

Session 23

How Then Shall We Live? (Part 1)

A. Introduction

1. In light of the coming End-Time eschatological crises, one of the most important questions for God's people to answer is, "How then shall we live?"
2. It would be naïve to think and believe that as God's people, we do not need to prepare ourselves for the storms that are to come, as Jesus Himself exhorted us to "watch and pray", and there is a response on our part for the Bride of Christ to make ourselves ready (Rev. 19:7).
3. The storms that will hit the face of the whole earth as we near the End of the Age require us to search out God's Word for His direction and wisdom as to how to respond in times of crisis, and to respond accordingly.

B. Four Contributing Factors to Global Crisis during the End Times

1. The following four factors will reach their fullness at the End of the Age, resulting in a perfect storm as conflict between light and darkness reaches its peak:
 - a. Fullness of man's sin (Rev. 9:21, 14:18, 17:5; Dan. 8:23, 12:10);
 - b. Fullness of Satan's rage (Rev. 12:12, 9:21; Dan. 7:21,25)
 - c. Fullness of God's judgment (Rev. 14:10, 15:7);
 - d. Fullness of creation's groan (Rom. 8:19-24).
2. It will be a time of great turmoil and pressure that the world has not seen before.

C. The Five Major Eschatological Storms

1. There are five major eschatological storms that will hit the face of the earth as we near the return of Jesus. Every human being will be susceptible to it, and believers will not be spared.

2. We are beginning to see these storms brewing today already and many in society and in the church being affected.

3. These five storms are: fear, offense, deception, confusion and lust.
 - a. The storm of fear.

“...men’s hearts failing them from fear...” (Lk. 21:26)

 - i. One of the most common exhortations throughout Scripture from the Old to New Testament is: “Do not fear!” (Josh. 1:8, Isa. 41:10, 44:8, 54:4, Matt. 10:26, 28, 31, Lk. 12:32, Rev. 2:10). This is because the Lord knows that we are prone to fear as weak human beings.
 - ii. Jesus prophesied that men’s hearts would fail because of the fear that would come upon the earth with the uncertainty and the turmoil of the End Times.
 - iii. Many would make irrational choices or not be able to make any choices due to the crippling effects of fear upon their hearts.
 - iv. One source of fear would come from the increased persecution that God’s people will face during the End Times (Matt. 24:9). God’s people will be persecuted and prevailed against by Antichrist for a period of time, which the Lord will allow (Dan. 7:21, Rev. 12:17).
 - v. Lest we think that we will be able to stand by our own strength, we can look at people of God in the past who gave in to the fear of persecution:
 - Peter denied Jesus and any association he had with Him when faced with pressure (Matt. 26:33–35, Mk. 14:29–31, Jn. 18:15–27);
 - Jonah disobeyed God and ran in the opposite direction away from Nineveh (Jon. 1:3), which was a godless nation that persecuted Israel.
 - vi. This is something that we will have to prepare for through growing strength in our inner man (Col 1:11). If not, we will succumb to our fleshly tendencies of self-preservation and compromise as believers in order to preserve our lives on this side of eternity.

- b. The storm of offense, which will lead to betrayal and hatred.
“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.” (Matt. 24:10)
- i. As shakings intensify and lives are affected, many people, including believers, will begin to question and wonder — is God really good? Why would He allow this to happen?
 - ii. Without an understanding of God’s heart and storyline, many will become offended at God for not “coming through” for them, or for allowing loss in their lives and the lives of those around them — whether jobs, careers, money, relationships, people etc.
 - iii. Prophet Habakkuk, upon seeing the judgment that the Lord was going to bring upon Israel through the hands of Babylon, an evil nation, was offended at the Lord.
 - iv. Many were also offended at Jesus at His first coming because He did not fall in line with their ideas and expectations of Him (Matt. 13:57). The Pharisees took major offense at Him when He corrected and called out their hypocrisy (Matt. 15:12).
 - v. Betrayal will also result from offense and fear. Scripture talks about the pressures being so great that even family members of the same household will betray one another (Mk. 13:12, Mic. 7:6).
 - vi. Jesus is aware that our hearts are easily offended and thus warns us in advance so that we can deal with our hearts.
 - vii. We cannot assume that we will not be offended, but instead begin to honestly deal with what is inside our hearts now, so that when greater pressures come, we can stand without offense until He returns (Phil. 1:10).
- c. The storm of deception.
“For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.” ... “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matt. 24:5, 24)

- i. Jesus warns of false Christs who would come, claiming to be the saviour. They will even perform signs and wonders and move in power (Mk. 13:22).
 - There are many cults existing today that are formed around personalities and figures who claim to be “prophets” or “saviours”.
 - Moving in signs and wonders does not prove the veracity of claims that these false Christs are making, especially if what they are claiming does not line up with the Word of God.
- ii. The ultimate false Christ will come in the person of Antichrist at the End of the Age, who will be someone who seems to have the answers that will be needed to solve the various crises around the world (Dan. 8:25).
- iii. Deception begins very subtly and starts with a compromise in the absolute Truth of God according to His Word. It could come in the form of selecting only certain passages of Scripture as “truth” while discarding the rest, and also mis-interpreting the Word in accordance to our own pre-conceived ideas.
- iv. Already, we are seeing deceptive doctrines making their way into the Church today.
 - Examples include hyper-grace theology, a re-definition of “love” and “justice”, and the acceptance of alternative lifestyles in the Church in the name of “love”.
- v. 2 Tim. 4:3–4 warns us against this truth crisis that we are already beginning to see: *“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”*
- vi. If we do not root and ground ourselves in His Word, love the truth and hold fast to it, we will inevitably be “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting” (Eph. 4:14).

d. The storm of confusion.

"...distress of nations, with perplexity.." (Lk. 21:25)

- i. Jesus prophesied that nations would be in utter confusion as the end-time pressures and shakings escalate.
- ii. As we see the increase in natural disasters, social unrest, political and economic upheavals and the like, many will be confused as to what is happening and why there is so much turmoil and unrest.
- iii. The Church will also fall into this category if we do not start preparing ourselves and develop understanding of the issues of our day and of what is to come.

e. The storm of lust / sexual immorality.

"And they did not repent of...their sexual immorality..." (Rev. 9:21)

- i. Lust and sexual immorality has escalated quickly over the past few decades, especially beginning with the sexual revolution in the 1960s, the invention of the internet which has allowed for the proliferation of pornography, and the erosion of God's commandment for the institution of marriage.
- ii. Perversion will continue to increase in the world and we will see the fullness of Romans 1:24–32, where God will give many over to vile passions and debased minds.
- iii. The church has not been exempt from this onslaught. Divorce is already widely accepted and alternatively lifestyles are increasingly being accepted in the church as well.
 - Throughout Scripture, we are constantly warned to flee from sexual immorality and lust (Acts 15:29, 1 Cor. 6:13, 18);
 - The devil will use this especially against the church because lust and sexual immorality quench the prophetic spirit in God's people;
 - Indulging in lustful pleasures will rob God's people of the fullness of life and the inheritance He has for us in this generation;

- The perversion will be so great that without the grace of God, we will not be able to resist and walk in purity and holiness before Him.
- iv. However, God is zealous for our fullness and will come against every sexual immorality and impurity in His people (Rev. 2:14, 20) and will provide a way for us to stand.

D. The Great Need — Cultivate and Develop Confidence in God

1. The great need will be for God's people to have confidence in Him as the storms and intensity increases. This is something that we need to start cultivating and developing now.
2. It is a mistake for us to think that confidence will suddenly and automatically arise in us when the storms hit, if we have not been intentionally cultivating it in our daily lives.
3. Throughout Scripture, we see that those who are able to stand for God and with God are those who have intentionally prepared themselves in accordance to God's ordained ways and allowed Him to bring them through a time of preparation and strengthening.

E. 4 Areas of Confidence to Cultivate

1. Confidence in God (Isa 33:6)
 - a. We need to cultivate confidence in His nature and character, in accordance to what He says about Himself in His Word.
 - b. Confidence in the goodness, mercy and grace of God is paramount so that we will not waver regardless of how chaotic things around us may get.
2. Confidence in His Word (2 Tim. 3:16)
 - a. In a day and age where the world believes that "truth" is relative, we need to cultivate confidence in the Word of God — that the Bible is the absolute and authoritative truth about who God is, about the world we live in, and about the true nature of what reality is.
 - b. This includes confidence in what the Word says about who God is, and also confidence in His narrative for the End of the Age.

- i. When we know His storyline and believe that what is written will come to pass, it will guide and direct our paths and decisions.
 - ii. It will also give us hope because we know how human history ends — with a victorious Bride welcoming Jesus at His Second Coming.
- 3. Confidence in His love (Rom. 8:35–39)
 - a. This is important because being confident in God’s love for us will give us strength and mature us. In Ephesians 3:16–18, Apostle Paul prays for His people to be rooted and grounded in His love so that they will be filled to the fullness of Christ.
 - b. When we have the same confidence as Apostle Paul that nothing can separate us from God’s love, it will cause us to emerge as more than conquerors through every trial and tribulation, especially the End-Time storms.
- 4. Confidence in His leadership and in His voice (Isa 30:21)
 - a. We need to cultivate confidence in His ability to lead us and in hearing His Voice. This will be especially crucial when hearing Him correctly could be a matter of life and death in the future as pressures increase.
 - b. We can begin today to cultivate a sensitivity to His Spirit and to also start with placing our confidence not in our own ability to follow Him, but in His ability to lead us.
 - c. The more we walk with Him and learn to hear His voice, the more we will recognize His leadership in our lives, and build our confidence in His ability to lead us.

F. The Approach Towards Cultivating Confidence

- 1. Turn to the Lord, especially to His everlasting Word for His instructions, wisdom and heart. This is our best and should be our first response in the face of the coming storms and crisis.
 - a. If it is the Lord who is sovereignly orchestrating the coming End-Time transition and drama, He will have the answer.
 - b. The last thing that we should do is to lean on our own human wisdom and effort to try and figure things out.
 - c. We also do not want to respond reactively out of fear without seeking God’s divine counsel and steps ahead.

- d. God will shake all that can be shaken. This will cause desperation so that there is no solution except in God. He will remove all our false hopes so that we hope only in Him.
2. Hear and take heed of what God calls us to do in times of crisis from His Word.
 - a. The Lord does not leave us guessing as to what He desires from us. Instead, He repeatedly calls His people to hear Him and pay attention to what He says to us, especially through His Word.
 - b. Oftentimes, it is not that God is not speaking, but that we as His people tend to be hard of hearing. Thus, we need to take His Word and instructions seriously.
 3. Respond in accordance to His directions and instructions.
 - a. After taking heed to His Word, we need to respond accordingly. We can respond with confidence and certainty in times of crisis because it is aligned with His heart.
 4. Persevere in the response.
 - a. There is a need to persevere in our response to the Lord, because cultivating confidence will not happen overnight.
 - b. We can be confident that even as we set our hearts to respond to Him, He will come and lead us in the preparation and give us the grace through the process.

G. Conclusion

1. God has His heart, wisdom and instructions in His Word on how to prepare ourselves for the eschatological storms that will hit the surface of this earth.
2. If we respond in accordance to His biblical instructions, we can have confidence that He will strengthen us and cause us to arise as the mature Bride burning and shining for Him (Rev. 12:11).
3. As believers, our goal is not to escape, merely survive or grit our teeth to the end. Our goal is to thrive and overcome, and participate in the glory that He has reserved for the End-Time Church.
4. We will look at God's divine instructions and blueprint from the Book of Joel in the next session.