

Hearing God's Voice in the Midst of the Storm

As I write these words from the safety of my home, with the weather outside beautiful and calm, people in other parts of America (and the Caribbean) are suffering terrible upheaval. Lives have been lost. Families have been torn apart. Houses have been destroyed. Whole islands have been devastated.

So, I do not write this lightly. In fact, I think of the famous dictum of Rabbi Irving Greenberg when talking about the Holocaust. "No statement," he said, "theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of burning children." (He was referring, of course, to Jewish children who were thrown into the fire by the Nazis.)

In that same spirit (and without intending in any way to compare the Holocaust to today's natural disasters), we should make no statement, theological or otherwise, about Hurricane Harvey and Irma (along with the fires in the west) that could not be made in the presence of families who have lost loved ones (or, lost everything else).

As for the cause of these storms, I will leave that to others to decide. Are these satanic attacks? Divine judgments? Completely natural occurrences? The results of global warming? Something else? Again, that is for others to say.

What I have sensed as I have prayed for the victims and prayed for the nation is a very simple message, one that I heard whispered rather than shouted. And it was not an angry, thundering message but rather one of loving appeal from the heavenly Father.

Do I believe that one day God will judge the whole world? Certainly.

Do I believe that His wrath will be poured on a rebellious creation? Without a doubt.

Do I believe that His voice will thunder with such intensity that the very earth will shake? Yes, I honestly do.

And yet it is not the voice of thunder or anger or wrath that I hear right now.

Instead, it is the still small voice that is heard in the midst of the fire, wind, and storm (see 1 Kings 19).

It is the voice that is heard as a toddler clings to her dead mother in the flood-ravaged streets of Houston.

It is the voice that is heard as a family desperately searches for a missing loved one in another city nearby.

It is the voice that is heard as a couple rides a boat through a flattened neighborhood in Barbuda.

It is the voice that is heard as a million people pack their cars in Florida and flee for their lives.

It is the voice that is heard as the proud human race cowers in terror in the face of a storm of monstrous proportions, as the work of our hands—the work of decades and even centuries—is leveled by wind and rain.

It is the voice of the Creator speaking to His creation.

It is the voice of the Father speaking to His children.

It is the voice of the Lord that says, “America, you need Me!”

It is the voice of appeal, the voice of mercy, the voice of the Healer ready to mend and restore.

You might say, “But how can that be? Surely God is not passive in the world. Surely He had power to stop the storms. Some would even say He sends the storms.”

Again, it is for others to decide what is happening behind the scenes and how God governs His world (and again, let it be done with caution; see Deut. 29:29).

Yet even those who believe that the Lord is sending these disasters as judgment on America must do as Job did many centuries ago. He was convinced that God was responsible for his terrible suffering, yet He knew his only hope was in God. So what did he do? In the words of a Jewish philosopher, he fled from God to God. That was his only choice.

But, to repeat. I am not saying that these hurricanes and fires have been sent by God as judgment. That is for Him to know and make known.

What I'm saying is that these storms remind us of our frailty, of our weakness, of our helplessness, of our need. What I'm saying is that they remind us that we are the creation, not the Creator, and our help is found in Him alone.

We can send satellites to Mars and build enough nuclear weapons to blow up the earth. And we can design robots and discover the meaning of DNA. Yet we cannot stop the wind and the rain and the fire. We cower before Mother Nature, recognizing our fate is not in our hands.

Right now, towns and cities in our nation are completely overwhelmed, and the rebuilding process will take many years. But that is also a picture of our spiritual state. We are torn apart, divided and devastated, and the time for rebuilding must begin now. Yet we can only rebuild with the help of our Maker.

It is His voice that I hear again, saying, "America, you need Me!"

If we seek Him, He will be found.

When I began to write *Saving a Sick America* last year, I was

overwhelmed with just how sick we were. But the more I wrote, the more I felt hope rising out of the despair.

America can be saved.