



ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

Volume 8, Issue 28

Drop the wrench.

If you're going to survive this world,
you've got to travel light.



Now that hurricane season is upon us here in South Florida, a friend recently lamented the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Maria of 2017, which was the worst natural disaster in recorded history to affect Puerto Rico, claiming 2,975 lives there. Still recovering from Hurricane Irma two weeks prior, approximately 80,000 residents remained without power even as Maria gained strength and headed straight for the islands.

Maria wiped out approximately 80 percent of the country's agriculture, with losses estimated at \$780 million. The hurricane completely destroyed Puerto Rico's power

grid, leaving all 3.4 million residents without electricity—in some places for months.

SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY
ARE *YOUR* EVILS

My friend wrestled with how people could go through such trial. He habitually tries to put himself in the shoes of anyone enduring hardship. He tries to imagine how it would be to see *his* house swept away by a storm surge, or to have to live on the ragged edge of existence without clean water, electricity, or shelter. He cannot imagine how people survive. It depresses him.

I tell him that he is making a mistake to put himself into the places of these people. As soon as he does that, I told him, he goes to a place where he is not meant to be. He is not the one called upon to endure what the Puerto Ricans were then enduring. That was their struggle, not his. He has struggles that they don't have. God gives each of us what we need for the day's trials—*our* day's trials. Not someone else's. It is not that we withhold empathy from those in trial, but we cannot let the trials of others snowball us into troughs of despair.

GOD MEETS US *NOW*

I told my friend that the relative cause of survival for any person enduring harrowing pain is the human instinct to survive. This is a gift of God. Most live their lives without ever having the deepest parts of them tapped. We can endure much more than we think we can. If we had been in Puerto Rico then, we would likely have survived—just like many of those people survived. After a terrible trial, we often say, "I don't know how I survived that." We say that because, after the trial, God takes away the tools that we needed for the trial. We don't know where such tools came from, or wither they go. We don't need to know. What does it matter? The tools are

there when we need them. We say before trials, “I could never go through something like that.” But then we do, and then we wonder afterward, “I have no idea how I got through that.” We get the tools when needed, and then after the trial God takes them away.

UNNECESSARY BURDEN

Do you carry a giant wrench around in your back pocket all day? No. You only use such a tool when you’re wrestling with some major plumbing job. Carrying a heavy wrench every minute of every day is too hard. We are not supposed to prepare ourselves for every contingency. The people who do so are called pack rats, or maybe “neurotic.” They have to keep everything; they might need it some day. Their lives are cluttered; weighed down; complicated. That is exactly what worry is; it clutters our lives and weighs us down. It makes things unnecessarily complicated. When we worry—especially about the future—we are mentally preparing ourselves for something that may never (and probably will never) happen. If it does happen, then God will provide the wrench—but not until then.

God provides for our present—*our* present. It is senseless, then, to worry about our future, or about someone else’s present. We can be empathetic, yes. But empathy is not worry. Empathy is not forcing yourself to imagine “what you would do.” If you want to worry about the future, or fret about the past, or project yourself into another’s trials, you go it alone. This is why worry feels so terrible; it’s a solo enterprise. When you live in the now and carry only those tools needed to survive your own trials this minute, you find relative comfort. God is a *present* help.

THE SURREAL COMPOSURE OF CHRIST

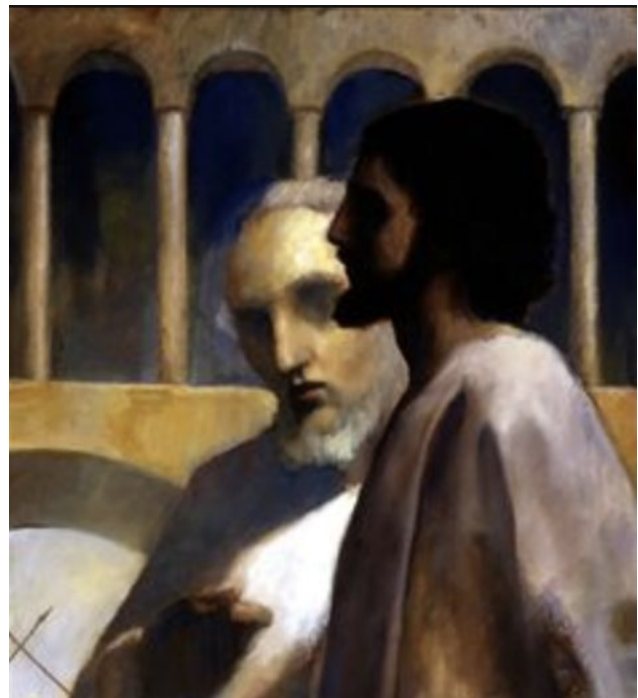
As He walked through His final hours upon this earth in His humiliated frame, Jesus Christ inhabited His own world. Every answer from His lips was calm, clean, composed. He looked straight ahead. He did whatever people told Him to do. He did not yell back at any of the people yelling at Him. All around Him was hate. *His* aura, however, was a sheen of acceptance. It was as though He had seen it all before—and it was fine. Not easy, but fine. All of it was supposed to happen. There was a reason for such calm.

Of all unlikely people with whom to share the reason, He told it to the Roman procurator, Pontius

Pilate. When Pilate spoke to Him and He did not answer, the procurator said: “To me you are not speaking! Are you not aware that I have authority to release you and have authority to crucify you?” Our Lord replied:

“No authority have you against Me in anything, except it were given to you from above” (John 19:11).

What was true of Christ then is true of us now: Nothing under heaven has any power over us unless God gives it. Thus: *everything that is happening to us is given from above*. The world seems so powerful and overwhelming.



Your trials seem unconquerable. And yet they have already been conquered. For it is not the power of this world that we are under. We are not under the power of the IRS, nor the power of our employers. We are not under the power of anyone who would seek to lord it over us. Even if we were literal slaves of a tyrannical government, we would still be free, because:

“No authority have you against Me in anything, except it were given to you from above” (John 19:11).

This was the key to the surreal composure of Christ during the crisis of His life. Let it be the key in *our* lives each and every day. —MZ

Produced by Martin Zender/www.martinzender.com
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email: mzender@martinzender.com