

The Hour of Crisis

By Ronald D. Reeves

Occasionally, each of us may face some sort of personal crisis as we face a crucial and a decisive point or situation. This may involve an unstable condition as we anticipate an impending abrupt or decisive change. This context may be accompanied by an emotionally stressful or traumatic change in a person's life. The various contexts where such a crisis may arise may be one of several—financial, employment, health, family, political, religious or some other meaningful context.

Jesus was not immune from experiencing a crisis. In the latter part of His personal ministry (John 13:21), the Bible affirms that Jesus “was troubled in spirit.” If not the only occasion, this is most certainly a rare description of Jesus as He faced His pending death, as brutal as He knew it would be. Have you ever wondered what went through the mind of Jesus as He anticipated His cruel death? Upon what was He focusing at this time? What was the character of His actions at this singular moment when He was to die for you and me?

While I am unable to fully answer the questions posed above, we can gain insight into the mind of Jesus on the occasion of this very traumatic moment in His personal ministry. As we look to chapters 14-16 of the Gospel of John, we may observe several striking things spoken of Jesus as He faced the ultimate personal crisis of any person who has ever lived in this earthly tabernacle. Consider: Jesus sought to...

- Be mindful of His established relationship with the Father (14:7-11). We too often only seek a deeper relationship with the Lord on the occasion of a crisis; previous to a crisis, we may be looking unto men when we should be looking unto God.
- Comfort others, though His personal life was in jeopardy; He was not self-centered (14:1a, 15-18). We too often place a premium on our personal comfort on the occasion of a crisis; we become self-centered.
- Strengthen others' faith in Him, though rejected by many; He did not lose confidence in self; He remained personally secure (14:1). We too often lose a measure of personal security as we react to the crisis of personal rejection.
- Remind others of the Father's graciousness (14:2a, 21, 23). We too often maintain a spirit that seems to forget His graciousness as we center our full attention on our crisis, rather than on the Lord who will help us through our crisis.
- Rekindle and enliven others' hope, though all hope was seemingly lost; He was not full of despair (14:2b-3, 19, 28). We too often are overcome with despair and pass it on to others as we face personal crisis.
- Build up the confidence of others in themselves to follow successfully, though seemingly being without direction; He exercised spiritual insight and vision (14:4-6, 26). We too often seem blinded to the proper course to follow when facing a crisis.
- Point out others' blessings reserved for them in their future work; He exercised the capacity to encourage others (14:12-14). We too often do not have the strength to be courageous as we face a crisis, and therefore, we cannot encourage others.

▪Influence others' walk of life based upon His current relationship with them; He exercised leadership (14:15, 20-24). We too often face a crisis because we have followed poor leadership, possibly of our own making.

▪Fulfill the joy of others; He maintained joy within Himself (15:11; 16:24). We too often have a negative attitude when we face a crisis, and therefore, we reveal that we do not possess a reservoir of spiritual joy to see us through the crisis.

▪Prepare His disciples for the realistic burdens of their future work; He looked to the future with a realistic eye (15:18-21; 16:1-4). We too often center our energies on the moment of a crisis rather than the future that holds so much promise for faithful children of God.

These traits marked Jesus as He faced the crisis of a lifetime. May we so value these traits that we mark our entire Christian service with these traits with all of those with whom we deal and in every context in which we find ourselves.