

HERE COMES HARVEY!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In light of the approaching Hurricane named Harvey, I am led to write a brief epistle to the flock of God at Christchurch Baptist Fellowship in Houston, the wonderful people God, in His mercy He allows me to pastor and to all my friends around the world who have been contacting me through all the different mediums now available through modern technology. Today, I thought I would take advantage of the modernity and send forth this word via the internet. First of all, allow me to give you some Bible verses that the Lord brought to me this morning:

Amos 4:13, "For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name."

Psalms 78:26, "He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind."

Job 38:25, 26a, "Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; To cause it to rain on the earth...."

Psalms 107:25, 29, "For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof...He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still."

Luke 8:24, 25, " And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him."

1. God is speaking, let us listen!

God will never compromise His Sovereignty due to our feelings. He remains and ever shall be Almighty God. Ezekiel 10:5 tells us, "And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh." What man may attribute to the acts of nature, I like to think of as the voice of God.

Do you realize that God used stormy weather to bring the man whom even secular scholars call the greatest American theologian, Jonathan Edwards to saving faith? Listen to his words telling how in his youth God drew Him to Himself. "I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder storm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, so to speak, at the first appearance of a thunder storm; and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural to me to sing, or chant for my meditations; or, to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice."

2. Pray!

We hear so much. We say so much. Even now we are inundated with conversation, speculation, exasperation and vexation. This is a great time to double up on contemplation, meditation, supplication and application.

If it is worth talking about; it is worth praying about. Joseph Scriven had it right when he penned the words in his song, "Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!" Philippians 4:6, 7 admonishes us to, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." "Be careful..." means do not let care overpower you; in other words don't let concern eclipse into worry. It is only natural to be concerned and humanly speaking it is only natural to allow some things to worry us, but God rebukes the spirit of worry, in essence, by saying, "Why worry when you can pray?" Too many of God's people take the attitude, "Why pray when you can worry?" I think if we take sides with God and realize that He puts worry into the category of sin, we would be far less likely to go there. And I say, "Amen!"

3. God is still God no matter if we trust Him or doubt Him. Therefore, do yourself a big favor-TRUST HIM!

Recently when all of America, from coast-to-coast was looking up into the sky during the recent solar eclipse, I could not help but pray, "Oh, God, help America to look past the sun to the SON!" Malachi 4:2a: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings..." Oh how our country, our churches, our homes and individuals need healing!

God did not stop being God because of Harvey. As a matter of fact, one of the finest Christians I know is my wife's first cousin named Harvey. So, if I may inject a little humor, Harvey has been nothing but kind to us, all our lives. I've never met a

Harvey I didn't like. The Psalmist said, "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me" (Psalm 57:1, 2). Is this not a good prayer to pray? Amen! Never look at circumstances God places us in our lives or allows us to experience with the attitude, "What is God doing to me?" Please understand He does all things for us (Romans 8:28)! All things work together for our good, even though not everything seems to be good at the time. Remember again, we love and serve a God that performeth all things for us!

Many years ago, I got this little ditty from an old preacher friend of mine, Vance Havner:

“Whether the weather be hot,
Whether the weather be cold,
Whether the weather be rainy or not,
We weather the weather
Whether we like it or not.”

I love you all!

Your Pastor and Forever Friend,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.