

Why Millennials Are Turned Off by All This End-Time Talk

It never fails: If the office goes quiet for more than five minutes, I start to look around. If everyone's missing, I have a slow sense of panic that creeps along my spine.

"The Rapture," I think to myself. *"It's happened. Uh oh."* And then my brain proceeds to remember every terrifying moment of the 40 Kids Left Behind books I read growing up.

As a Christian, Pentecostal millennial, I feel like I am floating between two worlds: One world begs me to look at what's going on in current events—the Iran Deal, ISIS, earthquakes, gay marriage—and take an attitude of godly fear as I steel myself for what's ahead.

The other world takes those same events and begs for an intrinsic analysis: How does the Iran Deal affect my politics and voting choices? Should I send money to help relief work in Nepal? How can I let my gay friends know that I don't hate them for their choices but want to show them the love of God?

It's hard to balance both. On the one hand, I look at the earth literally trembling and think to myself, *"Well, won't be long now!"*

But on the other hand, I remind myself that persecution and natural disasters have happened for millennia, and we're just more aware now because of the advent of the Internet and social media.

Imagine being alive during the Roman reign, Spanish Inquisition, Bloody Mary, slavery, any of the World Wars—I'm pretty sure those felt like the end of the world to Christians then.

Yet, we remain. We move on as countries, as people. We build our families and live our lives.

However, I'm from a generation that's looking to our future, and days to come can be intimidating when the headlines are full of despair. The more stories I read about the gut-wrenching attacks against Saeed Abedini, unborn children, Coptic Christians or even U.S. citizens who didn't want to bake cakes for someone they didn't agree with, the more I wonder just how close we are to Christ's return.

Tack those observations on to the blood moon and Shemitah patterns, and my head starts to spin.

Whether or not we are in the end of times, what I do know is bemoaning the state of affairs without an appeal to Heaven with a sense of hope will do nothing to improve our condition.

When we talk about end times, I think there's a sense of fear mongering that exists in the form of warnings. Someone close to me once confessed she grew up believing she would never get married, have children or live to even to her 20th birthday because the Antichrist was coming.

Trust me when I say this friend is alive and kicking, well past those milestones and looking forward to many more. But until she conquered her fear and realized that Christ is still on the throne, she couldn't live the life He planned for her.

When we live in a state of fear about the future, we hinder ourselves from celebrating what Christ can do in the now and how we can affect the future for His glory.

Are we so caught up in warning about the downfall of the American church and the eventual return of Jesus that we forget to serve the poor, to encourage one another, to spend time just loving on the Holy Spirit? The early church was founded on these attributes, and it transformed the world and enabled the gospel to spread further than anyone could

imagine!

The beautiful thing about the millennial generation is our tenacity, our desire to work to make the community we live in better. We aren't looking at the coming days with a sense of trepidation or fatalism about the downfall of America.

Rather, we're looking for answers to reconstruct the building blocks of society. Some may call us spoiled, ungrateful, addicted and selfish. But those "weaknesses" can also be strengths, because we've seen the good and want to improve upon it.

We don't settle for tradition because someone told us to. Instead, we're searching for answers, and that includes diving into the Bible to fill that God-shaped hole in our lives.

When Christian headlines scream about the negative, we tune that out because it doesn't enhance the world we live in. Christians have an incredible opportunity to walk out their lives like Christ did. Yes, Christ got angry, but He sought justice in His indignation. We need older generations of Christians to show us how to do this.

If we are in the end times, I think I would rather have a mentor guiding me to show others how they can be one with Christ rather than someone who goes, "There were signs! *Look at the signs!*"

Let's take those signs and turn them into practical steps, sharing the gospel so that none shall perish, as is God's wish in 2 Peter 3:9.

If all millennials hear about the future of the church is gloom and doom that's decaying because of society, how can we expected to join the cause? Just like a flower will not grow if you yell and stomp on it, saying, "Look at all these thorns, you won't be able to survive these attacks," you can't tell this generation of believers that we won't survive what's

to come.

In such a time as this, I feel called to be a peacemaker. I want to be known by my fruit—by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control—not by my fear.

The first thing a messenger of the Lord will tell those he visits is “Fear not.” In all this talk of the end times, I feel like we’ve forgotten that element, and in doing so, we are scaring off believers who want the simplicity of the gospel: For God so loved the world that He sent His only Son.

In such a time as this, it is vital that we seek first the kingdom of God, as the Bible says, and His righteousness. Then, and only then, will our clarity come. {eoa}