

Michael Brown: Look Away from the Chaos and Lift Up Your Eyes

If you're looking for cutting-edge political analysis, this is not the article for you. If you're looking for the latest insights on the presidential elections, you're in the wrong place.

But if you're looking for spiritual wisdom and encouragement, if you want to be uplifted and inspired, then keep reading. This article is for you.

The fact is: 2020 has been an exhausting year.

We were already worn out as a country before COVID-19.

The constant political tension, culminating in the impeachment hearings, was wearying.

The continual flood of sensational news, coming from all sides, was wearying.

The deepening divisions in our society, revealing massive fissures ready to split, were wearying.

Then we got hit by the virus. (In case you missed it, it's still here.)

Then we had the lockdown.

Then George Floyd was killed.

Then the protests. And the riots. And the looting. And the vandalism. And the shootings.

One day Minneapolis was in flames. Then Kenosha. Then Louisville.

One day it's masked rioters marching into our suburbs. The next day, we can't leave our houses without a mask. (If your computer or phone have facial recognition, you have to take down your mask just to identify yourself to your own gadgets.)

As for our normal distractions, like going out to eat or watching sports, most of them disappeared for months on end as well. And the end is not yet in sight.

What if there is a vaccine? Should we take it? Will it be safe? Or is it part of some government ploy to monitor our lives? Or is this just Big Pharma's way of making more money?

Is there anyone we can trust? The medical profession? The FBI? The media? Spiritual leaders?

Yes, this is America in 2020, and frankly, it is exhausting.

Added to all this is the ticking time bomb of the November 3 elections. The first Trump-Biden debate underscored the chaotic nature of the hour, and there is no guarantee that on November 4 anything will be settled.

Even when the votes are finally counted, will either side concede with grace? Will multiplied tens of millions of Americans (again, on either side) accept the results and move on?

You might say to me, "I thought you were going to encourage and uplift me! I'm feeling much worse now than when I started this column. Thanks for nothing!"

Well, here comes the encouragement in just four short words: *lift up your eyes*.

Lift up your eyes and look to the one who never changes and is never shaken or moved.

Lift up your eyes and look to the one who is perfect light, without any darkness at all.

Lift up your eyes and look to the one who sits enthroned in heaven, ruling and reigning over all creation.

Lift up your eyes and look to the one who cares so deeply for you that He sent His one and only Son into the world to die so that you and I could live forever.

Look away from the chaos and pain of the moment. Look away from the confusion and despair of the hour. Look away from the division and dissension of this age. And look up.

Look up and worship the King.

Look up and worship the one who is love personified.

Look up to the Savior and Redeemer.

Then, rather than complaining or gossiping or spouting off, begin to worship.

If you need some words to say, try these, saying them out loud if you can:

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalm 103:1–5)

Or maybe these: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” (Revelation 5:12; try repeating this a few more times!)

You see, the Bible recognizes that many times, we will feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life, be they financial or emotional or physical or spiritual or relational. That’s why there are so many prayers of desperation found in books like

the Psalms, with words like these: “From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” (Psalm 61:2)

That “rock” is the Lord Himself, and when we stand firm on His foundation, we will not be moved. Our perspective will dramatically change.

That’s why the psalmist also wrote these words: “*I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.*” (Psalm 121:1-8)

So, look away from the craziness of 2020, lift up your eyes, and begin to worship.

Your heart will be lightened. Your resolve will be strengthened. Your spirit will be encouraged. Your courage will be renewed, and rather than looking for a way to escape, you’ll be looking for a way to serve and love others.

Lift up your eyes! {eo}