

Creation is Groaning

If you were anywhere near a computer or television on Friday, you witnessed one of the most horrifying natural disasters in history. The 8.9 earthquake and subsequent tsunami off the coast of Japan unleashed destruction of epic proportions. The dramatic reports continue to flood in as new pictures and video are posted. My heart breaks each time I hear about it. It makes me wonder what God is doing in all of these natural disasters.

I came across this site documenting the Top 5 Natural Disasters of the Decade. It's a few years old so it didn't even include the earthquake in Haiti. The activity on the planet is increasing and is getting worse. I remember watching the movie 2012 and thinking how ridiculously over the top it was. As I watched the video of the flood waters crashing into Japan, the movie came to my mind and suddenly didn't seem so silly.

I was raised to believe that the ultimate goal for a Christian was to get to heaven. The most important thing you could do on earth was to get saved.

Then you were responsible for telling others to get saved. All for the purpose of getting to heaven. The world was getting worse and worse, but it didn't matter because we were getting out of Dodge soon.

In recent years, my focus has shifted from longing to go to heaven to longing to see heaven come to earth. I'm beginning to understand why Jesus told us to pray "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Jesus told us to pray for heaven to come to earth, not for us to go to heaven.

We have an inherent longing in our hearts for heaven. We have a longing for His kingdom to come. However that desire is not

only in us, it's in all of creation. Paul says in Romans that "the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth" (Romans 8:22). We get this picture of the earth giving birth to a longing. These natural disasters can be related to the pains of childbirth. The earth is groaning, but for what?

"that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21).

Paul says that creation was subjected to futility (Rom 8:20). That word can also be translated: "what is devoid of truth and appropriateness, perverseness, depravity." The earth is longing for truth. That truth will be fulfilled when the sons of God are revealed.

The reason I beat the drum of identity and sonship is bigger than just self-confidence. It's bigger than just overcoming sin and living an exceptional life. Those things are great, but there is so much more purpose in God's desire for us to become his sons and daughters.

All of creation is waiting for the sons and daughters to be revealed. We're in the midst of watching the earth literally groan. Natural disasters are increasing. Depravity and perverseness are abounding in our societies. As all of this is happening, nature is eagerly longing for the glorious manifestation of the children of God because that's when it will be freed from the bondage of corruption.

As sons and daughters, we have the ability mandate to bring heaven to earth. Our destiny isn't to leave this earth to go sit on a cloud and play the harp. Heaven is going to be manifested right where we are. The prophet Isaiah prophesied this long ago:

"See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind"

(Is. 65:17).

Revelation 21 talks about this new heaven and new earth as well. This is reality. If we are going to be part of this kingdom, we need to understand how to live as sons and daughters of the King. Creation is literally longing for this.

We are forerunners of the new heavens and new earth. We carry the kingdom inside of us. As we are in our schools, jobs and communities, we bring heaven to earth. People will begin to taste and see what heaven is like just by being around us. Jesus wouldn't have told us to pray that if He didn't know it was possible.

As the world witnesses the revealing of the children of God, its longing for truth will be fulfilled. Our response to these natural disasters is to bring heaven to earth. God wants us to carry His kingdom with us. The world will respond to the truth of those that live as sons and daughters of a greater kingdom. Even if they seem resistant, deep inside they long for it.

Realize that your relationship with Christ is so much more than just being happy or living a good life. It's bigger than going to church every Sunday and paying your tithes. All of the earth is crying out for your true identity to be revealed. There is no denying what we see in the world today. Natural disasters and the decline of society are its groans of pain. We are the answer to this longing for truth. We can hole ourselves up in a church or we can say to the world "Here We Are!"

Have you ever experienced a natural disaster?

You can find Tony online at .