

SECURITY IN THE STORM #1

Introduction

I want to use the next few weeks to speak to you on the subject of “Security in the Storm”. The whole world is in a “storm”.

But whoever thought we would be in such a storm as this?

A microscopic virus that was born in a science lab in China has now brought the world to the brink of a global economic meltdown. It has closed down businesses, schools and church services. It has closed down our entertainments: restaurants are closed, sports events cancelled, movie theaters empty.

Worst of all is the wildfire of fear running through the streets, with the mass media news outlets constantly pouring on the gasoline. A storm indeed!

But I want to talk about “Security in the Storm”. What do we mean by “security”?

“Security”

The state of being free from danger or threat.

Safety; freedom from care, anxiety, or doubt; well-founded confidence.

Human nature seeks security; everybody wants to be free from fear; to be safe and secure. We hate storms because they threaten our security.

- Physical storms: hurricanes; tornado warnings, threaten our sense of security
- The 911 terror attack was a storm-there was a time when I could go to the airport 15 minutes before the flight; but 911 changed all that forever. We spent billions to put airport security in place.
 - But now we have the “storm” of a worldwide epidemic.

The question for the Christian is: How can we be secure in the storm?

3 Points

- God is in control; but He allows storms
- Every storm has a purpose; there is always a ‘silver lining’
- The purpose of storms is for God to reveal Himself in new ways

A. God is in Control

1. God is in control. And God is good. So why does He allow storms? Especially big storms that attack health and prosperity? History helps us here.

2. Charles H. Spurgeon known as “The Prince of Preachers”. He was the Pastor of the great Metropolitan Tabernacle in London for 38 years, during the time of the terrible cholera epidemic that raged through the world for 14 years, from 1846-1850. (Cholera makes the corona virus look like a case of the sniffles). While hundreds were dying in London, services continued at the church, where Spurgeon said this in a sermon:

Charles Spurgeon

“It is much to be feared that a constant run of prosperity, perpetual peace and freedom from disease may breed in our minds just what it has done in all human minds before, namely security, pride, hedonism and forgetfulness of God. It is a most solemn fact that human nature can scarcely bear a long continuance of peace and health. It is almost necessary that we should be salted with affliction every now and then lest we putrefy with sin.”

- a. It is interesting that God has allowed this great crisis to interrupt the greatest run of economic prosperity in the history of our country.
- b. Record low unemployment; highest wages; stock market records; but what honest person would say that our nation’s commitment to God kept pace with our prosperity?

3. It is a historical fact that prosperous nations tend to forget about God. This was especially true of the nation of Israel; God’s own beloved people! God warned them over and over that the real test of their faith would not come in Egypt; nor even in the wilderness; the real test of their faith would be after they came into the Promised Land.

- a. After 400 years in Egypt and 40 years in the wilderness, God has a warning for His people about to enter the Promised Land:

Deuteronomy 8:6

“Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

Deuteronomy 8:7-8

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of

wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey;

Deuteronomy 8:9-10

...a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you.

Deuteronomy 8:11-14

"Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments lest — when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God.

4. When things go well we tend to seek our security in things.

C.H. Mackintosh

“There is great danger of our resting in the mercies, blessings and benefits which flow, in such rich profusion, from our Father's loving heart and liberal hand. We are prone to rest in these things and allow them to come between our hearts and the Lord and thus they become a snare to us.”

5. Our security must be in the God of the blessings and not in the blessings of God. Storms reveal the source of our security. This is...

B. The Storm's Silver Lining

1. Crisis brings clarity: when the chips are down, complex things are made simple.

- A millionaire is on his private plane when the engine conks out and the plane goes into a nosedive. Suddenly, *crisis brings clarity*. He loves his work; He loves to play golf; but in the crisis he's not wishing he'd spent more time in the office or more time on the golf course; he now knows he should have spent more time with his family!

a. Crisis brings clarity; storms reveal to us what really matters.

- In 1971, Elizabeth announced she was leaving me. Crisis brought clarity! To keep her I would have to get right with God. And I did!

2. Crisis brings clarity: Storms reveal who we really are and what we are trusting for our security!

3. The hallmark of a storm is fear! (Jesus in the boat)

a. Like the storm that hit the boat of Jesus and the disciples:

- He is asleep
- He doesn't care
- Then He calms the storm and asks them "why were you afraid; where is your faith?"
- They never would have known His authority over creation without the storm!

C. God Uses Storms to Reveal Himself to Us in New Ways

1. God allows our sin to bring us to crisis so He can reveal Himself to us as Savior.

2. God allowed Israel to drink bitter water so He could reveal Himself to them as their Healer.

3. God allows storms to reveal Himself to us as our security!

4. The Bible says our security in the storm is found in the shadow of God's wings.

II. Security in the Storm

A. The Shadow of His Wings

1. The Bible teaches us that our security in the storm is found in the shadow of God's wings.

a. God is not bird; nor does He have feathers; it is a prophetic metaphor, a word picture of security and protection.

2. The Psalms have much to say about the shadow of His wings!

Psalm 57:1

**Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!
For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my
refuge, until these calamities have passed by.**

- My soul is secure in the shadow of your wings; these storms will pass!

Psalm 17:7-9

**Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand, O You who save
those who trust in You from those who rise up against them. Keep me as the
apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings,
From the wicked who oppress me, from my deadly enemies who surround me.**

Psalm 36:7

**How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!
Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your
wings.**

Psalm 61:1-4

**Hear my cry, O God; Attend to my prayer.
From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed;
lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For You have been a shelter for me,
a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will
trust in the shelter of Your wings.**

Psalm 63:6-8

**When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches.
Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will
rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.**

3. But the greatest expression of the shadow of His wings is in Psalm 91.

B. The Greatness of Psalm 91

1. A most special Psalm it is!

Charles Spurgeon on Psalm 91

“In the whole collection there is not a more cheering Psalm, its tone is elevated and sustained throughout, faith is at its best, and speaks nobly. A German physician spoke of it as the best preservative in times of cholera, and in truth, it is a heavenly medicine against plague and pest. He who can live in its spirit will be fearless, even if once again London should become a lazar-house, (place of quarantine) and the grave be gorged with carcasses.”

2. I discovered Psalm 91 early on in my journey with Jesus! It begins...

Psalm 91:1-2

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust."

Mary M.B. Duncan

(Quoted in “The Treasury of David)

“The term ‘shadow’ is an expression which implies great nearness. We must walk very close to a companion, if we would have his shadow fall on us. Can we imagine any expression more perfect in describing the constant presence of God with his chosen ones, than this-they shall "abide under his shadow"?

Psalm 91:3-4

Surely He shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler and from the (noisome) perilous pestilence. He shall cover me with His feathers and under His wings will I trust.

“It is called in the "noisome pestilence," because it is infectious, contagious; the French read it, ‘dangerous pestilence’, because it endangers those that come near it. It brings a multitude of woes with it to any place or person it comes unto, it is a messenger of woeful fears, sorrows, distractions, terrors, and death itself. — William Greenhill.

- God will deliver us from the perilous pestilence-including the Corona virus. But do we believe it?

The Lord William Craven lived in a fine house in London when the sad calamity known as the plague was raging in the city. As the epidemic spread, his Lordship decided to avoid the danger and move to his home in the country.

His coach was at the door, his baggage loaded, and all was ready for the journey.

But as he was walking through his hall with his hat on, his cane under his arm, and putting on his gloves, in order to step into his carriage, he overheard one of his servants saying to another servant. "I suppose, by my Lord's quitting London to avoid the plague means that his God lives in the country, and not in the city."

The poor servant's words struck Lord Craven very sensibly, and made him pause. "My God," thought he, "lives everywhere, and can preserve me in town as well as in the country. I will even stay where I am." Then he prayed, "Lord, pardon my unbelief, and my distrust of your providence, which made me think of running from Thy hand." He immediately ordered his horses to be taken from the coach, and the baggage to be taken in.

He continued in London, was remarkably useful among his sick neighbors, and he never caught the infection.

a. I wonder what the world thinks we truly believe when it sees Christians running in fear?

3. The cure for fear is faith! But how do we get faith?

Romans 10:17

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Revelation 12:11

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives unto death.

4. We are saved by the blood of the Lamb-when the word of God becomes our testimony!

III. How Do We Walk It Out?

A. Memorize and Personalize Psalm 91

1. Here is my personalized prayer, a confession of Psalm 91.

Psalm 91:1-4

I dwell in the secret place of the Most High; I shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my

God, in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover me with His feathers and under His wings will I trust. His truth is my shield and buckler.

Psalm 91:5-8

I will not be afraid of the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flies by day, nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor the destruction that lays waste at noonday. A thousand may fall at my side and ten thousand at my right hand, but it shall not come near me! Only with my eyes shall I behold the reward of the wicked.

Psalm 91:9-13

Because I have made the Lord my refuge, even the most High my dwelling place, no evil shall befall me, neither shall any plague come near my dwelling. For He has given His angels charge over me, to keep me in all my ways; they shall bear me up in their hands lest I dash my foot against a stone. I shall tread upon the lion and the cobra; the young lion and the serpent I will trample underfoot.

Psalm 91:14-16

**Because I have set my love upon Him, therefore He will deliver me.
He will set me on high because I have known His name.
I will call upon Him and He will answer me.
He will be with me in times of trouble. He will deliver me and honor me.
And with long life He will satisfy me and show me His salvation.**

2. There is so much power in putting God's word in our hearts and in our mouths!

3. My testimony at age 76:

- I have never spent a night in the hospital except the day I was born
- I have never had a major surgery
- I have never had a broken bone
- I am almost never sick-and when I am it has been mild

4. Do I boast in me? Or in my faith? Am I special? God forbid! I feel like the Psalmist...

Psalm 34:2-3

My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

5. God has allowed me to go through many, many storms in my life; many places where I felt fear and insecurity flow into my life. But the storms taught me that when I feel the weakest I am really my strongest.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

B. Conclusion

1. We may never have a time like this to show the world where true security lies; in "The Shadow of His Wings".

Thomas Watson

Christ's wings are both for healing and for hiding, for curing us and securing us; the devil and his instruments would soon devour the servants of God, if he did not set an invincible guard about them, and cover them with the golden feathers of his protection."

2. And we can pray Spurgeon's prayer in the midst of the cholera epidemic:

Charles Spurgeon

"May God grant that we suffer neither famine nor sword but since we have this pestilence in a very slight degree, it becomes us to ask the Lord to bless it to the people so a tenderness of conscience may be apparent throughout the multitude and they may recognize the hand of God. Already I've been told by Christian brethren laboring in the east of London there is a greater willingness to listen to gospel truth."

3. The days are dark; the world is cowering in fear, seeking security in many ways. But Spurgeon gave us good advice:

Charles Spurgeon

**“When we cannot see the sunshine of God’s face, it is a blessing to cower
down beneath the shadow of His wings.”**

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