

Liberty Commentary May 27, 2008

Our hearts go out to the victims of the recent tornadoes that ravished the towns of Parkersburg and New Hartford. We should all join together in praying for the families who lost loved ones and help as we can those who remain to rebuild and put their lives back together.

The question often arises after a natural disaster of this magnitude, why would God allow this awful event to be perpetrated upon innocent people? To find the answer we must go back to the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden and were given the responsibility to care for it. There was only one stipulation, do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil “for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”. You know the rest of the story. They disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit.

The results of their disobedience brought the curse of sin upon both the human race and nature. The woman would endure great pain in the process of child bearing. The man would work by the sweat of his brow because of the weeds that would grow from the earth because of Adam and Eve’s disobedience.

The Apostle Paul makes reference to the consequences of the sin curse in Romans chapter eight. Paul points out two groans that take place because of the sin curse upon the earth and the human race. 1) The Bible says, “for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now”. As a result of the curse of sin we experience horrible natural disasters. Tornadoes, floods, volcanoes, earthquakes, all are the consequences of an earth that is under the curse of sin. 2) The Bible says that not only is nature under the condemnation of sin, but also the human race is as well, “even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body”. Our bodies get

tired, weak and diseased and eventually die because we are under the curse of sin.

Paul does not leave us without hope however. Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit that dwells in the life of every person who has repented of their sins and received Christ as Savior helps bear us up and brings peace even in the midst of trials, troubles and disasters. The Bible says, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”. Even when we hurt so much that we don’t know how to pray for the situation as we ought to, the Holy Spirit that dwells within the life of the believer takes our most heartfelt needs and hurts to the very throne where God resides and petitions God on our behalf.

The devastating consequences of natural disasters are in reality not an act of God at all, they are not the fault of God, but rather they are an act of mans disobedience that goes back to the Garden of Eden. It is never Gods prerogative to punish but rather it is His prerogative to take tragedy and turn it into triumph. Paul writes about Gods prerogative in Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”.

Because of the sin curse upon the earth and upon the human race, life is a continuum of crises. Either we have just come from a crisis, we are in the midst of a crisis now, or we are headed for a crisis. That is generally the cycle of life. How we react to the crises determines our success or defeat from the crises. If we choose to focus upon the crises instead of God who is able to lead us through and out of the crises we will be consumed with anxiety, depression and failure. If we choose to put our faith in Gods plan and purpose for our life and realize that God will work it all out for our good and his glory as we depend upon him, we will come through the crises stronger and more resilient in our faith.

Paul finishes Romans fourteen with the promise that through Christ we can snatch victory from the jaws of defeat, “in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us”.

Paul was perhaps the greatest Christian and certainly the greatest missionary to have ever lived, yet he was not exempt from the effects of both human and natural tragedies. Paul was used of God to write half the New Testament, planted perhaps one hundred churches, evangelized the known world at that time, was used of God to bring the gospel to the Gentile world yet Paul endured ship wreck, imprisonment, beatings, persecutions, was stoned and left for dead, and died a martyr for his faith in Christ.

Being a Christian does not exempt us from the tragedies of living in a world and in bodies that are under the curse of sin, but God will turn our tragedies into trophies of His grace and erect from the rubble of despair, lives that reflect the character of His Son Jesus Christ if we will yield our lives wholly to His control in both the good times and the bad.

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