So click on the link in the show notes to access them and to be encouraged in your own current circumstances. You know, there's just nothing like the hope that we find in God's Word.

Another thing that I do to invite God into my circumstances or into the storms that I'm walking through is I journal. In my book Right Now Matters I share this [00:14:00] tool and how I use it regularly. Maybe you're a journaler or maybe you're not, but sometimes I find that these storms can get so intense and overwhelming that writing everything out on a piece of paper truly helps me sort out my fears, my feelings, and the facts of what's really going on. Not caring about grammar or punctuation or anything like that. I just get every

thought that's in my head out onto the paper, and then I see it all in black and white. I may add some prayers or concerns or some things that I'm giving thanks for. Maybe some Bible verses or anything that comes to mind while I write. But writing everything out removes the overwhelming feelings and it fills me with peace. I can then think [00:15:00] logically instead of emotionally after getting it all out on paper.

You know sometimes it also helps just to talk to a trusted friend or a Christian counselor. That can really be a helpful thing when we're walking through a storm. Having an outlet to openly share about your feelings and your thoughts and your concerns, just anything about the situation and also receive encouragement back regarding it can really help us keep our focus on God.

And also expressing thankfulness to God in the midst of our storms fills us with such hope and it helps us cling to His peace. Adding a daily list of what you're thankful for to your journal entries is a treasure, not only for now, but to look back on later.

When we invite God into the storm, we experience His peace. [00:16:00] And the cool thing is that sometimes that peace becomes our testimony to others. We don't intend it to, but God may encourage others in their own storms through the peace that we've lived out and demonstrated to others amid our own life storms. We may never know how God might use our examples to bless another.

I am grateful that we do not walk through these storms of life on our own, aren't you?

Could you use a trusted friend to come alongside of you as you walk through your own storm? Or would you appreciate someone just to help you in uncovering the abundant life that Jesus came to give you? Are you ready to revive your faith and your life? Well, I invite you to take advantage of one-on-one abundant [00:17:00] life mentoring with me. Designed to help you refresh your faith, renew your mindset, and to embrace the abundant life that God has for you, the abundant life that He promises. Check out the link in the show notes and schedule your first appointment with me. I would love to work with you one-on-one and to help you to live the life that you've always desired to live.

Also, thank you for leaving a rating and or review from wherever you're listening in today and make sure that you subscribe so you never miss an episode. And I invite you to connect with me on social media. Share this

episode with a friend who is experiencing her own storm and who could use some encouragement in her life today.

So friend, in closing, be encouraged in any storm that you may be walking through today. I [00:18:00] invite you to take some time and invite God into that storm and watch how He strengthens you and gives you His peace through His presence. Trust that He is walking with you through it.

Will you pray with me? Oh, heavenly Father, we just thank You for this time. Thank You for the truth that You are our anchor in the storms of life that we go through. Father, there's nothing that, we cannot walk through with You walking it through with us. So thank You, Father, that You are the one. You are our constant companion no matter what we may walk through. Some of us here, we may be walking through storms today. I pray Father, the one that's listening right now that needs that touch of encouragement, I pray that You'll encourage her heart. That You will remind her that You are with her, that Your presence goes before her, and that You are giving her Your [00:19:00] peace right now amid the tribulation of this storm.

Thank You, Father, that we don't walk through any of it alone. Thank You that You are with us. May we see Your presence and feel Your presence oh, so very close today. We cling to You and we love You. In Jesus name, Amen.

Thanks for tuning in today, friend. God bless you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more@julielefebure.com and until next time, stay encouraged.