

In Such a Time as This
September 22, 2017
by C Benjamin Dill

Welcome to Round Up Sunday! Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Ecclesiastes 3:1-14

1 To every *thing* *there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted;

3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

10 I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

11 He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

12 I know that *there is* no good in them, but for *a man* to rejoice, and to do good in his life.

13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it *is* the gift of God.

14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever, nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him.

About three Sundays ago, most of us woke up somewhere in the middle of the night with either water threatening our home or already in it. We couldn't go to Church; we couldn't go anywhere, except by boat. Lots and lots of people were crying out to the Lord; some feeling helpless, some hopeless, some angry, some just sick as they watched everything they had and no doubt cared about too much, taken from them in the flood waters. The only people here were gathered for shelter under our portico having waded here or having been dropped off by boat from the neighborhood behind us. Materially, many throughout our city lost everything they had. No flood water had ever come near where they lived; flood insurance was not required nor ever thought needed.

Fortunately for many, the state and the banks require us to carry full coverage on our financed vehicles, otherwise many more would have lost their cars and trucks with nothing to replace them. What do you do when your house is wiped out but your big ole' mortgage is not? Most of these victims live mostly from paycheck to paycheck; and now some of them can't even get to work...or their place of business has been wiped out and their job is gone,

or on hold. What little savings some had is already wiped out trying to find a temporary place to live. The flood waters have receded, but now comes the mold and the mildew, for which the only solution is to tear it out and cast it away. The reality of verse 6 is truly upon us. It is truly a time to lose and a time to cast away! We are all going to be dealing with the effects of this storm for many months and even years to come.

The effects of Harvey upon our property is evident and easy to see. It is piled in giant mounds on the streets in front of our houses. What will become more evident in the weeks and months to come are the effects of Harvey upon our people. Harvey has interrupted us, challenged us and will ultimately change us; the question is, what kind of change will that change be? God has a plan for us and it is not a plan to harm us, although there is often pain in the process.

Malachi 3:2-3

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

We know that God puts his children in the fire, not to destroy us but rather to refine us. Such a time as this which accomplishes many things in us.

For one:

I. It reminds us who is in charge.

A. Believers are servants; we belong to God.

1. 1 Corinthians 7:22-23

22 For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant.

23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

2. God wants to be involved in our decisions...let me rephrase that; God intends to be involved; **God is going to be involved in our decisions!**
3. Did you seek wise counsel and talk to the Lord about that house or that car or that furniture... before you bought it?
4. I know that many of us did, and I know that many more of us will the next time!

*B. There are some **Biblical** principles believers need to remember at such a time as this.*

1. We and all we have belongs to God.
2. We have learned that what God gives He can also take away; for many He just did take it away.
3. The only things God guarantees He will never take away is His love and our salvation.
4. What we sometimes fail to remember is that God can also replace what He takes away with something even better.
5. The same God that flooded your house can also build it back even better than it was before.

C. *The Lord is in charge!*

1. **Psalm 29:1-11**

- 1 A Psalm of David. Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.
- 2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.
- 3 The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD *is* upon many waters.
- 4 The voice of the LORD *is* powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.
- 5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
- 6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
- 7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.
- 8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
- 9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of *his* glory.
- 10 **The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.**
- 11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

In such a time as this:

II. God shows us what we are really made of.

A. *God already knows everything there is to know about every one of us.*

1. The one who does not yet know is you!
2. We think we are strong; we think we will stand...but we never know for sure until such a time as this.

B. God is now testing many areas of your life.

1. Your faith; are you really going to trust Him to take you through this?
2. He will test your character.
3. He will test your commitment.
4. He will test your loyalty.
5. He will test your integrity.
6. He will test your willingness to sacrifice.
7. He will require proof of our love.
8. Some of what God reveals in you, you are not going to like; and He will also test your willingness to change.

III. God is going to minimize the mediocre.

A. Preacher, what in the world do you mean by that?!

1. Before the flood, most of us just kind of went through our routine every day, just doing what we do...
2. Not necessarily lazy and fruitless, but not stepping up to any level of greatness either...
3. Just basically mediocre.
4. Jesus just doesn't care much for mediocre.

Revelation 3:15-16

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

In such a time as this:

B. Few believers will remain mediocre.

1. Some will fall apart and cry and whine and moan... “Woe is me, God has let me down, I’ve lost everything, I don’t know what I’ll do!”
2. Others are going to thank the Lord for what they still do have, then get up off their knees and say **“The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord!”**
3. Then they are going to roll up their sleeves and get busy ministering to the needs around them and trust God to take care of their own needs.
4. **Such a time as this** doesn’t leave much room for lukewarm.

C. God intends also to re-establish our priorities.

1. Believer, I know you have been through a lot; but there is something you need to understand.
2. Until Jesus is in first place in your life, your storm is not over!
3. Until we are willing to simply say, “Yes, Lord, whatever you say”; mean it from the heart and get at it...this may only be the beginning.
4. “But I’ve got to get my house fixed...I’m working two jobs...I don’t have time for Church right now, I don’t have time to volunteer and serve others right now, I can’t tithe and give, I’ve got to buy sheetrock and stuff and...”
5. OK, I’m not going to argue with you; I guess Harvey wasn’t enough yet to get your attention.

Such a time as this also:

IV. Causes the cream to rise to the top.

A. Some of you citified kids don’t have a clue what I am talking about.

1. **Adversity reveals who God’s champions are.**
2. It is like it was with David; no one thought little David had the heart to be a great King and lead a nation.

3. God chose him when he was just a kid: but **it was through great adversity he rose to greatness; Goliath was only the beginning.**
4. **1 Corinthians 11:19** For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.
5. God sometimes allows trouble to come up in a Church so that those leaders whom He has approved are identified to the congregation as they step up to handle and face the problem.
6. Trouble like Harvey accomplishes much the same thing in identifying just who God's champions really are.

B. Harvey is revealing some champions as well.

1. I won't need to tell you who they are, their identity is already becoming evident.
2. The beauty of it is that you could be one of God's champions!

Conclusion:

In such a time as this, servants tend to get weary.

Galatians 6:9-10

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us **do good unto all men, especially** unto them who are of **the household of faith.**

Nobody can do everything all the time, but everybody can do something some of the time.

Pace yourself, do what you can but keep on keeping on...never quit! there is much to do.

Another great enemy of doing good as our Lord commands is becoming cynical.

As you serve handing out food and supplies you might see fat people in expensive cars already loaded with supplies they got from other relief centers.

You might see greed, you might see our love being taken advantage of.

I obviously have nothing against fat people or expensive cars.

And if you are not careful, you might become cynical and want to quit helping anybody because of the few - or maybe many - who are perhaps milking the system.

You really don't know; perhaps that expensive car may be all that is left along with all that money still owed on it.

Listen to Jesus and leave the judging to Him.

Matthew 13:24-30

24 ...The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

But most of all, keep the main thing the main thing!

Our job is not handing out food or fixing houses...those things just create opportunity.

Our job is to share the gospel with everyone that God sets up the meeting.

Jesus is God in the flesh, He came to this world to die, on purpose; the perfect, pure and holy Son of God on the cross willingly paying the penalty of our sins out of pure love for us.

Returning from the grave in victory over sin and death and hell and the grave...ready to give eternal life to as many as will believe.