

## When Tragedy Strikes

*John Isaac Edwards*

Tragedy does not discriminate. It can strike anyone, anywhere, anytime. The Bible says, “In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him” (Eccl. 7:14). Consider:

1) ***We Live In A World Where There Is Trouble And Tribulation.*** Job said, “Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14:1). Jesus declared, “...In the world ye shall have tribulation...” (Jn. 16:33). It wasn’t always this way. When God created the heaven and the earth, all was good. However, when man transgressed God’s law, affliction, anguish, calamity, disease, disaster, death, grief, pain, sadness, sorrow, tears, trouble and tribulation entered the world. Tragedy is as old as the human family. “Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him” (Gen. 4:8). While visiting the country of Moab, Naomi’s husband and two sons died (Ruth 1:1-5). Job suffered the loss of his seven sons and three daughters in a day (Job 1). Yet he said, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:22). And again,

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him...” (Job 13:15). Luke thirteen tells of Galileans slain by the order of Pilate and those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew (vv. 1-5). It was not that they were sinners more than anyone else, but trouble and tragedy is part of living in a world corrupted by sin. Such should motivate us to repent.

2) ***How Much We Need The Lord.*** When tragedy strikes, it puts us in a position where we come to realize just how helpless and powerless we are and how dependent we are on God who can do more for us than earthly persons. We become aware of our own limitations. We can’t be everywhere we want to be or do everything we want to do. However, we understand that God is there. He is where we can’t be, and He can do what we can’t — with Him all things are possible (Mt. 19:26). We just have to cast our care upon Him, knowing He cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7), and trust Him with the results. The Psalmist uttered, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth” (Ps. 121:1-2). The song *People Need The Lord* says: *Everyday they pass me by,*

*I can see it in their eyes.  
Empty people filled with care,  
Headed who knows where?  
On they go through private pain,  
Living fear to fear.  
Laughter hides their silent cries,  
Only Jesus hears.  
People need the Lord, people  
need the Lord.  
At the end of broken dreams, He’s  
the open door.  
People need the Lord, people  
need the Lord.  
When will we realize, people  
need the Lord?  
In the Lord, there is “peace  
(Jn. 16:33), “...which passeth all  
understanding...” (Phil. 4:7).*

3) ***We Do Not Know What A Day May Bring Forth.*** We can read in black and white, “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Prov. 27:1), but when tragedy strikes, we see it in technicolor! Jesus taught, “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Mt. 6:34). The Lord told of a certain rich man who had plans for many years, but did not live through the night! God said unto him, “...this night thy soul shall be required of thee...” (Lk. 12:20). James spoke of those who say, “To day or to morrow we will go into such a

city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain” and said, “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (Jas. 4:13-15). Have you considered how things can change in a moment of time? In a moment of time you can go from doing everything for yourself to being entirely dependent upon others for the most basic of needs often taken for granted such as bathing, clothing and feeding yourself. And, one can go from enjoying life to life being snuffed out — in a moment of time!

**4) The Need To Always Be Ready.** Since we live in a world where tragedies occur suddenly and unexpectedly, we need to live every moment as if it could be our last. If we have anything unresolved with any of our fellowman or stand in need of making our life right with God, do not let the sun go down before it is straightened out. Say what you need to say. You may not have another opportunity to say it. They may not have another opportunity to hear it. Do what

you need to do. Folks in Bible days made their lives right with God “the same day” (Acts 2:41), “the same hour” (Acts 16:33). You may not have another day; you may not have another hour! The Psalmist said, “I am ready to die” (Ps. 88:15). Can we say we are ready?

**5) What Matters.** Nothing matters much, and few things really matter at all. When tragedy strikes, we are reminded of what really matters. 1 Corinthians 7:19 teaches, “...keeping the commandments of God is what matters” (NKJV). Solomon, who set out to “...see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life” (Eccl. 2:3), stated, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13). John the Revelator penned, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. 22:14).

**6) Five Facts Of Life.** *Life is brief.* Life is “...but for a moment” (2 Cor. 4:17). “As

for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more” (Ps. 103:15-16).

*Death is sure.* “For the living know that they shall die...” (Eccl. 9:5). Reading the obituaries and walking through the cemeteries shows death is no respecter of persons! “...it is appointed unto men once to die...” (Heb. 9:27).

*Judgment will be just.* Christ will be the judge and His word the standard (Jn. 12:48; Rom. 2:16). Judgment will be universal in scope and individual in nature (2 Cor. 5:10).

*Eternity is long.* Think of being in comfort where “...there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain...” (Rev. 21:4), as opposed to “Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil...” (Rom. 2:9), “...world without end...” (Eph. 3:21)!

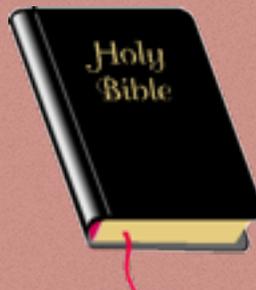
*Therefore, preparation is necessary.* Prepare by hearing (Mt. 17:5), believing (Jn. 8:24), repenting (Lk. 13:3), confessing (Mt. 10:32), being baptized (Acts 2:38), and being faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Now is the time to prepare (2 Cor. 6:2).

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