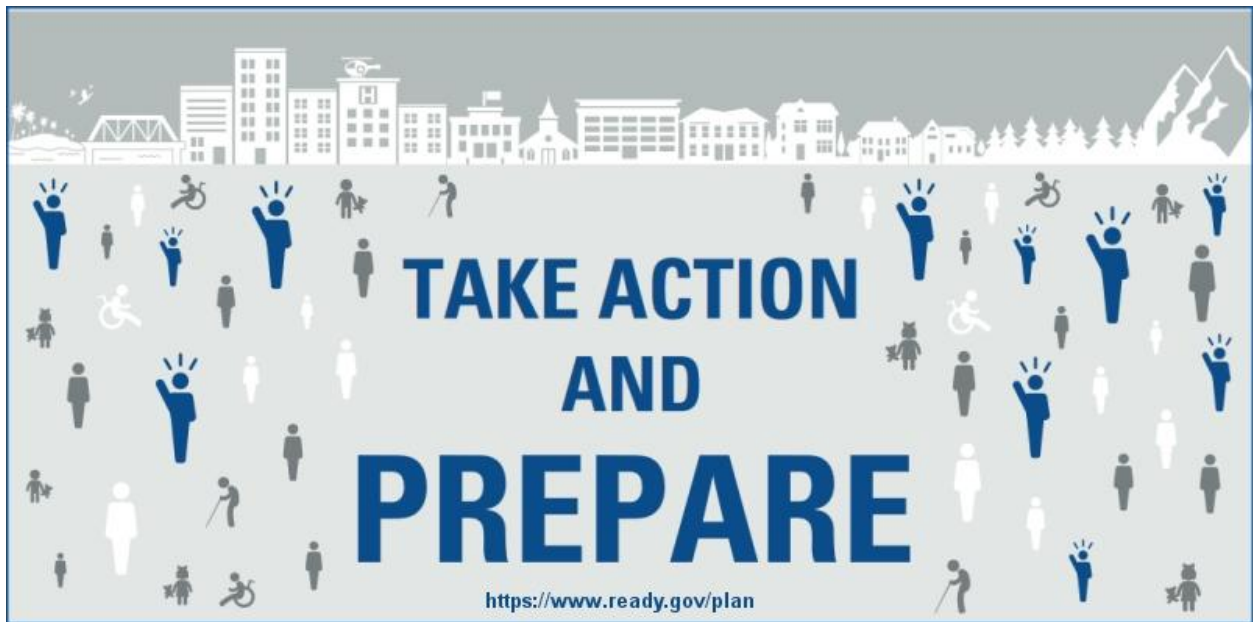




A Sermon by UCG-MT Pastor Daniel Deininger, given in Kalispell September 28, 2024

Introduction:

With hurricane Helene hitting our gulf coast this week much emphasis has been on being prepared for an emergency. But our federal government is always warning us to be prepared for natural disasters. They have a website dedicated to being prepared: <https://www.ready.gov> In fact September is “National Preparedness Month”. From their website:

September marks National Preparedness Month, the annual campaign to remind everyone that preparing for emergencies and disasters can keep them, their families and their communities safe. The Ready Campaign aims to ensure all of our friends and neighbors have the tools they need to prepare for disasters and build resilience before disaster strikes.

2024 Theme: “Start a Conversation”

Talking about bad things that could happen like a disaster or emergency isn’t always easy. We may think we’re protecting the people we love by avoiding these conversations, but they are important to start taking steps to get ready and stay safe.

The website focuses on preparation for natural disasters. These are often referred to as “acts of God” yet many do not even believe in God or think that He would use them as a way to wake up people to bring them to their senses, and see the need to repent for not following His commandments.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/act%20of%20God>: *an extraordinary interruption by a natural cause (such as a flood or earthquake) of the usual course of events that experience, prescience, or care cannot reasonably foresee or prevent*

But when God opens our minds to understand His scripture, and we take the time to read His word, we CAN see that there are serious consequences for disobedience. And coupled with

watching what is going on in the world around us, and its lack of repentance, we can foresee God's intervention and correction is about to be unleashed. His patience is about to end.

Nehemiah 9:29 NLT - "You warned them to return to your Law, but they became proud and obstinate and disobeyed your commands. They did not follow your regulations, by which people will find life if only they obey. They stubbornly turned their backs on you and refused to listen.

Nehemiah 9:30 NLT - In your love, you were patient with them for many years. You sent your Spirit, who warned them through the prophets. But still they wouldn't listen! So once again you allowed the peoples of the land to conquer them.

Nehemiah 9:25 NLT - Our ancestors captured fortified cities and fertile land. They took over houses full of good things, with cisterns already dug and vineyards and olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate until they were full and grew fat and enjoyed themselves in all your blessings.

Nehemiah 9:26 NLT - "But despite all this, they were disobedient and rebelled against you. They turned their backs on your Law, they killed your prophets who warned them to return to you, and they committed terrible blasphemies.

Nehemiah 9:27 NLT - So you handed them over to their enemies, who made them suffer. But in their time of trouble they cried to you, and you heard them from heaven. In your great mercy, you sent them liberators who rescued them from their enemies.

Specific Purpose of This Message:

I believe that God is warning us now - both through what we see happening in world events and through His ministry - to prepare to avoid the soon coming tribulation and day of the Lord. We need to prepare now by taking action to pray to God and study His Word daily.

Need?

Luke 21:22 NKJV - "For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Luke 21:23 NKJV - "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people.

Luke 21:24 NKJV - "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

...

Luke 21:28 NKJV - "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

Luke 21:34 NKJV - "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.

Luke 21:35 NKJV - "For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Luke 21:36 NKJV - **"Watch therefore, and pray always** that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

How will we escape?

Joel 3:16 NKJV - The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake; But the LORD will be a shelter for His people, And the strength of the children of Israel.

Malachi 3:16 NKJV - Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard [them]; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.

Malachi 3:17 NKJV - "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him."

Malachi 3:18 NKJV - Then you shall again discern Between the righteous and the wicked, Between one who serves God And one who does not serve Him.

Revelation 7:3 NKJV - saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."

Ezekiel 9:4 NKJV - and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

Ezekiel 9:5 NKJV - To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity.

Ezekiel 9:6 NKJV - "Utterly slay old [and] young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom [is] the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." So they began with the elders who [were] before the temple.

Revelation 12:6 NKJV - Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Revelation 12:14 NKJV - But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

We also have the prophecies given warning us of what is coming.

Matthew 3:1 NLT - In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was,

Matthew 3:2 NLT - "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."

...

Matthew 3:6 NLT - And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

Matthew 3:7 NLT - But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. "You brood of snakes!" he exclaimed. **"Who warned you to flee God's coming wrath?"**

Matthew 3:8 NLT - **Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.**

Matthew 3:9 NLT - Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones.

Hence we need to take these warnings seriously and we need to be prepared!

Amos 3:1 NLT - Listen to this message that the LORD has spoken against you, O people of Israel and Judah--against the entire family I rescued from Egypt:

Amos 3:2 NLT - "From among all the families on the earth, I have been intimate with you alone. That is why I must punish you for all your sins."

Amos 3:3 NLT - Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?

Amos 3:4 NLT - Does a lion ever roar in a thicket without first finding a victim? Does a young lion growl in its den without first catching its prey?

Amos 3:5 NLT - Does a bird ever get caught in a trap that has no bait? Does a trap spring shut when there's nothing to catch?

Amos 3:6 NLT - When the ram's horn blows a warning, shouldn't the people be alarmed? Does disaster come to a city unless the LORD has planned it?

Amos 3:7 NLT - Indeed, the Sovereign LORD never does anything until he reveals his plans to his servants the prophets.

Amos 3:8 NLT - The lion has roared--so who isn't frightened? The Sovereign LORD has spoken--so who can refuse to proclaim his message?

Amos 3:9 NLT - Announce this to the leaders of Philistia and to the great ones of Egypt: "Take your seats now on the hills around Samaria, and witness the chaos and oppression in Israel."

Amos 3:10 NLT - **"My people have forgotten how to do right,"** says the LORD. "Their fortresses are filled with wealth taken by theft and violence."

Amos 3:11 NLT - **Therefore," says the Sovereign LORD, "an enemy is coming! He will surround them and shatter their defenses. Then he will plunder all their fortresses."**

Amos 3:12 NLT - This is what the LORD says: "A shepherd who tries to rescue a sheep from a lion's mouth will recover only two legs or a piece of an ear. So it will be for the Israelites in Samaria lying on luxurious beds, and for the people of Damascus reclining on couches."

Amos 3:13 NLT - "Now listen to this, and announce it throughout all Israel," says the Lord, the LORD God of Heaven's Armies.

Amos 3:14 NLT - **"On the very day I punish Israel for its sins,** I will destroy the pagan altars at Bethel. The horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground."

Amos 3:15 NLT - And I will destroy the beautiful homes of the wealthy--their winter mansions and their summer houses, too--all their palaces filled with ivory," says the LORD.

September 26th Letter from UCG President Rick Shabi:

Spiritual preparation and heartfelt prayer

Physical preparations are important, but spiritual preparation is more vital. Heartfelt prayer to God—daily and sincere—must be an important part of preparing of our hearts and minds for the Holy times ahead of us. **And, we must recognize our need for God's strength, power and guidance as we prepare for the challenges we will face in the days to come.**

This time leading up to the Feast of Trumpets should remind us of unfolding current events. **Four seals of Revelation are open.** The four horsemen are riding across the earth and forces are at work to bring upon the world the end-time effects and intensity of their ride—resulting in the death of a fourth of the earth's population (Revelation 6:8).

Revelation 6:8 NLT - I looked up and saw a horse whose color was pale green. Its rider was named Death, and his companion was the Grave. These two were given authority over one-fourth of the earth, to kill with the sword and famine and disease and wild animals.

Following this, the fifth seal brings the great tribulation upon the earth. After this time of trial that comes on the whole world (Revelation 3:10) heavenly signs will show that God will intervene in world affairs—to make His power known and to usher in the return of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:8 NLT - "I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet **you obeyed my word and did not deny me.**

Revelation 3:9 NLT - Look, I will force those who belong to Satan's synagogue--those liars who say they are Jews but are not--to come and bow down at your feet. They will acknowledge that you are the ones I love.

Revelation 3:10 NLT - "**Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who belong to this world.**

Revelation 3:11 NLT - I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown.

The only way to survive those times as His people is to be very close to God. When the pressures of society and Satan bear down on us, it will then be too late to develop the relationship and trust in God that we must have. If we don't actively make the right choices in our lives and ask God to strengthen us and deepen our conviction to Him *now*, we will fail.

Unity of heart requires us to put away selfish ambitions and the desires of this world that divide us, and this must happen now. We must yield ourselves to God, let His will be done and trust His will is being fulfilled—and we bind together as His family.

The way to achieve this is through prayer to God. Only through heartfelt, daily prayer—asking God to reveal the sins, faults and weaknesses within us that separate us from Him and from each other—can we overcome, both personally and collectively, and begin to build the temple of God that He is establishing. Only through prayer can we develop a relationship with God that reassures us He is always there and that we can humbly call on Him to direct our words, attitudes and motivations. Our motivation should be for His will to be done and His Kingdom to come.

Matthew 7:21 NLT - "Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.

Matthew 7:22 NLT - On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.'

Matthew 7:23 NLT - But I will reply, **'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'**

By going to Him in prayer and asking Him to (gently) show us our sins and faults, will we be able to become like Him, and will He get to know us. Otherwise we still are breaking His laws.

Matthew 7:24 NLT - "Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.

Matthew 7:25 NLT - Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock.

Matthew 7:26 NLT - But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand.

Matthew 7:27 NLT - When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash."

Matthew 25:1 NLT - "Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

Matthew 25:2 NLT - Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

Matthew 25:3 NLT - **The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps,**

Matthew 25:4 NLT - but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil.

Matthew 25:5 NLT - When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

Matthew 25:6 NLT - "At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'

Matthew 25:7 NLT - "All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps.

Matthew 25:8 NLT - Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.'

Matthew 25:9 NLT - "But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.'

Matthew 25:10 NLT - "But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked.

Matthew 25:11 NLT - Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'

Matthew 25:12 NLT - "But he called back, **'Believe me, I don't know you!'**

Matthew 25:13 NLT - "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

Brethren, I could go on and on, but I'll leave it at this: **let us all commit to real, heartfelt prayer**—beginning now and continuing throughout the rest of our lives.

Remember to keep up with the recommended reading of the book of Deuteronomy. Combining that reading with prayer will help us all to understand and implement God's will in our lives.

Conclusion:

September marks National Preparedness Month, the annual campaign to remind everyone that preparing for emergencies and disasters can keep them, their families and their communities safe. The Ready Campaign aims to ensure all of our friends and neighbors have the tools they need to prepare for disasters and build resilience before disaster strikes.

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Talking about bad things that could happen like a disaster or emergency isn't always easy. We may think we're protecting the people we love by avoiding these conversations, but they are important to start taking steps to get ready and stay safe.

The time to prepare for a disaster is BEFORE it happens. We see in God's word He is about to bring a terrible time of trial and tribulation on the earth. It will certainly be an "Act of God". But it is one that we can prepare for. And the key to being prepared is daily prayer to God and study of His word. Let us prepare now to survive the disaster that is coming on all the world!