

From the Heart September 12th, 2001

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Poor little Chippie never saw it coming. One minute he was perched in his cage, happily singing. The next he was sucked up, dunked down, and blown over.

The way I heard the story, it all began when Mary decided to clean Chippie's cage with the vacuum cleaner. Mary removed the attachment from the end of the hose and stuck it in the cage. The phone rang, and she turned to pick it up. Mary had barely said "hello" when "fa-wumpa!" Chippie got sucked in.

Mary screamed, dropped the phone, turned off the vacuum, and opened up the bag. There was Chippie sitting up – somewhat dazed, but still alive -- and completely covered with dust. Mary grabbed him, ran to the bathroom, turned on the faucet, and held Chippie under the running water. Then, realizing Chippie was wet and starting to shiver, she did what any concerned bird owner would do --- she reached for the hair dryer and gave him a blast of hot air.

Poor Chippie never knew what hit him.

A few days later, a reporter who had initially written about the story called to see how Chippie was doing. Mary told him that Chippie was doing okay, but "Chippie doesn't sing much anymore. He just sits and stares."

It's not hard to see why. Being sucked up, dunked down, and blown over will steal the song from the best of us.

Can you relate to Chippie? Most of us can. One moment every thing is calm and going well, and we have a song on our lips, then – "fa-wumpa!" Something happens and we are sucked into a black chasm, doused with the cold water of reality, and blown away with the hot air of frustration and dismay.

The life that had been so calm is now stormy. Many of us experienced this on September 11 last year. The truth is, many of us also experience this in varying degrees every day. The pink slip comes. Health fails. Things aren't working like you thought they would. Depression sets in. Finances become tight. Promises fall through. Anxiety rises. A lot of things can happen.

Storms come. They come quickly. And sometimes, they come hard. If you are not in a storm today, you know someone who is. And somewhere in the midst of these storms, joy vanishes and the song is lost. Chippie doesn't sing much anymore.

So, what do we do when we find ourselves in the middle of one of life's many storms or when we've lost our song? Let me suggest two things:

First, let us remember that the same voice that stilled the rage on the Sea of Galilee can still the storm in our world, and the same voice that gave the birds their song can restore our song as well.

Second, let us turn to God's Word for inspiration and instruction. Check out these Psalms: "I lift up my eyes to the hills-- where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth." (Psalm 121:1-2) "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1) "He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God." (Psalm 40:1-3)

May God put a new song in your mouth and in your heart, and may you go forth and make a joyful noise for our Lord, and be a hymn of praise to our God.