

Braving the Storm



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Illustrated by
Paul Cunningham



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*To my mom and dad,
with love and gratitude.*

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Chapter One



An Idea That Works

This adventure happened on a hot Saturday in June. The day started off great. Then it got terrible. Then it got great again.

Right after breakfast, I went with my dad to his workshop. I was so excited. His workshop is where he makes toys and furniture out of wood, which is his job. I had been asking him for a month to teach me what he does. And he had promised that today we would start.

The workshop has a lot of light because of the big windows. And there's always the smell

of fresh wood shavings. I like sweeping them up and putting them in the big barrel.

“What are we going to make, Dad?” I asked as we put on the denim coveralls. (Mom says they’re aprons, but Dad calls them coveralls.)

“Well, we might not get as far as making things today, Caleb. There’s a lot of basic stuff to learn before you start handling the saw and cutting the wood.”

“Yeah, but I learn fast, right, Dad?”

“We’ll see how far we get.”

I should have realized when he said this that we weren’t going to get very far at all. Dad wanted to go through all these rules about safety and then just sit there and talk about the wood and look at it. I wanted to cut it or at least sand it. I wanted to make something!

Anyway, that’s when the day became terrible. I said I was bored. And then Dad said maybe I was too young to learn woodworking. So I got mad and left.

It was very hot outside, but I didn’t want to go into the house. My mom would ask why I was done so soon. So I walked over to our

weeping willow tree, thinking I could sit in the shade and hide for a while.

My older sister Hannah was there already, reading. She's almost eleven and always has her nose in a book. She didn't even look up when I pushed aside the hanging branches and sat down next to her.

"Hi, Hannah," I said.

"Hi," she replied, still not looking up.

"Want to do something?"

"No, I want to read my book," she said.

"Come on, Hannah. Let's do something fun."

"I want to read, Caleb. Why don't you do something with Noah?"

Noah is my six-year-old brother.

"Noah can come, too," I said. "In fact, he has to. We need him, to do what I'm planning."

Now Hannah looked up.

"What do you mean?" she asked. "What are you planning?"

"I want to go *there* again, Hannah."

"Go where?"

“*You* know,” I said. “Go back in time, to the time of Jesus.”

Now you may think that was a funny thing for me to say, but it actually had happened before. Hannah, Noah, and I were riding our bikes down the hill together and had found ourselves in another place and time.

It had been so much fun, and I really, *really* wanted it to happen again.

Hannah sighed and rolled her eyes.

“Caleb, listen to me. There’s no way for us to ‘go there.’ There’s no way to *make* it happen. It just happened before. It may or may not happen again.”

But I was certain she was wrong. I was sure we could do it again if we only figured out what we did that made it happen before.

The one thing we did agree on was that we couldn’t do exactly what we had done the first time. We had already tried riding our bikes down the hill again. It didn’t work.

“There must be some way to figure it out!” I said.

“There *isn’t*, Caleb,” she said. “We just have to wait to see if it happens.”

“I have an idea,” I said, getting up. “I’m going to get Noah so we can try it out.”

“No more trying things out,” said Hannah. “I told you it won’t work!”

Noah came out the back door at that moment.

“Noah, come over here!” I called.

When he had arrived, I said, “Just listen. I’ve been thinking. When it happened before, the three of us were together, riding our bikes down the hill.”

“We already tried that!” said Hannah. “How many times did we ride down that stupid hill! You wanted to try it at different times of the day, different days of the week. It didn’t work!”

“But don’t you see? That was because it can’t work exactly the same way twice.” I took a breath. “I think what made it work was that we were all together, moving in a downward motion. Let’s climb up on that branch and jump down together.”

“Yeah, let’s try it!” said Noah. He looked as excited as I felt.

“No, you guys! I am going to sit here and read. I am not climbing up the tree. I’m too hot, and it *won’t* work,” said Hannah.

“Please?” I asked.

“No, try it yourselves!”

“No, Hannah, it has to be all three of us. I’m sure of that,” I said.

“Please!” said Noah with his eyes wide and pleading. “I want to go back there and see Jesus!”

“Oh, all *right*,” said Hannah, “but it’s not going to work.”

She got up with a groan, and we climbed up into the old willow. The first branch is low, so even Noah could get up on it.

“Okay, now!” I yelled, and we all jumped together. We fell in slow motion, as if the air had become as thick as water, and landed with a gentle thud. I looked down at my tan-colored tunic.

“Yes!” I cried. “It worked!”

