

Liberty Commentary October 13, 2008

One word that continues to be reiterated over the course of the past few weeks as it relates to our financial situation is, "crisis". These are a few of the headlines we have read recently, "IMF says U.S. crisis is largest financial shock since Great Depression", "Financial crisis hits global poverty battle", "Economic crisis claims two more banks", "A financial crisis unmatched since the Great Depression, say analysts". These are just a few of the headlines that have blanketed the recent news. Even here in Marshalltown some are in a "crisis mode" after learning that their jobs are being eliminated.

Encountering crisis is never a pleasant experience, but it is in the time of crisis that God will take us and redirect our lives to be more useful for Him if we will place our lives in His control and be obedient to His plan and purpose for our life. The Apostle Paul, who was no stranger to crisis, tells us in Philippians chapter four, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content". Paul wrote this when he was a prisoner in Rome. After the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, Jesus ministered for 40 days giving final instructions to His disciples. Jesus had told them that He was going to return to heaven; but that He would send them a helper in the person of the Holy

Spirit to lead them and guide them into all truth and the Holy Spirit would give them the power to live an abundant Christian life. Acts chapter one tells us that 120 disciples had gathered and stood watching as their savior ascended slowly up through the clouds and eventually left their sight. After Christ had disappeared out of their sight they went and gathered in the upper room as they had been instructed, where they would pray and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

These disciples were in a state of crises. The one in whom they had invested their lives for the past 3 ½ years was gone. These 120 disciples had endured immense persecution for their commitment to follow Christ. They had been rejected by their families. They had been banished from the Jewish synagogues. They feared for their very lives knowing that those who crucified Jesus also wanted them dead as well. Their entire social and economic structure had been destroyed because of their commitment to follow Jesus. The Jews and the Romans thought this small “rag tag” group of disciples would soon lose hope, disband, go home and forget about their commitment to follow Christ. They were wrong.

These 120 frightened disciples would have to make a decision. Would they succumb to the pressure of the crisis or would they rise to the occasion, defy the odds, defy the critics and the circumstances to

take Christ at His Word and believe that God would work this crisis for His glory and their good. They remained faithful and the Holy Spirit did come as Acts chapter two indicates. Peter preached to the thousands gathered at Pentecost and 3,000 people received Christ as their Savior. The group of disciples has now grown from 120 to 3,120 Christians. Peter and John then go to the steps of the temple and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and 5,000 more receive Christ as their Savior. The church has now grown from 120 to 8,120 and Christianity is on the march.

What this group of 120 disciples did in their moment of crises was not quit and go home and give up on their commitment to Christ, but rather they determined to bet the farm that by faith Jesus would do what he promised to do when Jesus told them in John 14:12 "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father". These hurting, lonely, rejected disciples in their moment of crises stepped out by faith and believed God would deliver them from their crises and empower them through His Holy Spirit and for the past 2,000 years the world has seen millions upon millions of people come to receive Christ as their Savior in an explosion of evangelism unparalleled by any other movement in human history, all because 120 Christians were willing to

stay committed to Christ even when it seemed as though all hope was lost.

God wants to empower each believer to do the greater works so that He can be glorified and we can be edified. The greater works can sometimes come at the cost of great crises in our lives. God may use financial crisis, marital crises, health crises to turn us toward Him so that he can take us as a potter takes a lump of clay and begins to mold us and shape us into to the image and character of His own Son Jesus Christ.

Life has three continuous phases. Either you have just come out of a crisis, you are now in a crisis, or you are headed for a crisis. For those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, they will always come through the crises stronger, better equipped and more committed to their faith in Jesus Christ knowing that if they will stay in the race and not quit, they will cross the finish line of life having accomplished the greater works for their Lord and Savior.

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