Hurricane People and Storm Shelters

While churning away on the eliptical Saturday at Planet Fitness, I saw the very beginning of Sandra Bullock movie called “The Proposal.” As the movie opens, a busy office is on high alert because their oppressive, driven boss is walking through the door. ***“It’s Here!”*** they message each other in the on their bulky 2008 computers. (See clip below)

Most of us at one time or another have been associated with a person that causes pandemonium upon their arrival. These are ***the hurricane people***. If you are in ministry, politics or involved in any aspect of a school system, you’ve definitely been there and know them by name. Here are a few real life examples:

Many years ago a pastor, dissatisfied with the choir’s performance walked up to the podium to preach and said, “Well that was a little sub par. Choir stand to your feet. Let’s show them how it’s done.” Then he turned around and conducted the choir HIMSELF as they re-sang the song. Can you imagine the humiliation of the minister of music? You’d think that the pastor would be reprimanded, but he was a gifted speaker and the band played on.

In an office, long, long ago, there was a department director of a ministry who would habitually pilfer through the refrigerator and eat other people’s lunches. B*elieve me, I’m not making this up.* An administrative lady caught him eating her lunch and she said, “You owe me five dollars.” His face turn red as he wiped his mouth after finishing her chicken salad in the Tupperware bowl.

“What?” He barked.

“I said, you owe me five dollars because now I’m going to have to buy my lunch.”

“Why do I have to buy your lunch?” He said acting like he didn’t understand.

“Because you just ate mine. It has my name on it.”

“Do you know who I *am*?”

But the administrative assistant held her ground. “Of course I know who you are. I’ve worked here for years!”

Finally he pulled a five dollar bill out of his wallet, wadded it up and threw it at her!

These are the hurricanes.

A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.
Proverbs 29:11

A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.
Proverbs 18:2

Hurricanes are often gifted, brutal narcissists. They get the work done but have blind spots regarding work relationships, especially regarding subordinates. A friend of mine who was a media minister was ordered to fire up the studio cameras for a pastor who was going to be on television. His assistant rolled in several sport coats, and despite my friend having a load of *real* work to do, he asked him to let him see himself on the monitor with each coat on, one by one, in order to select the one that made him look the best. The process lasted for two hours.

One of my most frequent prayers is simply, Lord, please shelter me from the hurricanes in my life, and help me to ***never*** be one.

There are hurricane people and then there are ***storm shelter people.*** These are the safe people who you go to, when life is brutal. You know you will be refreshed, restored, and replenished by them. You won't get judgment.

I want to be like the man of Isaiah 32:2:

"A man will be as a hiding place from the wind,
And a cover from the tempest,
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

Oh, if I could be that man for everyone around me! A place to hide in the path of the storm…

Storm Shelters include Barnabas, Jonathan, and John. They don't have to be the lead guy. They are fierce in loyalty and love.

Storm Shelter People have some common characteristics:

- They keep secrets. We all need people we can tell our secrets to. They make us whole. Storm Shelter people keep their word and honor your secrets like a sacred trust.
- They are ruthlessly in your court no matter what. They refuse to walk away when everybody else does.
- Storm Shelter people are truth tellers and yet what they speak is always infused with love and commitment.
- Storm shelter people never stop you mid sentence with "Enough about you, lets talk about me for a minute" or with a behavior that communicates that phrase. Their nature is listening actively and there's healing in their silence.

I really want to be a storm shelter to my friends. I want to be a person of the highest integrity and devotion to the people in my tribe. There have been days when I have failed.

But I believe I’m getting better at it. God is reinforcing my walls and building my fortifications.

More than being known or admired, I hope I’ll be a shelter to people because there have been so many *storm shelter people* who have saved my life when the weather radar is swirling in red.