

## The Calm Before the Storm!

6.2.2019

I need to talk to you from my heart this morning and step away from the series I am teaching on the love of God.

Things are not well in America. I feel that we are living in the calm before the storm. For a few minutes I would like to reveal to you the contents of my prayer times.

Acts 27: 13-14

*When the south wind blew softly, supposing they had obtained their desire, putting out to sea they sailed close to Crete...but not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon...and all hope that we should be saved was finally given up."*

### **1. Jesus is coming again.**

Jesus' first coming was prophesied by prophets in Israel 700 plus years before it happened. Jesus' birth fulfilled every single one of those predictions from the prophets in Israel.

Jesus' second coming has been predicted by the same prophets over 2500 years ago, and will fulfill them too, just like Jesus' first coming.

### **2. Peter framed well the attitude of the world before Christ comes again:**

2 Peter 3:3-14 (NLT)

Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. (4) They will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created." (5) They deliberately forget that God made the heavens long ago by the word of his command, and he brought the earth out from the water and surrounded it with water. (6) Then he used the water to destroy the ancient world with a mighty flood. (7) And by the same word, the present heavens and earth have been stored up for fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment, when ungodly people will be destroyed. (8) But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. (9) The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. (10) But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. (11) Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, (12) looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it

along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. (13) But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness. (14) And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.

### **3. Jeremiah wept over Judah before their enemies defeated them.**

Recently I read the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

Jeremiah began to minister to Judah 40 years before Judah went into captivity. He decried the sin and the worship of false gods among his people. He is called the weeping prophet because of his heart cry of repentance towards his people.

God eventually told Jeremiah not to pray for the people any longer, for judgment was coming. In 586 B.C., Judah fell into the hands of the Babylonians, and judgment came.

Lamentations is a book lamenting over what happened in Judah. Lamenting over what they had and what happened.

Lamentations 1:1-7 (NLT)

Jerusalem, once so full of people, is now deserted. She who was once great among the nations now sits alone like a widow. Once the queen of all the earth, she is now a slave. (2) She sobs through the night; tears stream down her cheeks. Among all her lovers, there is no one left to comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her and become her enemies. (3) Judah has been led away into captivity, oppressed with cruel slavery. She lives among foreign nations and has no place of rest. Her enemies have chased her down, and she has nowhere to turn. (4) The roads to Jerusalem are in mourning, for crowds no longer come to celebrate the festivals. The city gates are silent, her priests groan, her young women are crying— how bitter is her fate! (5) Her oppressors have become her masters, and her enemies prosper, for the Lord has punished Jerusalem for her many sins. Her children have been captured and taken away to distant lands. (6) All the majesty of beautiful Jerusalem has been stripped away. Her princes are like starving deer searching for pasture. They are too weak to run from the pursuing enemy. (7) In the midst of her sadness and wandering, Jerusalem remembers her ancient splendor. But now she has fallen to her enemy, and there is no one to help her. Her enemy struck her down and laughed as she fell.

The climate began to turn against Judah before they fell into captivity. Jeremiah was even told to stop praying for them, for judgment was sure to come.

Jeremiah 14:1-16 (NLT)

This message came to Jeremiah from the Lord, explaining why he was holding back the rain: 2 "Judah wilts; commerce at the city gates grinds to a halt. All the people sit on the ground in mourning, and a great cry rises from Jerusalem. 3 The nobles send servants to get water, but all the wells are dry. The servants return with empty pitchers, confused and desperate, covering their heads in grief. 4 The ground is parched and cracked for lack of rain. The farmers are deeply troubled; they, too, cover their heads. 5 Even the doe abandons her newborn fawn because there is no grass in the field. 6 The wild donkeys stand on the bare hills panting like thirsty jackals. They strain their eyes looking for grass, but there is none to be found." 7 The people say, "Our wickedness has caught up with us, Lord, but help us for the sake of your own reputation. We have turned away from you and sinned against you again and again. 8 O Hope of Israel, our Savior in times of trouble, why are you like a stranger to us? Why are you like a traveler passing through the land, stopping only for the night? 9 Are you also confused? Is our champion helpless to save us? You are right here among us, Lord. We are known as your people. Please don't abandon us now!" 10 So this is what the Lord says to his people: "You love to wander far from me and do not restrain yourselves. Therefore, I will no longer accept you as my people. Now I will remember all your wickedness and will punish you for your sins."

#### ***The Lord Forbids Jeremiah to Intercede***

11 Then the Lord said to me, "Do not pray for these people anymore. 12 When they fast, I will pay no attention. When they present their burnt offerings and grain offerings to me, I will not accept them. Instead, I will devour them with war, famine, and disease." 13 Then I said, "O Sovereign Lord, their prophets are telling them, 'All is well—no war or famine will come. The Lord will surely send you peace.'" 14 Then the Lord said, "These prophets are telling lies in my name. I did not send them or tell them to speak. I did not give them any messages. They prophesy of visions and revelations they have never seen or heard. They speak foolishness made up in their own lying hearts." 15 Therefore, this is what the Lord says: "I will punish these lying prophets, for they have spoken in my name even though I never sent them. They say that no war or famine will come, but they themselves will die by war and famine!"

#### **4. Amos prophesied to the "Northern Kingdom" of Israel before it was taken over by the Assyrians.**

They were at ease and were not concerned about how they were living.

Amos 6:1-7 (NLT)

What sorrow awaits you who lounge in luxury in Jerusalem, and you who feel secure in Samaria! You are famous and popular in Israel, and people go to you for help. (2) But go over to Calneh and see what happened there. Then go to the great city of Hamath and down to the Philistine city of Gath. You are no better than they were, and look at how they were destroyed. (3) You push away every thought of coming disaster, but your actions only bring the day of judgment closer. (4) How terrible for you who sprawl on ivory beds and lounge on

your couches, eating the meat of tender lambs from the flock and of choice calves fattened in the stall. (5) You sing trivial songs to the sound of the harp and fancy yourselves to be great musicians like David. (6) You drink wine by the bowlful and perfume yourselves with fragrant lotions. You care nothing about the ruin of your nation. (7) Therefore, you will be the first to be led away as captives. Suddenly, all your parties will end.

## **5. We are living in the "calm before the storm."**

The Apostolic Age occurred after Jesus was raised from the dead and the church age began.

People had to change their habits and ways of thinking from OT living under law to NT living under grace. Animal sacrifices and circumcision were no longer necessary. For instance, the book of Galatians was written explaining in detail how the grace of God supersedes law.

It was a period of several decades before the people of God really understood the whole of how Jesus' resurrection changed things. The lines were blurred between law and grace.

We may be living now in an unusual period between grace and the judgments that will come.

There is a day of judgment coming just before the return of Christ. The Bible calls it the Day of the Lord. During that time or "Day," nature becomes violent with earthquakes, ravaging storms, and what seems like meteorites striking the earth and creating weather and atmospheric changes.

We just may be in the latter edge of the period we call the grace of God, and we are just before that calamitous time of judgment. The lines are becoming blurred. Earthquakes, catastrophic, record-breaking storms, tsunamis, cyclones, hurricanes, and tornadoes could all be a part of a pattern that will escalate into the likes of which the world has never seen.

Luke 21:25-28 (NLT)

And there will be strange signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. 26 People will be terrified at what they see coming upon the earth, for the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with power and great glory. 28 So when all these things begin to happen, stand and look up, for your salvation is near!

Revelation 8-10 reveals trumpet judgments that occur after the sounding of trumpets in heaven. This begins the Day of the Lord or the judgments that fall just before Jesus returns.

Things will not get better. We are in a window of preparation before things get really bad.

## **6. America has departed from "light," from the Bible that has made it great and kept it safe.**

And now, payday for our sins is encroaching upon us too, just like it did with Israel and Judah.

There is unparalleled division in culture, politics, and even among our churches.

Sin entertains us. Sexual promiscuity is now a way of life. We kill our unborn. Lying and cheating are normal in the marketplace. We are at ease just like Israel and Judah.

We want to be left alone. And that is what God will do. He will let us have our own way, even if it hurts us.

## **7. A newsletter from Billy Long.**

Susan has a cousin, Billy Long, who founded Covenant Church here in Raleigh back in the 70's. Billy put out an e-newsletter this past Thursday. He summarizes my heart-feeling in it well.

*We as a nation have lived in relative peace, plenty, and prosperity. We have been secure, thinking we were exempt from the troubles that plague the rest of the world. For us "the south wind has blown softly." But recent national and global events have created a sense of apprehension and fear. We have seen how helpless we really are in the face of the power and fury of nature. 911 reminded us how vulnerable we are to human wickedness and to those who have malicious intent towards us. We witnessed hurricane Katrina, the Gulf oil spill, the Tsunami in the Indian Ocean, the earthquake and Tsunami in Japan, the earthquake in Haiti, record-breaking floods, plus other catastrophes and strange weather and natural phenomena that have taken multiple thousands of lives. These events came suddenly and ferociously upon people who for the most part were at ease and not suspecting any danger. Even now we see conflicts and distresses around the world, governments gone crazy with spending and debt, and the ominous clouds of severe global economic crisis. For the first time in contemporary history, Americans realize that these plagues can come to our own doors. For the first time we have the sense that our government itself will also be helpless to aid us.*

*We have "sailed" with the warm "south wind blowing softly," and in that place of prosperity and security, we have as a nation turned our back on God, laid aside His written word, and the godly values taught in it. We have called evil good and good evil. We have honored the wicked and persecuted the righteous. We have killed millions of babies in the womb, and rejected God's word regarding morals and lifestyle. We have continued in our religious ritual without stopping to really touch the living God our creator and Lord. Is it possible that God may be trying to get our attention?*

*The storms, disasters, and conflicts have been bad, but they are only tremors...not the big*

quake. They are only the consuming locusts...not the "Babylonian" army that will come in terror.

*It is time for the church to awaken out of its sleep and really...really...pray. In these days the church cannot afford to continue as a nursery being entertained and just "enjoying the service." It needs to arise and pour out its soul and heart to the Lord and to sigh and cry because of the abominations growing in this land, abominations which will surely bring the judgment of God upon us.*

*In his storm at sea, the Apostle Paul arose with a word from God that saved everyone on his boat. Maybe the church in this season should touch God in the same way, and arise as a light in the darkness and speak a word of salvation to a generation that is beginning to feel the insecurity of a threatening storm.*

***"If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*** 2 Chronicles 7:14

### **Action Points:**

1. Get your own "house in order"!
2. Repent of anything you do that you know displeases the Lord.
3. Pray for our beloved nation and its leaders.
4. Share Christ with your friends and with those God places in your life.

### **Appendix**

Before the rapture of the church, the sun will darken, warning the world of the Day of the Lord judgments that are coming to the earth, and encouraging believers to get ready to go to heaven.

Matthew 24:29-31 (NKJV)

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

(30) Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (31) And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Revelation 6:12-17 (NLT)

*I watched as the Lamb broke the **sixth seal**, and there was a great earthquake. The sun became as dark as black cloth, and the moon became as red as blood. (13) Then the stars of*

*the sky fell to the earth like green figs falling from a tree shaken by a strong wind. (14) The sky was rolled up like a scroll, and all of the mountains and islands were moved from their places. (15) Then everyone—the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the wealthy, the powerful, and every slave and free person—all hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. (16) And they cried to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. (17) For the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to survive?"*

Isaiah 13:9-11

(9) Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. (10) For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. (11) "I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Joel 2:30-32 (NKJV)

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. (31) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. (32) And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls.

Joel 3:14-16 (NKJV)

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. (15) The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. (16) The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; but the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Acts 2:19-21

I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. (20) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. (21) And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

## **The Day of The Lord**

According to scripture, the day of the Lord is more than a 24-hour period. It is a time period that moves through a sequence of events where God judges through wrath the disobedience of mankind, the nations that reject His plans, and Satan as the thief that ruined His plan for a

Father and His family. This Day of the Lord culminates in the Second Coming of Christ to earth, and ushers in the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth, which ends with us living in the New Heavens and New Earth with God as our Father and we His sons and daughters.

The Day of the Lord begins with the opening of the 6th seal in Revelation 6:12, and the cosmic disturbances that occur.

In the darkness of that hour, Jesus comes in the brightness of His Glory, lights up the sky, and take us to heaven in the Rapture of the church...

After we believers are raptured (Rev.7:9), the Day of the Lord begins.

It's a time of intense judgment. There is nothing nice or positive about the Day of the Lord...

### **Listen to what the Bible says about the Day of the Lord...**

Revelation 6:12-17 (NKJV)

I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. (13) And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. (14) Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. (15) And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, (16) and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! (17) For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Isaiah 2:12-22 (NIV)

The Lord Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled), (13) for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan, (14) for all the towering mountains and all the high hills, (15) for every lofty tower and every fortified wall, (16) for every trading ship and every stately vessel. (17) The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day, (18) and the idols will totally disappear. (19) Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth. (20) In that day men will throw away to the rodents and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship. (21) They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth. (22) Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?



Isaiah 13:6-13 (NKJV)

Hail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. (7) Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt, (8) And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces will be like flames. (9) Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. (10) For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. (11) "I will punish the world for its evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. (12) I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. (13) Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the Lord of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.

Isaiah 34:4,8 (NKJV)

All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine, and as fruit falling from a fig tree. (8) For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion.

Joel 1:15-20 (NKJV)

Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand; It shall come as destruction from the Almighty. (16) Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God? (17) The seed shrivels under the clods, storehouses are in shambles; Barns are broken down, for the grain has withered. (18) How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless, because they have no pasture; Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment. (19) O Lord, to You I cry out; For fire has devoured the open pastures, and a flame has burned all the trees of the field. (20) The beasts of the field also cry out to You, for the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the open pastures.

Joel 2:10-11 (NKJV)

The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness. (11) The Lord gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it?

\*Joel 2:30-32 (NKJV)

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. (31) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. (32) And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the remnant whom the Lord calls.

\*Joel 3:14-16 (NKJV)

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. (15) The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. (16) The Lord also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; but the Lord will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.

Amos 5:18-20 (NKJV)

Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? It will be darkness, and not light. (19) It will be as though a man fled from a lion, And a bear met him! Or as though he went into the house, Leaned his hand on the wall, And a serpent bit him! (20) Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light? Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?

Zephaniah 1:14-2:3 (NKJV)

The great day of the Lord is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. (15) That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, (16) a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers. (17) "I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse." (18) Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land. (2:1) Gather yourselves together, yes, gather together, O undesirable nation, (2) Before the decree is issued, or the day passes like chaff, Before the Lord's fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger comes upon you! (3) Seek the Lord, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger.

Zechariah 14:1-4 (NKJV)

Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. (2) For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. (3) Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. (4) And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.

### Acts 2:19-21

I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. (20) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. (21) And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

### 2 Peter 3:10-13 (NKJV)

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. (11) Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, (12) looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (13) Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

### 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4 (NKJV)

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. (2) For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. (3) For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. (4) But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.

### 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 (NKJV)

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, (2) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

The day of the Lord encompasses a period of time that immediately follows the rapture of the church, and includes God's wrath, judgment on, and repossession of the world system that has been stolen by Satan from Adam. It is an intense time. There is nothing nice or positive about it from a believer's perspective.