



"Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, so that we see ourselves as we really are."

—Arthur Golden

27-Feb-04

Storm of the Century

Over the past two days, more than fifteen inches of snow fell on south Charlotte where I live, encasing everything in a thick, crystalline blanket. My house, topped with more than a foot of white stuff, looks like some mad, Southern imitation of a Courier and Ives picture, even to the wisps of smoke escaping from the chimney. Sadly, the old, grey car parked in my driveway in no way resembles the ubiquitous sleigh in those wintry illustrations.

Statistically, this weather system produced the storm of the century for the region. The Charlotte area—which averages about one snowstorm a year, and that of only a few inches—had not received this much snow at once since 1902. In this metropolitan area of more than a million people, a frozen deluge like this one brings everything to a slippery halt, since the city owns only two-dozen trucks that can be used for salting and plowing the roads. According to the city fathers (and mothers), its money is better spent on building an arena for billionaire Robert "Bobcat" Johnson and implementing an unnecessary light-rail system. No amount of money is too much to spend to make Charlotte a "World-Class City"! Meanwhile, they warn that our dire financial circumstances warrant future tax increases.

Children [love](#) days like this. For starters, they are out of school, even my home-schooled kids. There is no sense making them slog away at the books when all their neighborhood friends are out sledding (down my driveway, of course), throwing snowballs at each other (from behind their newly constructed "forts"), eating snow (either inadvertently from a snowball in the face or deliberately), carving snow angels (and—mothers love this—getting soaking wet in the process), and building snow men (and women). On days like these, our clothes dryer gets a good workout, as each kid comes in at least twice to disrobe, go to the bathroom, grab a snack, and don a new set of warm clothes for the next go-round. In the meantime, Mom loads the dryer to be prepared for their inevitable return to repeat the process.

Dogs enjoy days like this too—at least my dog, Sydney, does. She is a black Labrador Retriever-Border Collie mix, but her genes seem heavy on the Lab part. In the snow, stark black against the glistening white, she is in her element (Labrador Retrievers were developed in Newfoundland). Even though the snow had piled higher than her back, she was game, bounding over the drifts as a dolphin hurdles the waves. She ate the snow just as much as the boys did, and then she was back to racing among them and trying her best to involve herself in their games.

Around here, though, the fun of a snowstorm is over all too quickly. The temperatures rarely remain cold enough for the snow to linger very long. Two days, maybe three, and the snow has melted, making the ground sodden and in some places muddy. The pristine glitter and excitement of freshly fallen snow give way to a big, wet mess.

Certainly, the city cannot remain under the spell of a rare snowfall for more than a day or so. Parents have to get back to the old grind, businesses need to make their profits, and government must return to spending its citizens' money profligately. The supermarkets need to restock their bread and milk, and the hardware stores must reorder batteries, snow shovels, and space heaters. And the snowplow drivers, electrical linemen, and emergency workers need a little time off—not to mention the intrepid meteorologists.

I have learned one lesson from this massive, once-in-a-century storm: As technologically advanced as we are, as much as we claim to have conquered

nature, it is an empty boast. The forces involved in something this huge are far beyond mankind's ability to influence, much less control. This storm should give even the environmentalists pause in their wrong-headed push to convince us that man has caused global warming.

It reminds me of what [God](#) said to Job to cut him down to size: ""Have you entered the treasury of snow, or have you seen the treasury of hail, which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?" ([Job 38: 22-23](#)). Or, what David said to God, "What is man that You are mindful of him? And the son of man that You visit him?" ([Psalm 8:4](#)). We are so puny, and if it takes the storm of the century to make this point, then it is a good thing. Fun too.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

We must not have a one-dimensional perspective of God, for there are multi-faceted aspects of His personality and His vast works. Our puny minds can only grasp a tiny sliver of what God really is. Far less than a toddler to an adult is our understanding compared to God's. As a meticulous micro-manager of His universe, calling every star by name, numbering every sparrow and every hair upon our head, God is active in every aspect of creation, including scrutinizing every detail of our lives. We desperately need to bring to our lives a sense of awe of the Creator, coupled with a sense of our own humility—grateful for His creative work in us, transforming us from maggots to members of His family.

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