

# THE HOURGLASS IS TICKING

BY LE-ANNE ROPER



The feel of white sands beneath my feet, the gentle wind whispering sweet nothings and caressing my face, while the waves hum up and down to their own beat. There are moments in life that make me appreciate the beauty of my island home, Jamaica; these are but a few. But there comes a moment in time when the sand is loosened and lost as the waves wash the shore with overwhelming strength, and winds howl and hurry with destructive force. Our lives and that which supports us hang in the balance. Ironically, what makes my island what it is also makes it vulnerable. The surrounding sea – so important to our identity – carries dormant threats. From June to November each year, we wait with bated breaths as system after system develops in the Atlantic Ocean. Will this be the year a hurricane strikes? Can we prepare enough? Will we weather the storm? Perhaps the most heart-breaking truth we face is the future of more ferocious storms. Our human habits have changed Earth's atmosphere by adding gases that trap heat beyond what is natural. The warmer planet is unbalanced and climate change results. The evidence: rain is less predictable, sea levels are rising and stronger storms are becoming more frequent, among others. Our environment, our economy and our way of life is now trying to adjust to these changes, but the challenges sometimes appear insurmountable. The climatic changes have taken place much more rapidly than our ability to adapt to them. An unpredictable yet more dangerous threat lies in wait. And yet, we dare to hope. We choose to believe that those

who can significantly lower heat-trapping gases will do so before the point of no return. We hope that empathy will evoke action to help the vulnerable. And we hope that people will be resilient, that their spirits will remain undaunted, and that they can build a better, brighter future. But hope alone is not enough. As faith without works is dead (James 2:26b), so is hope without action. Wishing and praying that we overcome the difficulties ahead must accompany the bold steps required to make resilience a reality. But we can't do it alone. The world at large must become a part of the solution, where together, we ACT – accept responsibility, change the status quo and tackle the issues head-on. Whether literally or figuratively, not everyone may have the privilege of feeling the white sands beneath their feet, but everyone should care that beaches can feed families and sustain nations. To truly love our neighbours near and far, we must accept responsibility to care for those who stand to lose everything. Only then will our hearts break for those who are in need. And seeing our role as part of the solution will drive us to change the status quo. Jamaica and other countries in the Caribbean have tale upon tale of loss and devastation. Many lives have been lost; homes have been destroyed; jobs have disappeared and income has dwindled. The status quo is not one we can be comfortable with; we must see the need for change. More than that, we ought to tackle the issues head-on by learning what we can, doing what we must and becoming champions for change. How wonderful to think that together, our homes, communities, schools, workplaces, churches and nations can stand the tests of time! And what blessings await those who extend grace and gratitude to shore up the sands of the vulnerable! The hour glass is ticking away; my island's beaches are the sand running out. Yet, I hold on to hope that before our Father returns, we can ACT to save lives and show love like never before, not just in Jamaica but all other countries that face a similar fate. Because otherwise...



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