

LESSONS IN TIMES OF DISASTER

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Natural disasters can happen at any time and place in this unpredictable and dangerous world. We experience hurricanes and floods in our part of the world, while others endure earthquakes, tsunamis, tornados, fires, and famine. Sadly, some disasters are man-made, like wars and economic collapses. What lessons should the faithful Christian learn from times of disaster?

- ❖ Disaster can strike at any time or place and can start in the smallest ways (the proverbial "finger in the dike"). We must remain alert and watchful at all times, physically and spiritually (Eph. 5:15-17). The Christian will appreciate the brevity of life much more than those who have hope only in this world (Jas. 4:13-15).
- ❖ All that we possess may be gone in a moment. Earthly things are uncertain, and the faithful Christian will not put his trust in such things, but use them to the glory of God (1 Tim. 6:17-19).
- ❖ Life is more precious than property. If a great disaster is predicted to come, the Christian will seek safety, and not foolishly risk his life for the sake of earthly things that can be replaced. The Hebrew Christians did not worry when their goods were plundered because they had better possessions waiting in heaven (Heb. 10:34). God teaches us to properly order our priorities so that we will not fall into the snares of evil or the dangers of life (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9).
- ❖ Only our relationship with God is everlasting. We can be separated from earthly things and relationships, but nothing on this earth can separate us from the "love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." In life or in death, we are "more than conquerors through him who loved us." (Rom. 8:37-39)
- ❖ Our attitude must be one that will accept the trials of life as we faithfully lean on God to care for our souls. Paul overcame despair and depression by learning to be content (sufficient, adequate, trusting) in any given situation, good or bad (Phil. 4:11-13). Paul had plenty of disastrous moments in his life (cf. 2 Cor. 11:24-28), yet he learned how to suffer with integrity and faith. It is easy to be content in good times, but we must be determined to learn how to suffer with patience in times of disaster, avoiding the temptation to sin with our mouth or commit acts unbecoming of a child of God.

Whatever may happen on this earth, eternal salvation is always available by grace through faith. Let us hear and obey the will of the Father, building our "house" on the rock of Christ and His word. We will be able to face the trials of life and death with trust and hope in our God who has preserved an eternal inheritance for us in heaven. In that heavenly home, we will endure no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain (Rev. 21:4). I know this will be true, for no disaster will ever take us or our eternal home away!