

# The University Heights Messenger

October 31, 2010

## Lessons From A Tornado Watch

I was sitting in the office last Tuesday morning with the door to the parking lot open as it usually is. As I was working an intercom located nearby began playing the short tune that heralds an announcement of some sort. A man's voice came over the speaker informing everyone that a tornado watch was in effect and everyone should seek safety indoors immediately.

Later in the day as I was driving home I began to think about the announcement from a spiritual perspective and several things struck me. God has made similar announcements throughout His Word. One such place is Hosea 8:7. **“For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.”** In the first seven verses of this chapter God is speaking out against Israel's idolatry and declaring that judgment will be its result unless stopped. Idolatry is especially pernicious because of the wickedness associated with it. Idolatry nourishes vanity, selfishness, and emptiness. It has no more substance than if one were to sow to the wind. Yet the sowing of seed always anticipates a yield greater than the sowing. So it would be in their case. While they sowed emptiness and selfishness, they would reap the very substantial power of God's judgment.

The great sin of our day is idolatry. People put themselves before God, families before God, work before God, money before God, and this list could continue forever. This is a problem for all people, Christian and non Christian alike. As I considered the tornado watch, several things came to mind.

First, it went largely unheeded. I walked to the door and looked up into the

sky. Nothing unusual seemed to be happening and so I promptly forgot about the announcement. Some people in our parking lot acted as though they had not even heard the announcement as they went right on talking and laughing as if nothing were amiss. A glance through the upstairs window indicated that the vast majority of the campus was heedless of the warning as students walked carelessly with their ipods or cell phones at their ears. Because nothing appeared unusual, few gave any heed to the warning.

Take a moment to read our Lord's words from **Matthew 24:36-44**. Now consider Peter's words from 2 Peter 3:4, having introduced the subject of scoffers in verse 3. **“They will say, ‘Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.’** If a tornado suddenly appeared as the man was making his announcement each one of us would have been running all over the place seeking cover. Because it didn't, his warning went largely ignored.

Furthermore, it occurred to me that having paid this warning little or no attention, it would have been too late for those of us in this area last Tuesday to make preparations to save ourselves had that tornado appeared. Do you recall Peter's exhortation from Acts 2:40? **“And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this crooked generation.’** I think also of Paul's words from Philippians 2:12. **“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absen-**

**ce, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”** And let us not forget Jude’s exhortation from Jude 21. **“Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.”**

Here’s the thing, when that tornado appears everyone needs to be in a place of safety *right then*. If we’re running all over the place when the whirlwind is among us we’ve waited too long. In the same way, when our Lord returns, and the great and final Day of the Lord has reached us, we *must* be in safety at its arrival. If we’re not, we’ve waited too long and having nothing but destruction and punishment to look forward to.

Third, it occurred to me that if that tornado had struck none of us would have anyone but ourselves to blame for our predicament. None of us were seeking shelter. None of us were making preparations. I could not help but think of God’s words spoken through Ezekiel. **“When this comes--and come it will!--then they will know that a prophet has been among them”** (Ezekiel 33:33). It wasn’t as though the warning had not been sounded. It wasn’t as though we did not know that a tornado was a possibility. If it had struck all we could have said was that we had been warned. God has been no less explicit in His warnings.

There is a terrible tornado coming our way. When it hits it will leave nothing standing. There *is* a place of safety from this event. **“Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!”** (Psalm 61:4). When this tornado comes--and come it will!--am I going to be found under the shelter of His wings? Are you? Please think about these things.

AL

#### **IN NEED OF PRAYERS:**

**Glenn Davis** suffered a severe seizure Tuesday afternoon. His tumor has not grown but the doctors had to up his medication.

**John Thompson** has been dealing with significant pain in and around his neck.

Our members: **The Tirey’s, Glenn Kimberlin, Janet Brundige**

Others: **Ann Sego, John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Sara Phillips, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Kay Montgomery, Jean Gartland, Wes Kidd, Vera Howerton, Gail Stein, Glenn Goldy, Shannon Gilbert, Chuck McDavitt,**

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

The second streaming Bible study will be this Tuesday evening at 7. Matt and I will be starting at Mark 1:16. Check it out and tell your friends!

#### **BIBLE READING SCHEDULE**

**Sunday:** Isa 8-9, Ps 84, Acts 7  
**Monday:** Isa 10-12, Ps 85, Acts 8  
**Tuesday:** Isa 13-14, Ps 86, Acts 9  
**Wednesday:** Isa 15-19, Ps 87, Acts 10  
**Thursday:** Isa 20-22, Ps 88, Acts 11  
**Friday:** Isa 23-25, Ps 89:1-29, Acts 12  
**Saturday:** Isa 26-28, Ps 89:30-52, Acts 13

#### **SERMON TOPICS:**

Sunday AM. “Sir, We Wish To See Jesus” 2  
(John 20:30-31; 21:25)

Sunday PM. Vessels For Honor Or Dishonor  
(1 Timothy 2:20-21)