

32963 Faith Column for 11-3-11
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We're Not Here Anymore

There's an old story about a couple who lived on a small houseboat moored in a snug port somewhere off the ocean. One night while they slept peacefully, the winds from a storm began to toss their little vessel. Their lines broke and their boat drifted far away from shore. When the husband woke in the morning, he rubbed his eyes, stretched his legs, and took the stairway up to the deck, discovering their dilemma. He called down to his wife, "Honey, come quickly! We're not here anymore!"

Have you ever felt surprised to find yourself somewhere you never planned to be? It can happen to us all. Perhaps we've failed to anticipate approaching strong winds because we, too, have slept through the warning signals. And when we wake to the reality, we've already been driven from our customary places of comfort and security. We're just not here anymore. And that is disorienting.

But maybe being blown off course isn't all bad. As Isaac Newton in his first law of motion notes: everything continues in a state of rest until compelled to change by forces impressed upon it. How many of us would remain comfortably in our ruts without a little external force to push us forward? It is, after all, quite easy to adopt some life pattern and then be fairly unreflective about the choices we've made and their ultimate result for our lives. But when we've been dislodged from familiar surroundings, when our old expectations aren't being realized, when our usual practices aren't yielding the same results, when the doors that readily swung open for us have been locked shut, then maybe we'll find ourselves ready, for the first time in a long time, to try a new thing. And that, to our surprise, may be the best thing that ever happened to us.

When we feel compelled to change by forces impressed upon us, perhaps we are actually being offered a chance to consider whether we're ready to re-channel our drive, our energy, and our attention toward the attainment of a new goal, one more suitable or more worthy of our lives' investment. If you've veered away from your typical moorings and need to chart a new course, then a great opportunity lies ahead.

Of course striking off in a new direction is not easy, but the results may be extraordinary for your life. Consider that people of faith throughout the millennia have acknowledged the sometimes uncomfortable privilege of venturing off on a new mission through unfamiliar territory. Abraham heard God say: "Go to the land I will show you." And Abraham went. Moses heard God say: "I will send you to bring my people out of Egypt." And Moses went. Jesus said to disciple after disciple: "Follow me." And across the ages many have gotten up, leaving all behind, and followed.

It only stands to reason, really, that the sheer immense power of God's love and grace is unlikely to leave us floating around indefinitely in the same old place. Where might the winds of grace be blowing you? We hope you'll find a brisk breeze urging you out of complacency and encouraging you toward a new place – where you're not "here" anymore!