

Storms, death and other things I can't control

By [Diane Roth](#)

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Sunday night we heard there might be storms heading our way, so we decided to stay in South Dakota for an extra night and head out Monday morning instead. This was a decision that I regretted then on Sunday evening when it started hailing and everyone in the hotel was instructed to gather in the foyer. We heard there might be tornados. I considered if we had started out that we might have gotten ahead of the storm, and not have to worry about our car being picked up out of the parking lot and deposited somewhere else.

All week I have been watching the news from our northern city of Duluth, all of the storms and the raging water, the floods that have broken up roads and swallowed up cars. The power and the destruction were so unbelievable. Duluth and the North Shore are familiar places to us; we have visited often and never experienced anything like this.

The power of a storm: that's the gospel reading from Mark -- a simple and elemental story of the power of nature, the power of fear, and the power of a Word. I like this story because a storm is such a good metaphor, you know? "the storms of life" -- we all have them, those things outside of ourselves we cannot control. There are more of them than we know.

It would be nice to have a Word to say: "Peace! Be Still." or something like that. It would be nice to have a Word to say when the roads buckle, and the rain keeps coming down, and we need to know that there is a Lord of the wind and rain, someone who reigns over Life and Death, over all the things we can't control.

Wednesday afternoon the rain stopped, I heard, although they will be cleaning up for some time still. Wednesday afternoon I drove to the hospital to see a man who was taken off of life support. He has been battling cancer for many years. He has lived without both kidneys. He has lived by faith.

When I got to the hospital, there were many people who loved him gathered there. His father came and kissed him on the forehead. Someone said, "He is rich." He seemed to nod. I made the sign of the cross on his forehead, and said, "You are sealed by the Holy Spirit, and marked by the cross of Christ forever." And then this Word, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the Life. the one who believes in me, even though he die, yet he shall live."

Peace. Be still.

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