

Hurricane Irma: A Message From God?

As Houston dries out and another hurricane is barreling its way toward the U.S., I have heard many people ask: Is God trying to tell us something? I believe the answer to that question is yes. Absolutely. He is trying to tell us something! In fact, He is trying to tell us many things:

1. **Everything is broken.** When sin entered creation through the willful decision of Adam and Eve, nothing escaped its effects. We often forget this. Original sin did not only influence humans. Everything in creation was affected; including nature itself. We should not presume that a natural disaster is a punishment from God, just as we should not presume that cancer is a punishment from God. Both are tragic implications of the fall of man. Not only that, but also, we have an adversary who uses everything possible to "... steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10).
2. **We need a Savior.** We need a Savior for eternity, and we need a Savior for now. The psalmist reminds us, "Do not abandon me, O Lord; O my God, do not be far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation" (Ps. 38:21-22). In the United States, it is often easy to live our lives as if we do not depend on God. We can forget how fragile our lives really are. Hurricane Harvey reminded all of us of our powerlessness. People responded in an outpouring of prayer. The tragedy took our attention off bitter arguments to focus instead on caring for others, and on our need for God.
3. **We must pray.** When the disciples' boat was about to sink in a fierce storm, they cried out, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" (Matt. 8:25). Jesus answered this prayer of desperation by calming the wind and the waves.

The disciples responded with an incredible affirmation of faith: “‘What kind of Man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him!’” (Matt. 8:27). Although we cannot control the storms of life, we do not have to sit idly by and watch the destruction occur. God has given us tools of prayer and intercession. Powerless to personally affect the outcome of our circumstances, we cry out to God. We would not passively watch cancer ravage one of our loved ones; no, we pray. We pray for their health and their strength. We pray with desperation and passion. We pray, believing in the power of God and asking Him to act. Neither should we sit idly by and watch Hurricane Irma wreak destruction. We should cry out to God to save us, believing in His power and asking Him to act.

4. **God is merciful.** Some have said that there is no coincidence in these two massive storms hitting the U.S., that we are being punished for national sins. Others say that God’s hand of protection has been removed because our nation has not walked in His ways. As a nation, we have legally allowed 60,000,000 babies to be murdered. We have legally redefined marriage, a covenant created by God. We are even redefining male and female. As tragic as Harvey was and Irma may be, why don’t we have more natural disasters? We certainly deserve them. (“And in anger and wrath I will take vengeance on the nations that have not listened” [Mic. 5:15]). But God is merciful: “He does not want any to perish, but all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

Is God saying something to us in the storm? Absolutely! Everything is broken, we need a Savior, we must pray and God is merciful.

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