

Preacher's Pen points

Prepare!



As I write this, Hurricane Ivan is about to crash upon the Gulf coast somewhere between Mobile and New Orleans. Hearing of it, my thoughts went back to an experience I had over fifteen years ago. Then, for the first time, I had the opportunity to join several other gospel preachers in a special building project in Gulfport, MS. The church there was meeting in a dilapidated double-wide trailer, desperately needing a new meeting place and unable to pay someone to build it. Consequently, several of us who preached in the north Alabama area went there to assist them in framing up a meeting place. From daylight to dusk we worked hard each day, trying to get as much done as possible during the course of the week. And then when night came, after supper, those of us who preached took turns preaching to encourage these brethren in a gospel meeting. It was a great experience.

I also remember being the one who hung on the south wall and whose job it was to nail down the trusses as they were put in place and then to nail on hurricane straps in the event a hurricane should ever come that way. Well, our work is perhaps about to be tested and we hope that the building will stand the blasts of hurricane Ivan. But the whole matter reminded me of an important lesson about preparation.

Storms Will Come

Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes encouraged his readers to live with joy, but added this cautionary note: *“and let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.”*

(*Eccl. 11:8*). Solomon wisely observed that we will not avoid life's storms. Sickness, death, temptations, sorrows and disappointments are all a part of our earthly existence.

We Need to Prepare

Perhaps we imagine that we will beat the odds, that somehow life's storms will not come our way. But the wiser approach is, as an old adage says, “Expect the best; prepare for the worst”. Since none of us knows what the future holds, it behooves us to make sure that our faith will be strong enough to withstand the storms of life. One of our spiritual songs asks, “Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, when the clouds unfold their winds of strife? When the strong tides lift, and the cables stain, will your anchor drift or firm remain?” Good question! In view of the impending storms, it would be good to nail down a few “hurricane straps”—a firm faith (1 Pet. 5:9), a devoted love (1 Jn. 5:4), and a committed hope (Heb. 6:19).

How To Prepare

How do we get these things? Not by hurrying to the spiritual lumber yard the day the storm hits, but by pursuing a life of faith day by day. As we make time to study the Scriptures, to pray to God, to put His word into practice in all our relationships, we develop the metal to withstand life's challenges. Assembling with the saints also helps because it provides opportunity for increased knowledge, encouragement to keep growing, and the fellowship of other believers. Let just say that today we are preparing for the storm! —Johnny Felker