

# CRISIS AFTER KATRINA



## Melva's Corner-Special Edition

### “CRISIS DEMANDS COURAGE”

September 19, 2005

Bible Text: Luke 10:30-37

**Central Truth:** Heavenly Father and Giver of every good and perfect gift, please bless me with holy and practical wisdom so that I can more fully know how you have blessed me and so that I can be the blessing to others that you want me to be. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Hurricane Katrina packed a mighty wallop when it hit the Gulf Coast of the United States on August 29th. New Orleans, Biloxi, and many smaller cities in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama are still reeling – and will be for months to years. The tragic stories of lives lost in the storm are heartbreaking. Nobody can estimate the damage to homes and businesses, infrastructure and jobs. "Nightmare!" screamed a recent headline. Hundreds, perhaps thousands are believed dead. Some search – and – rescue crews bypassed dead bodies in their scramble to try to save people who climbed trees, took shelter in attics, or sat forlornly on the roofs of destroyed houses.



Through it all there has been amazing heroism. Neighbor rescued neighbor. Stranger saved stranger. Police, firefighters, EMTs, volunteer workers – they have pushed their bodies beyond all reasonable limits. They have risked life and limb. And they have made a difference by rendering aid and saving lives.

The same series of events also brought out the very worst in others. Young and old roamed streets in order to loot stores! They weren't breaking in for bread or canned goods. They were trying on clothes and shoes on sidewalks and toting away television sets and computers. When an astonished reporter stuck his microphone in the face of one of them, he stopped



for an interview. "You have to know how wrong this is!" he said. The looter grinned. He made some lame comment about how anybody else would do the same thing. I think not!

As I grabbed a bite of lunch in the Dallas airport Monday afternoon I found myself sitting at a table with a number of evacuees. It was there that I was reminded of the resilient spirit God put into people. The airport was full of displaced people, most of whom were trying to figure out how to get to the place they would be calling home. Some were from south Mississippi, others from Louisiana. All were sharing similar stories. One lady said her biggest fear was that her house would be full of snakes! Still, she was headed back home. I listened to a lady describe how she had gone back to her two-story brick apartment building only to discover that it wasn't there any more. All she found that belonged to her was a shoe.

One man said his wife was a nurse and she needed to get home so she could get to work. The storm created a crisis. God created people to rise to the occasion.

I saw people obviously displaced and displeased with the problems, but at the same time I saw people with a simple, easy determination. A determination to not only survive but to thrive.



There is much to be learned from these resilient people. After all, God has made it clear that this new life we enter into as His children is a death to the old and a new birth into a fresh way of living. Perhaps that is what many of the evacuees are experiencing. The decision which many Christians must make, that of "... forgetting what lies behind

and reaching forward to what is ahead," (Philippians 3:13) is an absolute necessity if one is to reach that level of life to which the child of God is called.

Do we learn from the past? Hopefully.

Are we affected by the past? Of course.

Must we be bound by the past? Absolutely not!



Carrying on: Kieth Rayfield and his son, Terrance Brown, carry groceries to their Northwestside apartment. The storm forced them to leave both Louisiana and Mississippi. And he says he one of the lucky ones.

When one has left something secure it is always good to know how to get back if we get "confused." However, if the past is a disaster, we must leave it behind and seek the future. When I talk with so many who have lost everything and are still looking to the future, it makes me aware of the power of faith and faith always looks forward.

Prayers, help, financial assistance will all be needed in the weeks and months ahead. This event will leave its effects for generations. But, when all is said and done, people will survive, rebuild, get on with life and be better for what they have to endure. The victory they will experience will be a beacon to the world. It's the way God made us. It's courage in a crisis.

I see so many of us, not directly affected by Katrina, expressing outrage at what has happened. You and I must do more than feel grief and express outrage. Each of us must find a way to help. Your company may create a relief fund. Perhaps your church will take a special offering to get relief supplies to people who are suffering. If not, pass the hat yourself. Or just give some money through a favorite charity or relief agency. Maybe you can volunteer your services. But do something. And do it quickly!



If you've ever been given a helping hand and offered a glimmer of hope in a dark time, you know how critical it is. If you remember a time you needed help and none was offered, you know even more about what a critical moment this is!

No one really loves God who ignores the needs of our hurting neighbors.

[Jesus gave this illustration about loving our neighbor] "A Jewish man was traveling on a trip from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes and money, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

"By chance a Jewish priest came along; but when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

"Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt deep pity. Kneeling beside him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with medicine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he handed the innkeeper two pieces of silver and told him to take care of the man. 'If his bill runs higher than that,' he said, 'I'll pay the difference the next time I am here.'

"Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?" Jesus asked.

The man replied, "The one who showed him mercy." Then Jesus said, "Yes, now go and do the same." (Luke 10:30-37 NLT)