

# America 'Overdue' for Catastrophic Earthquake

Imagine being forced to stay inside from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. while living without electricity. That's the plight of millions in Puerto Rico today. Meanwhile, rescuers are digging through mountains of debris this morning searching for signs of life following Tuesday's earthquake that killed at least 282 people.

People in Texas and Florida are still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Maria or another hurricane could strike the US again. And seismologists are warning today that we are "overdue" for a catastrophic earthquake.

When disasters strike, it's human nature to ask why God allowed them and to wonder how he is relevant to our suffering. We know that some suffering results from misused freedom (Gen. 3:17-19) and that natural disasters are a consequence of the fall (Rom. 8:22). We know that future good can come from present pain (Rom. 8:18).

But there's another biblical fact worth remembering today: God hurts as we hurt. Why should we believe that this is true?

**One:** His revelation promises his compassion.

Our Lord assures us, "When you pass through waters, I will be with you" (Isa. 43:2). Our Father is all-knowing (Heb. 4:13), so he knows about our pain. And "God is love" (1 John 4:8b), so he hurts as we hurt.

**Two:** His relationship with us requires his compassion.

If Jesus is your Lord, you are the child of God (1 John 3:1). Now the Lord of the universe feels for you what parents feel

for their children. When my older son went through cancer, and my younger son broke his leg playing basketball, I could not feel their physical pain as they did, but I felt a grief for their suffering that was deeper than any pain I have ever experienced. Every parent knows what I mean.

But the Spirit of God actually indwells our bodies (1 Cor. 3:16), meaning that our Father feels our physical pain as he grieves for our suffering. In this sense, he hurts even more than we do.

What does his presence in our pain mean for us today?

**One:** We are never alone.

Pain is the great isolator. People tell us, "I know how you feel," but they don't because they can't. But God can and does. No matter how lonely we feel, we are not alone.

**Two:** We always have what we need.

Our Father promises to give us whatever we need to withstand the trials we face (1 Cor. 10:13). His omnipotence is as near as your next prayer.

Now we have a choice. We can reject God's help because our finite, fallen minds do not understand his omniscient, sovereign ways. Or we can ask him for his empowering strength.

The only person who can keep you from experiencing the power and compassion of God is you.