



Remembered Promises

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On September 20, 2017 my stepfather was celebrating one of those big-deal birthdays that further cemented his ability to qualify as a classic. But I don't remember his birthday. I also don't remember much about my brother's birthday the day prior. I wish that was the memory that I remember. Ojalai!

Instead, I remember preparing for yet another hurricane to make land in the U.S. I remember waiting with bated breath to hear if the winds had found land, waiting to hear if what was being hailed as potentially the worse hurricane season in recorded history would affect anyone I knew. I remember waking up the morning of the 20th with a prayer of flustered remembrance. "God, you promised. You promised that you would not wipe us out by water. You promised. You promised that the rainbow would serve as a reminder of that promise. You promised." And so I waited.

We waited for our families in Borinquen to call and say they were safe. We waited for the darkened outline of Puerto Rico as seen from the night skies to be relit with electricity for the island's 3.3 million inhabitants. We waited for packages that were sent via U.S. Postal Services to arrive on American (U.S.) soil. We waited for medicines to reach those most unable to live without medical attention. We waited for pictures of rainbows hovering over that little island to appear on our timelines. We waited for the sounds of the coqui to be heard once more.

We waited as days became weeks, and weeks became months, and months became a little under a year when, as of August 14 2018 according to the Puerto Rican Power Authority, full services were finally restored to the island. And we hear stories of friends and family members who still are without stable power almost a year after Hurricane Maria first hit. Who talk of leaving or have already left the island, not because they see no hope of a future, but because they have children who have lost a full year of school and they pray and strive forward in order that there will be an educated future.

And so, in the weeks leading up to the one year anniversary of Hurricane Maria, as some still wait to be counted in the numbers of those whose lives were lost to the hurricane, I am reminded of the words of Luis Paz, an evangelist and doctor who a week after Maria remained grateful: "We thank

the Lord no matter what. The Lord is not good when Irma started to go out and not good [when Maria hit]. The Lord is good all the time.”

God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good. Even in the midst of waiting for news. Even as the Atlantic Hurricane Season begins heating up once more. We pray. We wait. We remember. We prepare. We grieve.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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