

Now More Than Ever – Various Scriptures

Ready.gov video

(Intro) I don't about you, but when I first saw that as I was watching some coverage of Hurricane Irene on The Weather Channel, I had a visceral reaction
It affected me at the core

And there's no arguing with the advice; Especially so in this time of increased disaster
From tornados, floods, and hurricanes; To earthquakes, volcanoes, and wildfires – it
doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that we've had more and more as of late
In fact, according to the International Disaster Database – a *lot* more (**graph**)

This is a graph showing the number of natural disasters occurring each year in the world,
from 1900 to 2010 – showing a 4000% increase over that time
A 100% increase would be significant; But 4000%? That's staggering*****

And when you combine it with *man*-made disasters like wars and terrorist attacks . . .
And then *personal* disasters like accidents, sickness, and crime . . .
Not to mention the *emotional* trauma associated with those things . . .
I don't think anyone would argue with the conclusion, that our world is being turned
upside down, now more than ever

- And if preparing yourself physically is where it stops, you're in trouble
Yes, having an emergency kit is important as the video implied
And having your financial house in order is too
But if that's where it stops, you're in trouble

B/c there's a disaster of *biblical* proportions looming on the horizon, and it will dwarf
what we've seen thus far
Jesus said in **Mt 24:21**, that a time is coming when . . .
*There will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world
until now, no, and never will be*
That's the tribulation of the last days, the end times; It's coming

And no amount of physical preparation will get you ready*****
B/c it will end with the return of Jesus to the earth, to *judge* the living and the dead
That is, to separate those who are his own, those who have *accepted* him as Lord and
Savior – from those who have *rejected* him, those who aren't his own
Those who have ignored the signs of the times, and failed to reconcile with their Maker
Leading to a *personal* disaster that makes the others *pale* in comparison

Which is why, now more than ever . . .

We need perspective (Mt 24:6-14)

God's perspective; Mt 24:6-14 (p829; Introduce, Welcome, Encouraged, Weekend, Stage)
Now more than ever, we need God's perspective on things
B/c every other perspective will leave you wanting at best, and devastated at worst

It's like this **drawing** of an old woman who looks kind of like a Disney witch – not real
appealing, right? But if you look *closer*, or more importantly . . .
If you look at it from a different *perspective* – you see the face of a beautiful young
woman; Your perspective makes all the difference*****

And so do your expectations

For instance, if I told you that on vacation in Colorado this past summer, I took an
amazing picture of a beautiful mountain scene . . .
But show you picture of a mountainous *garbage* dump (**photo**) . . .
You might be a bit disappointed; Maybe even angry
B/c you expected one thing, and got another*****

And the same is true regarding our world these days – your perspective and expectations
make all the difference
If you're expecting life to be *rosy*, and experience just the *opposite* – like disease or
disaster . . . You're going to feel let down, and probably even devastated

That's one of the reasons that now more than ever, we need the perspective that . . .

• **Bad things are going to happen**

Jesus said in John 16:33 – *In the world you will have tribulation.*
You will have difficulties; We will have hardships

And he said in Mt 24:6, that before he returns – *You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed* [manage your expectations], *for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. 9 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then many will fall away* [indicating they weren't true believers in the first place] *and betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved* [saved unto eternal life]. *14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

Wars, famines, earthquakes, death, apostasy, betrayal, hatred, lawlessness, and a lack of
love; Expect anything else from this world, especially *these* days . . .
And you'll end up disillusioned, disheartened, and devastated
Now more than ever we need the perspective that bad things are going to happen

But we also need the perspective that . . .

• **God is in control**

Not only does he know the end from the beginning (Is 46:10) . . .
But he plans our days before we are born (Ps 139:16); He marks off the boundaries of
nations (Acts 17:26); He controls their destiny (Job 12:23) . . .
He directs our steps (Prov 20:24); He brings success or failure (Ps 75:6-7) . . .
And he turns the heart of kings (Prov 21:1); And that's just the short list

And no matter what (**Rom 8:28**) – *We know that for those who love God all things work together for good*; Rom 8:28
Bad things are going to happen, yes; But there's nothing outside of God's sovereignty
He's in control*****

Not only that, but he has a *plan* for our *lives*

• **God has a plan for us**

That's that famous verse in **Jer 29:11** where God says – *I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare [or peace] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

If you've been adopted into the family of God by virtue of your faith in his Son and repentance of your sin, this applies to you
God has a plan for your life, as part of his plan for his people
He cares about you that much

Which is reassuring to know when the (**graph**) oceans roar and the mountains fall
We're not just at the whim of nature and evil – God has a plan (**Summary**)
And God knows we *need* that perspective, now more than ever

Second . . .

We need the truth (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

When it comes to the topsy-turvy world in which we live – we need the truth
Not half-truths; Not falsehoods; Not lies; But the truth

We demand it in politics; We demand it in sports; We demand it in business . . .

But for some reason, when it comes to religion, when it comes to our souls – it's as if we throw rationale to the wind . . .
And accept anyone or anything that's well-spoken, written down, or extreme

“If someone's passionate about what they're saying, it *must* be true”

“If they've been around for a long time, they *must* be legit”

“If they have a big audience, they *must* be right”

That seems to be the thinking these days

And we end up blindly accepting all kinds of things in the name of religion, that aren't true; Even from people who label themselves “Christian”

Sometimes it's what *they* think; Sometimes it's what a dead guy thought; And sometimes it's the latest guru
But more often than not, it's a feel-good pop psychology to affirm whatever *you* think

None of which does us any good

And with so much of it out there, now more than ever we need the truth

- The truth, first of all – **About death**

The truth, that b/c of our sin, we're going to die

The Bible says that the wages, or consequences of sin, is death (Rom 6:23)

And since we've all sinned, we're all going to die

And then face judgment (**About judgment**)

It's appointed for man to die the Bible says, and then face judgment (Heb 9:27)

The question is, will it lead to the punishment and condemnation of hell, or the blessing and life of heaven? We need the truth

Third, we need the truth – **About life**

As in, how to *get* it, and how to *live* it; We need the truth

Jesus said in **Jn 3:16**, that – *God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

That's the truth we need to *get* life – believe in Jesus; entrust your life to him; put your faith in him*****

And then, live in such a way that honors him

The guidelines for which, the how-to's, are found in this book – the Bible

2 Tim 3:16-17 says – *All Scripture [that's this book] is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof [i.e. for rebuking or reprimanding people for sin], for correction, and for training in righteousness [i.e. training in how to live life], 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

The truth we need for life, both to get it *and* live it, is contained in the Bible – God's

Word; God's *revelation* to us, as he moved men by his Spirit, to record his message

And there's no other book that can legitimately claim that

No other book for which the evidence backs it up; Only the Bible*****

And with so many people struggling, and hurting, and helpless, and hopeless . . .

We need its truth about death, and judgment, and life – *now* more than ever

- Even, if it hurts; Even if it cuts to the core; B/c truth that hurts, is truth that heals
“Spare me the pleasant platitudes, and tell me what I need” – that s/b our mindset
Or like the Philippian jailer said – “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30)
Just give me the truth; With that in mind, take a look at this **video** (John Nelson)

John needed Jesus; And if you're anything like him, you do too

You need Jesus (John 14:6)

In fact, we all do

Oh, your marriage may not be in shambles; Or your dignity shattered; Or your life turned upside down . . .

But if you've never embraced Jesus as your Lord and Savior – that's where you're headed

It's either going to happen in this life, or the next; On this side of death, or the other
Either way, you *need* him

You need the One who made you, knows you, and most importantly, loves you

That's right, he loves you

So much, that he died for you, in your place, suffering the penalty you deserve for your sins – so that you wouldn't have to

And now lives, having overcome that penalty – to forgive you, and save you

To save you from a disaster of biblical proportions

- And he's the only one who can do it (**Jn 14:6**)

I am the way [he said], *and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

No one enters into a relationship with God, no one enters into his protection and provision – except through Jesus

He's the *way* – the only means of being forgiven of your sin and relieved of your guilt . . .

He's the *truth* – the perfect image of the unseen God, in whom there is no deceit . . .

And he's the *life* – the embodiment of all you need for salvation and eternity

The only thing left, is to embrace him as such*****

To embrace him as your Lord and Savior

To embrace him as *your* way; And *your* truth; And *your* life; B/c he is

He's just waiting for you to see it, and admit it

To admit that you *need* him; That now more than ever . . .

You need his forgiveness, and his salvation, and his peace, and his presence (**Summary**)

- He's waiting; And he has a plan for your life; But he won't wait forever
Your days are numbered, and he's coming again
At which point he will separate those who *need* him, from those who don't
Those who embraced him, from those who didn't
Those who received him, from those who rejected him

IOW your decision now, determines your fate then; Not to mention your life in the
meantime; So if you need him, pray with me right now, to receive him

Pray – If I've been talking to you, and you've had a change of perspective about your life,
and death, and your need for Jesus – I'm going to lead you in a prayer of salvation
A prayer to receive him into your heart and soul, as Lord and Savior, right where you sit
Just call out to him in the quietness of your heart, and say . . .

“Lord God, I *see* it – I see the truth now

The truth about death, and life, and judgment, and this world – I see it, NMTE

And I *admit* that I'm a sinner, in need of forgiveness – I admit it

I admit that I've thought wrong things, said wrong things, and done wrong things

And I'm sorry; I'm sorry for grieving and offending you, I'm sorry for hurting others,
and I'm sorry for living for myself

Please forgive me, God; And wash me white as snow

B/c I *believe* that when you died, you died for *my* sins, so that I *could* be forgiven

And then rose *again* to save my soul; I believe it, Lord

So come into my life – I now *receive* you as Lord and Savior

Entrusting all that I am to you, for all eternity

And committing to follow you, and live for you, all of my days”

- As we continue in prayer, I want to pray for you if you just prayed with me
So will you just raise your hand and wait for me to acknowledge you
I'm not going to ask you to come forward or stand up, I just want to know that you
prayed, and who I'm praying for
Is there anyone?

Lord, thank you; Thank you for each and every decision that was just made

Thank you for changing their perspective, and opening their eyes to the truth

Thank you for saving their souls, and making them whole

And now God, having set them on the path of your plan for their lives – continue to lead
and guide them by your Spirit within them

And find them faithful to follow, now more than ever

Close – New Believer Packets; PwtP's

Pray that God would comfort those who lost loved ones on 9/11, and that he would use
the memory to open people's hearts to the truth

Pray for HBC-Chatt – launch next week

Worship – Tear Down The Walls