

Questions in a Time of Crisis: Answered from God's Word

Transcript of message delivered September 11, 2001, by James MacDonald

No matter how hard we try, words cannot express the horror that we have felt and experienced repeatedly this week. The anger, the grief, the concern, the compassion, the heartache. We have had three extensive prayer services here just this week already. I don't know about you, but earlier I was feeling pretty wrung out.

It is at times like this that people need God the most. You know that, don't you? People who haven't been talking about God for a long time are talking about Him now. The hard part is that our minds are filled with questions that can make God seem very far away. Sometimes they are big questions, hard questions. When we have big questions in our minds about God, they can pretty quickly shatter our impoverished little theology department and leave us feeling really alone.

Today I proclaim to you a God of truth and a God of mercy. He is a big God. He is the One true God. He can shoulder our criticisms. He can certainly answer our questions. In fact I did an informal survey and gathered up the questions that people have been asking. So I know the questions on people's minds. "Why would God allow such suffering?" "Where is God when innocent people are dying?" "How could a God of love--?"

Those are reasonable questions. I want you to know that God is not put off in the least that we would ask them. In God's Word we find faith-building answers to these questions; but they are answers that will only satisfy us if our hearts are open to God and our minds are receptive to truth. So let's take a moment now and pray before we open

God's Word. Before we even bow our heads, let's really decide for ourselves, "Am I using my questions as a way to push God away, or do I really want answers?"

Father, we thank You that we can humble ourselves before You. You are the one true God. Righteousness and truth are the foundation of Your throne. Lord, we are not ashamed to admit to You that we have a hard time reconciling some of what we have seen with what we know to be true about You. But we have learned by experience that when questions plague our minds and You seem far away that the problem is in us. So we pray, O God, that You would become very large before our eyes today. We invite Your Holy Spirit to take truths that go beyond spoken words and nourish our hearts by them. Might You be honored and lifted up in the proclamation of Your truth today. Might You comfort Your people – not as an end in itself – but so that we could comfort others with the comfort that we have been comforted with. This we pray in the matchless name of Your Son, the Lord Jesus. Amen.

1A) Why is there so much evil in the world?

Let's go. There are good answers to the questions we are asking but we have to be willing to seek for them. So I would challenge you today that these questions can be answered if our hearts really are looking for answers and really want to know the truth that is found in the Lord. God has made Himself known in a book and we can find the answers there.

Here is the first question: "Why is there so much evil in the world if there is really a God who loves us?" The Apostle Paul was writing about the evil in the world and showing the

people their part. In Romans 1, he says to the Romans that all Gentiles are sinners; in Romans 2, he says that all Jewish people are sinners. In Romans 3, he says, “Bottom line – everybody in this world is sinful.” In Chapters 4 and 5 he begins to detail the solution to that sin. It is found through faith in Christ. But he comes back to it in Romans 5:12. He says, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all have sinned.* Just as through one man sin entered the world. God created Adam and Eve. They were perfect. They had a perfect environment; they had a perfect relationship with each other; they had a perfect relationship with God. Do you know what else they had? They had perfect freedom. That is the way God made them. They had the freedom to choose whether they wanted to worship God and obey His commands or they wanted to do their own thing – sin. Guess what? They chose sin. And *through one man*, the Bible says, *sin entered the world.*

God is not the Author of sin; God is the Author of freedom. God is the Author of a world in which people have the freedom to choose Him or to reject Him. God created a world where people have the freedom to choose. With that came sin.

You say, “Well then God shouldn’t have created a world with freedom! He shouldn’t have made a world where we have the choice if all this pain comes from sin.” So what then? A world of robots? “I worship You Almighty God. There is none like You. It is 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. Time to worship God. Everyone worship.” For what!? How meaningless would that be? Very! So God decided that He wanted to create a world in which people had the freedom to choose or reject Him because in that freedom those who choose Him offer meaningful worship to God. You came here this morning

because you chose to and God, in His infinite wisdom, sovereignly determined that He preferred the meaningful worship of a few over the meaningless worship of the robotic masses. That is the world that God made. Because God made a world like that, people have the freedom to choose and many choose sin.

What pain in our world is not the result of sin? All sickness. All disease. The very distortion of the created world itself is all, the Bible says, the result of sin. All of our broken relationships and all of our selfish ways – all of it – is the result of sin. *Just as through one man sin entered the world.* Why is there so much evil in the world?

Because some of those people who choose to reject and rebel against God actually go so far into sin that they become the very instruments of Satan himself. They do his bidding and inflict great pain upon the human race. You say, “I don’t see how God could let that happen!”

A pastor was walking through the streets of a city one day. He had with him his friend, a barber. The barber said, “This God you preach! This God of love! I am not seeing it! Look at all of the suffering. Look at all of the heartache. Look at all the struggle that people are going through. How could a God of love allow all of these things?” The pastor was silent. They walked on a little further and saw among all the hurting people one man who was especially unkempt with long, straggly, dirty hair, and several days’ growth of beard. The pastor turned to the barber and said, “What kind of barber are you? Look at that man! How could you let him go on like this? Why haven’t you helped him?” The barber said, “Well I am open for business every day. If he wanted to come to me I would gladly have helped him, but he didn’t come to me.” The pastor said, “It is

just like that with God.” He is available to all who come to Him. No one who comes to Him has *ever* been turned away. God loves the world. God has provided for all we need in His Son, Jesus Christ. But many turn away callously and reject Him saying, “I don’t need what God has to offer.”

2A) Why does God allow what He could prevent?

You might be saying to yourself, “Well I don’t like this world of freedom that God created. Did God see those planes about to crash?” Yes, He did. “Couldn’t He have stopped them?” Yes, He could have.

That leads to the second question. I think it is the hardest one to answer. “Why does God allow what He could prevent? Why does He do that? Why does God let things happen? God, You could have stopped that! Why do You allow things when You could prevent them?” First of all let me say that I have wrestled with this question myself. I wouldn’t stand here to give you the biblical answers that have satisfied me if I didn’t believe them with my whole heart. You are going to have to think with me for a few minutes here because the answers to hard questions are not usually easy answers. So help me out a little bit. All in favor of thinking? I am going to get it on the table right now, but you are all going to have to really think and focus in here. All right?

Let’s look at this question from 5 different perspectives.

1b) Doxological Explanation

Let's call the first explanation the doxological explanation. *Doxa* is the Greek word for *glory*. The glory of God is any manifestation of His presence. Let me give it to you in a nutshell: We exist for God. We are here for God's plans. We are here for God's purposes and not the reverse. We are here so that God can display Himself. Eons ago, before time itself began, there was no one but God. No space. No time. No nothing. God spoke and said, *Let there be light and there was light*. Then God said, *Let Us* [Father, Son and Holy Spirit] *make man in Our own image*. God created humanity. God made all of us. He put us here for a reason – to display Himself. He is not here for us though He loves us. We are here for Him. When God decided to create humanity, it wasn't because He was lonely. That is so dumb. I have heard people say that. God is never lonely. God didn't need anything. It wasn't because God was bored. It was because God has a lot to give and He created people to give to and to display Himself. "Do you want to know what I am about?" He created a whole race of people, the human race that He could display Himself in. That is what this is all about! We exist for Him!

Psalm 19:1 says, *The heavens declare the glory of God*.

Psalm 8:1 says that God has set His *glory above the heavens*. It is the most important thing, God displaying Himself.

Isaiah 43:7 says, *Even everyone who I have called by My name, for I have created you for My glory*. I have created you so I could display Myself.

Isaiah 40 tells us that earthly rulers rise up and God blows upon them and they wither.

Isaiah 40:22, *And all its inhabitants of the earth together are like grasshoppers* before God.

Of course He could have stopped this from happening. When He prevents something He does it to display Himself. Might I tell you that God often does prevent things. In fact, the Scripture tells us in many different places that if it weren't for the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit in this world we would have destroyed ourselves a long time ago! When He prevents things, He does it to display Himself. And when God allows things, He does it to display Himself. That is the Doxological Explanation.

2b) Philosophical Explanation

Here is the philosophical explanation. You may be saying to yourself, "But why can't God make a world where we are free to choose Him or not, but then sort of secretly guarantee that everyone chooses Him? Don't you think that would be a great world? I'd vote for that. We are free to choose Him, but everyone chooses Him. That's the world I want, God." Do you see the problem with that?

Now don't be storming the platform half-way through the explanation. Did you know that God has limitations? Did you know that there are some things that God can't do? Now wait. II Timothy 2:13 says, *God cannot deny Himself*. He can't do it. God cannot deny who He is. Can't. Not won't; can't. James 1:13 says, *For God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone*. You're like, "C'mon God, tempt

me.” Can’t. God cannot do that. Titus 1:2 says, *God cannot lie*. “Aw, c’mon. Just a little fib.” Can’t. God cannot do anything that is contrary to His nature.

God cannot do anything that contradicts the laws of the universe that He has made. Theologians have debated through the centuries, “Can God make a rock so big that He can’t lift it?” No! If He made a bigger rock, He could still lift it. If He made it even bigger than that, He could still lift it. If He made it a million times bigger than that, He could still lift it. God cannot make a rock so big He can’t lift it.

“Well can God make a round square?” (Call the ambulance; the pastor is loosing it!) No! He can’t. “Can God make a married bachelor?” No, men. God cannot do that. Now listen. There are some things God cannot do. Here’s one: God cannot make a world in which people are free to choose or reject Him and, at the same time, guarantee that everyone will accept Him. God cannot do that. The kind of world that God made is a good one. God decided that He preferred the meaningful worship of a few over the robotic worship of the masses. This is the world that God has made. And it is good. Everyone who turns to Him and comes to Him by faith will rejoice through all eternity about the incredible worthiness and goodness of God. Those who reject Him will never see it. That is the world that God has made.

Why does God allow what He could prevent?

3b) Theological Explanation

Here's the theological explanation. Some of you are saying to yourself, "Well I don't like the world that God made. I don't think there should be any suffering. I don't think God should do this." I don't want to hurt your feelings, but do you have any idea how arrogant that is? I have to tell you. God is not up in heaven going, "Oh, what are We going to do? Sally has really just lost confidence in Us." God doesn't read the papers. God doesn't follow the popularity polls. He is so disinterested in all of that. God does what pleases Himself. All of this exists for Him. What God does is perfect. And the fact that we don't always see it is not breaking Him down very much.

In fact, let me just read to you some Scripture that reinforces this truth.

Job 41:11, *God said, "Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine."*

Psalm 50:12, *God says, "If I were hungry, I would not tell you. For the world is Mine and all that it contains."*

Psalm 115:3, *Our God is in the heavens. He does whatever He pleases.*

Acts 17:24, *The God who made the world and all things in it since He is Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made with hands nor is He served by human hands as though He needed anything since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things.*

Romans 9:20, *On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this" will it?*

The bottom line is God is God and we are not. He does what is good and right always. No one thwarts His purposes. And no one in eternity doubts, even in an infinitesimal way, the 100% goodness of God. This is all only about this; we can't always see it. We don't doubt it. But we just can't always see it.

4b) Consequential Explanation

Now the consequential explanation. This is still another angle on *Why does God allow what He could prevent?* Galatians 6:7 says, *Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever a person sows, that they also will reap. Whatever a person plants, that they also will harvest.* Now I am sure it is not a news flash to you that our nation, in an unprecedented way has been planting rejection of God's ways for many years now, rebelling against Him, shedding innocent blood, showing a complete disregard for God's laws. Perversity abounds and is defended and flies in the face of God. You can't plant that year after year and pray for crop failure. It's not going to happen. *Be not deceived. God is not mocked.* [What] a nation plants, it will also harvest. When God allows mass suffering, it is because of a nation that has drifted from Him. His heart is *yearning* to gather them back.

You say, "Does God really do that?" This has happened over and over again in Scripture. Here is just a small portion of God's Word.

In Judges 3:7, in 1380 BC, God sold the people of Israel into the hands of the Mesopotamians to accomplish His purposes.

In Judges 4:1, 1250 BC, God again sold the nation of Israel into the hands of the Canaanites to accomplish His purposes.

II Kings 17:6, God used the nation of Assyria to defeat the northern kingdom of Israel and take the people into captivity to accomplish His purposes.

In II Kings 24, God used the nation of Babylon to defeat the southern kingdom of Judah. Again people were taken into captivity to accomplish His purposes.

Jesus Christ Himself, in Matthew 24, predicted the destruction of Jerusalem. And in 70 AD, God used the nation of Rome to destroy the city of Jerusalem and burn the temple. Now don't you think on all of those days there were people who were saying, "God, how could You allow this?! What are You doing?" And yet as history unfolded in every single instance, God proved Himself faithful. God was at work. He was trying to get the attention of His people. One of the reasons why we have a hard time getting this past our little theology department is because we have rejected the notion of a God whose love is perfecting. God's love is not a pampering love; God's love is a perfecting love. God is incredibly interested in the righteousness of His people. So God sovereignly allows some things that we would never choose nor understand even fully. Billy Graham has said, "If God does not judge America, He will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah." Consequences.

5b) Practical Explanation

But finally, why does God allow what He could prevent? A practical explanation. I think at the end of the day we have to say, “Do you know what? I don’t know what God is doing. I know some things about God. I know that He is good. I know that He is faithful. I know that in eternity all of us will see and agree. But we won’t always fully know or understand here. I think of all of those people in that tower, they were not all overtly rebellious people. They were not all wicked people. Some of them were believers. And then the suffering of their innocent children and all of it. Who could explain all of that? And God forgive us for arrogantly thinking we understand completely. We don’t! The Bible says, *Now we see through a glass dimly*. We don’t understand fully all that God is doing.

A man I know named Leonard Sweet has written extensively on the drifting of our culture away from God. He tells the story of a day he went to visit a young girl, eight years old, dying in a hospital of cancer. He said that what he saw changed his life. He went into the hospital room and there was that little eight-year-old girl curled up on the bed in pain. What a tragic, awful scene in the last hours of her life. But even more impactful for him than that was her grandmother, laying beside her on the bed, pulling into herself this girl – this little suffering girl – wrapping her big arms around her, covering her almost with her body. Unable to relieve her suffering, she embraced her in the midst of it. And that, loved ones, is a picture of God. Creating a world where people have the freedom to choose and offering this – His comforting nearness in the midst of suffering. *That’s* our God. The Bible goes out of its way to explain that God *Himself* suffers when we suffer. God is grieved and God is heartbroken by the consequences of sin that never had to be in this world. Rather than preventing all of the consequences of

the choice people make, God shows Himself strong to those whose hearts are yielded to Him.

How can we comprehend this? Romans 11:33 says, *Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways. For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor? Who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things to whom be the glory forever.*

Amen.

Maybe you're thinking to yourself, "You know James, you say that God loves us. You say that God has a reason. You say that there is a higher purpose for the things that happen. I am not seeing it. If there is a reason – if goodness will prevail, if there is a higher purpose – I have to know what it is. What are some of these things you are talking about?" Great question.

3A) What good could possibly come from this tragedy?

Here is a third question. I have heard this this week. "What good could possibly come from this tragedy? You say that God loves us. You say that He has a reason. He has a purpose and that good will come of this. Higher purposes will prevail. Like what?"

First of all there are many Scriptures that teach God's sovereign goodness. The classic New Testament text is Romans 8:28 that says, *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good.* God causes all things (**all** things – that's the hard part) to work together for good.

Here are some things I wrote down as I thought and prayed about it. First of all, has there not been, this week, an amazing ground-swell of unity in our country? Has there not? And how many times have thought to myself, "God, how could You ever reach this whole country? They are in so many different places and so many different directions." But as you see people are starting to come together and drop their differences. We are hearing the most liberal congressmen and senators say, "Whatever the President wants! We are behind him!" Isn't that incredible? A week ago, who would have believed that could happen!

What can God do from this? What about the unity between races and people-groups. So many people were standing up and saying, "All Arab people are *not* wicked! There are good people in this country – Arab-Americans—that are as horrified by what has happened as we are. We are hearing people rise up against our human tendencies toward prejudice – God forgive us - and say, "No! We won't allow that to happen!" We won't allow what happened in World War II - the punishment of innocent Americans. So unity in our country is one good thing.

And how about sensitivity to the realities of life? Did you see that CEO on CNN. Did you see him? From the 100-105 floor, seven hundred of his employees gone – not one of them known to have survived. This guy runs the biggest bond-trading firm in the world

(How strong is he? How wealthy must he be?) weeping like a baby on national television, so broken and groping for answers and where to turn. People say, “God is a crutch!” Right! And the only One that will hold you up! Life is short. Money is meaningless. Family issues do matter. God is real. What good could possibly come from this tragedy? People returning to God. People turning back to God. C.S. Lewis said that God whispers in our well-being but shouts in our pain.

Franklin Graham was on Chris Matthews *Hard Ball* program. If ever there was a hardball, it’s that guy. Franklin Graham looked right in his eye and essentially said without saying it, “You are not going to stop me from saying this.” Franklin went into a five-minute presentation of the Gospel like I have hardly ever heard in my whole life. It was so clear. And all Chris Matthews could say at the end was, “Thank you.” The bold proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ and unprecedented opportunities and unparalleled openness.

When President Bush declared a *National Day of Mourning and Remembrance*, we had already had two prayer meetings here. I was walking around thinking about it in my office for a couple of minutes. I just sensed in my heart to invite people. So I went over to our Executive Pastor, Joe Stowell, and said, “Hey, Joe. Here is what I think.” And we talked about it for a minute. He went to the staff. Our staff, our ministry team, went out door-to-door with hundreds of invitations. Over four hundred people showed up here at noon on Friday. We prayed and shared the Gospel. Many of our staff had the opportunity to pray with people afterwards and minister to them. God knows maybe some of those people are in this service. An unparalleled openness to the Good News.

What good could come of this? I can't give you the whole list. But we serve a God who is righteous and faithful and true. And all He allows, He allows for a purpose. Hear the Scripture again, *All things work together for good.* (here's the key), *to those who love God.* To those who are called or committed to His purposes. So the question comes, are you? Are you committed to God's purposes? Do you love God? Because if you don't love God, if you are not committed to God's purposes, then you will never see the good that comes out of this or any other heartache. No national tragedy. No personal tragedy. You will never experience that. You won't know it. God only brings the good to the life of the heart that is really yielded to Him. You say, "Well how do I yield to Him?"

Here is a Scripture a brother gave me tonight. Let me read this to you . You don't need to look it up. Luke 13:4,5. *Were those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them? more guilty than the others living in Jerusalem?* Do you think the people who were in the tower in New York when it fell on them, do you think that they are more guilty than the people sitting in this room? *Jesus said, "I tell you no! But unless you repent you too all will perish!"* It is only a matter of when, not a matter of if.

If you have never repented of your sin, if you have never turned from the unholy things that you have done which inflame the just anger and wrath of Almighty God; if you have never done that; if you have never turned from your sin and embraced Jesus Christ by faith who two thousand years ago came into this world and died on a cross and rose from the dead to prove that He is God; if you have never embraced Him by faith as the only basis for your forgiveness, you have a lot bigger problems up ahead. I'll tell you the good that can come from this. The good that will come from this is that there will be

multitudes of people in eternity, in heaven, because God got their attention this week! Maybe He will get your attention today. He loves you. He wants a personal relationship with you. But you have to turn from your sin and come to Him by faith.

4A) Is the end of the world coming soon?

Is it? How many people got this crazy Nostradamus e-mail? Was that nuts or what? I have it here. I just want to talk to you about part of it. I couldn't believe it. This is supposedly a prophecy from some ancient sage. It says, "How true (NOT!) for your information." The third big war will begin when the big city is burning on the eleventh day of the ninth month. Two metal birds will crash into two tall statues in the new city and the world will end soon after. Signed, Nostradamus 1654." The first clue is that the guy died in 1566. Okay? So he didn't make this prophecy a hundred years after he died.

Secondly, the very people who promote this false teacher and false prophet said on their websites that it was not a legitimate prophecy. No. If you want some prophetic insight into the things that are happening this week, turn in your Bibles to Zephaniah for a moment.

How thankful I was when the Lord just led me to this passage of Scripture. I found myself looking in some prophetic Scriptures and here this was. While you're finding it, here's a little background. Zephaniah prophesied six hundred years before Christ. He denounced sin and apathy among the Lord's people. The judgment I am going to read in a moment he predicts has a near fulfillment in the Babylonian captivity and it has an

ultimate fulfillment during Daniel's seventieth week or that period called the Day of the Lord. Zephaniah uses the term *day of the Lord* more than any other author of Scripture.

We studied this a couple of years ago when we were learning about Daniel, but -- just to refresh your memory -- prophetic Scripture often has a near fulfillment, an ultimate fulfillment, and then in-between what we would call touchdown, generic or deposit fulfillments where God reminds people, "Yeah, I can do this! Yeah, I am going to do this!" And that is what we see here. Notice in Zephaniah 1:11. It says, *Wail oh inhabitants of the Mortar*, a Hebrew term which means and can be translated 'marketplace'. *For all the people of Canaan will be silenced. All who weigh out silver will be cut off. I will search Jerusalem with lamps. I will punish the men who are stagnant in spirit who say in their hearts 'The Lord will not do good or evil.' Moreover their wealth will become plunder and their houses desolate.*

Notice in verse 16, *A day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities, against the high corner towers. I will bring distress on men so that they will walk like the blind because they have sinned against the Lord and their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung.* You say, "God would never do that." Yes He would do it!

And periodically through history He will even allow things to demonstrate afresh to His people the day of the Lord is coming! It's coming! It may be far nearer than you think.

Verse 18, *Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord's wrath. And all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.* Now have all the inhabitants of the earth been destroyed? No. So what we have is a

touchdown fulfillment indicating that God is still on the throne and able to do all that He says He will do.

Notice Zephaniah 2:3, Seek the Lord, all you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinance. Seek righteousness. Seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the Lord's anger.

Zephaniah 3:1, Woe to her who is a rebellious and defiled, the tyrannical city. She heeded no voice, accepted no instruction, did not trust in the Lord, did not draw near to her God.

Zephaniah 3:6, I have cut off nations. Their corner towers are in ruins. I have made their streets desolate with no one passing by. Their cities are laid waste.

I would simply say this. Is the coming of the Lord soon? You know that I believe that it is. I have taught that here many, many times. How many days or weeks or months we have, I do not know. But I'll tell you this: This is no day to have your feet on the coffee table. This is no day to say, "Well maybe next week I'll accept the Lord. Maybe later I'll..." Listen. I don't know if you have another day. I can't think of one passage of Scripture to encourage you to wait. But I can think of a whole lot that say, "Now is the time to be right with God! Now is the time to be right with others! Now is the time to take the drawing near of the Lord very seriously."

And then practically,

5A) *What do I do with my anger and hatred?*

“I have been so angry. I can’t sleep. I am so disturbed about what I have seen. And *someone* has to do something about this!” Well that holy anger inside you – that is a righteous thing. In fact it says in II Thessalonians 1:6 that it is *a righteous thing for God to repay with affliction those who trouble you*. It’s not wrong to long for justice; it is wrong to take justice into your own hands. Romans 12 says, “*Vengeance is Mine, sayeth the Lord. “I will repay.”* You don’t think God can fix this? You don’t think God can balance the books of justice?

Romans 13:1 says *The powers that be are ordained of God*. He is talking about human government. In fact, Romans 13:4 says that human government is *God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer*. Now we can leave these terrorists with our government. We can and God wants us to. We need to pray for our leaders like we have never prayed before. They are God’s ministers of vengeance and justice. What they undertake is a righteous cause. We need to pray for their success and for their wisdom and for their sense of timing in all of it. We can leave that with God. We don’t have to take any vengeance.

Wasn’t it great to hear people coming forward this week and saying, “All Arab people are not evil! There are Arab-Americans that are more grieved by this than we are!” And how thankful I was to hear that. And how grateful that we are not going to make some of the mistakes that were made during the World War II of lumping people by nationality instead of by citizenship. We are all Americans and greatly grieved by what we have seen. We can trust God and His appointed ministers of justice.

Lastly,

6A) *How should this event change me?*

What a great question to ask. “God, I have seen so much. I don’t want to be the same. I can’t go on as I have.” Do me a favor, quietly bow your head in a word of prayer. Let me share some things personally with you.

Quietly where you are, ask yourself, “How should this change me?” First of all, we need to pray like we have never prayed before. Ephesians 6 says *With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit with this view. Be on the alert with all perseverance and prayer for the saints.* God, make us a people of prayer. Maybe God is calling you to pray, to really intercede for people – not to think about the President, but to pray for him, to get down on your knees, to pray for your family, to pray for these unparalleled opportunities to pray.

Secondly, Paul goes on to say in Ephesians 6, *Pray for me in the opening of my mouth that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.* This is a day for bold witness for Jesus Christ. People are looking for answers. This is no time to be subtle or strategic. This is a time to speak up for God. Open my mouth, Lord, and fill it with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Lord, make us bold witnesses for You – all of us. Help us not to be ashamed of the Gospel. Help us not to shrink back from our opportunity or our responsibility. But let us

rejoice, if You give us an opportunity to suffer or be rejected for You. Lord, let us stand as the Apostle Paul did. Let us say from our hearts, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. It is the power of God to salvation to every one who believes." Lord, don't let us be ashamed of the gospel, but let us speak for You boldly with our whole hearts. Let us be changed. We pray in Your name. Amen.