

Following the Lord during the Winds of Change, 9.28.08

Intro.

1. Thank you for your involvement in the recovery efforts. Don't wait to get involved, but look around for opportunities to serve. If you'd like to assist or need assistance please complete the forms. Come forward after the service if you'd like to talk to someone personally about your needs.
2. Last weeks message - Our response to Hurricane Ike
 - a. Let's have an attitude of gratitude. I witnessed community during my clean up - people visiting with each other & families made closer.
 - b. Let's demonstrate the Kingdom - James 1.26f
 - c. Let's live out the Great Commandment - James 2.8
3. I believe it's important to look for the Lord's activity especially during times of transition & change. We are in a time of change - community, financial markets, politically.
4. If we believe we're living in the end times change will only accelerate for both good & evil. Is.60 says it will be both a time of great darkness & light; Dan.11 speaks of the battle betw good & evil; Luke 21.25f; these are the birth pains of our Lord's return. It's important that we be at attention & ready for the Lord's movement during times like these.
5. As your pastor, I want you prepared, equipped & watchful. We need to be the ones who are at peace...like the men of Isachar who understand the times & know what to do...realize that global warming is in the Bible & is a sign of the Lord's return Rev.16.8f. If you aren't prepared, you will either grow terribly discouraged or worse, hostile towards God.
 - a. When God brought discipline against Israel & the other nations there weren't too many people that were excited about God. Most were either mad or depressed, but the saints who know their God stood strong.
6. I believe we as a nation are experiencing the discipline of the Lord - 2 Chron.7.13f. Why I believe this:
 - a. Prefer using the word discipline over judgment. Discipline is redemptive. It's corrective love that wants to bring out the best. God isn't looking for an opportunity to smash us, but rather he uses events & people to push us in the right direction.
 - b. God disciplines individuals - Heb.12
 - c. He disciplines churches - Rev.2-3
 - d. He will discipline the nations - Matt.25 & Zech.14

- e. He disciplined the nation of Israel – Matt.23 & 24
- f. He disciplined Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar & King Herod Agrippa (Acts 12)
- g. He disciplined other nations Ninevah, Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, & Moab.
- h. If we believe that God has blessed America, then we should believe that He has & will continue to discipline America.
 - i. Luke 12.48
 - ii. He will use nations & individuals worse than itself to bring the discipline.
 - iii. I don't believe He is behind evil events, but due to sin evil events happen to us, but He uses them in redemptive ways to bring us into a deeper relationship with Him.
 - iv. Ezek.33.10–11. God's heart is for our good. He doesn't have to prove a point.

We Must Repent – Luke 13.1–5

1. Article from The Facts
2. Jesus is always calling us from our sin to Himself. The first dimension of repentance is to turn away in our mind & actions from the lesser things of this life to His kingdom & purposes. We MUST confess and turn from personal and national sins. We must ask God to forgive and deliver us from these sins. John the Baptist in Matt.4
3. Repentance from our sins and ask God to change our minds. Repentance is a change of mind. If we change our mind, we can follow God during the winds of change.
 - a. Illustration of people not listening to Jeremiah the prophet who told them they would go into captivity. They needed to both turn from their sins and have a change of mind. They did neither, b/c they thought he was wrong & they went into captivity.
 - b. The reason Jesus says to be watchful of the signs of his return is b/c if we aren't then we will be caught completely off guard when those times draw near. We'll be like the passengers of the Titanic watching the icebergs get closer, but never having any concern until someone says put a life vest on b/c the ship is sinking.
 - c. God is on the move and we need to be advancing with him.
4. During this election year, we need to repent . Don't put your hope & faith in any political candidate, party or movement to solve the problems of this

nation. You will be sorely disappointed. Our only hope as a nation is Jesus. John McCain and Barak Obama will not change the moral and spiritual trajectory of this nation. Even if we had all the right people in office, all the right laws enacted it still wouldn't change the human heart. Please, get involved in the political process, but don't expect it to change the heart of this nation. Only Jesus can do that.

5. Christian, don't fool yourself into thinking we can take back America. "Taking back America" will not change the direction of this country unless there is a heart change. If we take it back & there's no heart change, it's like mopping up water while the faucet is still running.
6. Repent of our view of God and the American way of life. The god of America is nothing more than a bigger one of us, who is called upon to bless our way of life and is asked to keep anything away that might interfere with it. We want him to bless us w/o us turning from our sins. We want all his blessing and none of his discipline. The god of America is nothing more than a mascot who is supposed to protect our retirement accounts. God bless America, but don't hold us accountable for our sins.
 - a. We serve the wild, untameable and passionate God of the Scriptures who refuses to wear a collar. A God who loves us so deeply he sent the one He loves the most to save us. The god of the stars and stripes is not the same God who bore my scars and stripes.
 - b. For that God says this - Deut.11.26-28. 26 "Look, today I am giving you the choice between a blessing and a curse! 27 You will be blessed if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today. 28 But you will be cursed if you reject the commands of the LORD your God and turn away from him and worship gods you have not known before.
 - c. We must turn from our sins and have a change of mind.

Following the Lord during the winds of change, pt.2, 10.5.08

Introd.

- Review of last week's message
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What is the Lord saying:

2. I am with you & you can trust in me!

- He is with us! He is Emmanuel – God with us! He hasn't abandoned us as a nation, the body of Christ or individuals. He will never leave us or forsake us.
 - Heb.13.5 – It sounds like in order to rest in the truth that He will never leave nor forsake us that we must be free from the love of money. As long as you have your security in money rather than Christ, you won't be fully convinced that he will never leave you or forsake you.
 - Luke 16.13 – you can't have faith in them both. Faith is seen in focus and attention. Where is your attention? What is it that's stirring your heart with anxiety or hope? Is it Christ or money?
- God is always looking in our interest...He always wants what is good for us. The Ro. 8.28 promise. He will work everything together for good!
- Our problem is that we assume "good" means pleasant/easy. Good means what is best. And it may be very unpleasant journey to get to what is best for us as a nation.
 - The righteous & wicked suffer together. When God brought Judah into Babylonian captivity, the wicked political leaders, as well as the righteous citizens, such as Daniel were all hoarded up.
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- How many of you want to see this nation turn to the Lord and the Kingdom of God & all of its glory expressed in America? It is God's will that it happen. He wants to see our society totally transformed by the power of His Spirit.
- This thought ran across my mind: what if in order to societal transformation to happen it meant you lost all your retirement in the stock market? What if it meant that in order for America to turn to God the stock market had to crash?

- **It's the same proposition Jesus laid out to a young man – Mark 10.17–31. It's extremely difficult for the affluent to walk away from their wealth in order to receive the fullness of the Kingdom of God.**
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- Know that God is for us. He desires the best for us and like a loving Father he corrects us to keep us on the path of life.
 - Luke 12.⁵But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. ⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. ⁷Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.
 - God loves us too much to let us be consumed by our sins and controlled by Satan. **HE'S FIGHTING FOR US ALL THE WAY TO THE END. LIKE A FATHER WOULD FIGHT FOR ONE OF HIS CHILDREN CAUGHT IN A TERRIBLE ADDICTION. HE WANTS THE BEST FOR US!!!**
- Trust in the goodness & sovereignty of God – Scriptures
 - Psalm 46.1–3: ¹ God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,³ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.
 - Don't turn God into a whipping boy, but praise and thank Him for His generosity & provision. Some never think of all the blessings God provides, but only rail against what He has or hasn't done things they don't like.
- **He is good and is well able to protect us during times of hardship, trials, destruction & disorder.**
 - **Water in the Bible. We have seen the destructive power of water personally.**
 - **Water sometimes symbolize chaos, destruction, problems, persecution and instability.**
 - Gen.1.2 – before creation the world was chaotic...
 - Gen.6.5f, 7.4, 17, 24 – Noah lived in a time of turbulence
 - Ex.14.21–28 – the Jews encounter a huge obstacle and certain death
 - Josh.3.14–16: the Jews face a barrier betw them & the PL.

- Ps.107.23–31: the paralyzing power of water
- Jonah 1: the destruction of innocent sailors & Jonah
- Mk.4.35–40: the certain demise of the disciples
- Mk.6.45–52: the absolute exhaustion of the disciples.
- How did the Father either deal with the chaos or help his children deal with the water's of difficulty? In Gen.1 He brought order to them; In Gen.6, He provided protection, In Ex.14, he led on dry ground and destroyed their enemies; In Jos.3, he led into the PL; In Ps 107, he directed them into a safe harbor; In Jonah, he took care of the sailors & the prophet (the sailors had a better deal); In Mark 4, Jesus said "peace, be still"; In Mark 6, Jesus steps into the boat and everything & everyone calms down.
- Everything was out of control in these scenarios, but God brought peace, direction, hope, provision, and protection. He will do the same for us during these times of turbulence.
- Response - Mark 4 story. Our response while we're in the storm shouldn't be, "Jesus, don't you care we're going to drown?"(Mark 4.38), but rather, "I trust you! You will take care of me. I'm at peace. I think I'll take a nap with you!"
 - Psalm 29.10
- We serve a good God who loves his children and the nations intensely. He's not the angry, frustrated father who wants to dispense his pent up fury. He is the ever patient & ferocious in love dad, who is fighting for our destiny. He will do everything necessary to draw us unto himself. If we will but turn to Him He will bring us back unto himself.
 - Video from Life Church of Jesus drawing a person to himself.
- S

3. Look for Jesus among you.

- If you knew Jesus was in town, how many would go find Him? We'd all be on our cell phones running down every lead.
- I have Great News, He is in town! Dietrich Bonhoffer quote, p.5 in Lutzer.
- He is the suffering among us.
- Amos 5.24 has another connotation of water. "Let righteousness roll on like a river and justice like a never ending stream." Let who you are be translated into bringing God's will for those in need.
- The reason, in part, that God brought final judgment against Sodom & Gomorah was b/c they didn't take care of the poor; the reason Israel was disciplined so

severely by God & taken into Assyrian captivity was b/c they denied justice to the poor. Your faith is demonstrated by whether or not you assist those in need. I am firmly convinced one of the reasons God has blessed America is b/c of our response to the broken & needy of the world. This is huge in God's eyes. Is.58.

- Where can you start? The problem is so big...
 - Where did Jesus start? With those in front of him.
 - I'm for planning and addressing systemic problems. But, when it comes to personal involvement, look who is in front of you.
 - Stephanie asking me who we should assist. It's the ones we know about.
 - Other approaches also.
 - God's not calling you to reach the world, just your world.

Illustration of story of how serving those in need changed a person life.