

You are my hiding place

Psalm 32:1-7
June 17, 2007

Do you know about stormy weather?

*Don't know why there's no sun up in the sky
Stormy weather
Since my man and I ain't together,
Keeps rainin' all the time*

There are lots of songs about rain! Do you know this one?

*Broken windows and empty hallways
A pale dead moon in the sky streaked with gray
Human kindness is overflowing
And I think it's going to rain today*

Of course, there's this one:

Raindrops keep falling on my head

Some of you will remember this song by the Doors:

*Riders on the storm
Riders on the storm
Into this house we're born
Into this world we're thrown
Like a dog without a bone
An actor out alone
Riders on the storm*

A contemporary Christian group, *Casting Crowns*, sings this song:

*I was sure by now, God,
that You would have reached down
and wiped our tears away,
stepped in and saved the day.
But once again, I say amen
and it's still raining as the thunder rolls.*

You can fill a jukebox with bad weather songs! Because that's the way life is. That's the way all too many of us feel all too often. I got the rainy day gone astray can't find my way nothin' to say hell to pay blues!

So what do you do? What do you do when it rains? What do you do when the storm hits? You run for shelter! You look for a place to hide!

You look for a place to hide. And the fiercer the storm, the more threatening the weather, the faster you run!

You are embarrassed, ashamed, humiliated. You want to dig a hole in the ground and crawl in and hide. You can't get away too soon, from everything and everybody.

Or you are anxious and afraid. You look for a place that feels safe, a place that feels protected, a place "it" can't get you, a hiding place.

Shame and fear send us scrambling for shelter, looking for a place to hide. Shame and fear.

There are lots of places to hide, lots of ways to hide. Maybe you close down. You close in. You withdraw. You hold in your emotions, you hide your feelings, you build a wall around yourself and nobody gets in. Nobody sees you. Nobody knows you. If you dig that hole deep enough, if you build that wall high enough, nobody does know you, and you become isolated, alone, and depressed, almost as good as dead.

Or you hide in plain sight! You avoid risk. You avoid confrontation. You do your best to fit in, to go unnoticed. You go with the flow, you take the easiest path, you conform. You do what everybody expects you to do,. You say what everybody expects you to say. And you -- the real you -- disappears.

Or you build a fortress. You lay up the bulwarks. You stockpile the weapons. You secure the perimeter to make sure no one gets through, that no one gets the better of you. And if anybody threatens you, or even seems to threaten you, you let them have it!

So does it work? Does hiding work? Are you any less afraid? Are you any less ashamed? Or have you become a prisoner of your fear, a prisoner of your shame?

There's another bad weather song, one that was just introduced to me week before last by Liz Becker, a song by the Christian rock group, Superchic(k), titled *Stand in the Rain*.

*So stand in the rain
Stand your ground
Stand up when it's all crashing down
You stand through the pain
You won't drown
And one day what's lost can be found
You stand in the rain*

You don't run. You don't hide. You stand there in the rain! How can you do that? You can do that when you have found a different kind of hiding place.

You are my hiding place ...

When a great flood of trouble comes rushing in, it will not reach me, because you are my hiding place. When the rains come and the storms let loose, they will not hurt me, because you are my hiding place.

The Lord is a different kind of hiding place. You find this hiding place right out in the open! Your shame is not buried, but exposed. When we bury our shame -- deny it, ignore it, excuse it, hold it deep, deep inside -- we are left exhausted, worn out, dried up. But when we let go of our shame, when we confess our sins, when we face our frailty, when we stop covering up, we are set free, the Lord forgives.

What about our fears? How does the Lord protect us from threatening storms? Think about it: *You are my hiding place*. You and nothing else. It's not that the Lord will find me a good hiding place, or build me a good hiding place. The Lord is my hiding place.

But where is the Lord? Out there! Everywhere! In and above and around and through all creation! In the midst of good weather and bad. In the sunshine and in the storm. So if we hide in the Lord, where are we? Out there! Standing in the rain, but safe, because the Lord himself is our hiding place.

Look! The rain is coming. The storm clouds are gathering on the horizon. Quick! Run and hide!

Or ...