

Side By Side In Times of Crisis

Ephesians 6:10, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

Introduction: In our culture, we have various sounds and symbols which warn us as we face a time of crisis. We will all face our moments of crisis in life. Preparation for moments of crisis, among God’s people, began as far back as the nation of Israel. In Numbers 10 we read about this primitive system of crisis-response, the sounding of trumpets, and we can take a few lessons from it as we strive side by side facing modern-day moments of crisis. From this text let’s learn that in moments of crisis...

I. Communicate Clearly

- A. Numbers 10:1-2 is where we find Moses commanded to use the silver trumpets as a system of communication “*for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps.*”
 - 1. Various trumpet sounds indicated various commands—much like an ancient system of Morse code for Israel.
 - 2. Therefore, to achieve the desired result for such a large group, the communication needed to be clear so the response was appropriate.
- B. Paul possibly alludes to this in 1 Corinthians 14:8-9, “*For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.*”
 - 1. The problem being addressed by Paul is the danger of “*speaking in tongues*” to the benefit of no one in an assembly.
 - 2. An over-arching goal of our assembly is “*edification*” (1 Corinthians 14:26).
 - 3. Teaching, preaching and communication that is unclear and uncertain is not edifying, but confusing.
 - 4. Many times crisis occurs, in various forums, because of “*uncertain sounds*” meaning communication and expectations are unclear!
- C. When we sound the trumpet, let’s make sure the message is clear to avoid confusion!

II. Assemble Together

- A. In moments of crisis, the trumpets were sounded to call an assembly.
 - 1. Numbers 10:3, “*When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting...*” (cp. 10:7).
 - 2. There were times important messages needed to be shared with Israel and it was important for all of Israel to gather so they would be on the same page.
 - 3. Miscommunication and misunderstanding abound when people miss opportunities or there is not time made to communicate information.
- B. The first-century church often brought the entire congregation together in moments of crisis to communicate and clarify information which brought about unity!
 - 1. In Acts 6:1-7, some of the widows were being neglected so “*the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples*” to fix the issue together (Cp. Acts 6:1-7).
 - 2. In Acts 12:1-5, Peter was arrested and the disciples responded with “*constant prayer... offered to God for him by the church.*”
 - 3. In Acts 15:1-6 there was a doctrinal crisis so “*the church and the apostles and the elders*” all met in Jerusalem and Scriptures are cited to resolve the issue (Acts 15:4).

III. Leaders Make Time

- A. In Numbers 10:4 there was a specific trumpet call for “*the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel*” to gather together to Moses.
 - 1. There are times leaders need to meet privately to communicate about issues.
 - 2. This was the case in Israel as Moses met with the heads of tribes.
- B. Likewise, the New Testament urges us to respect the amount of time leaders take to discuss issues and formulate a plan and their work (1 Thessalonians 5:11-13; Hebrews 13:17).
- C. Similarly, there will be times when leaders, in any group, need to meet.

IV. Keep Moving Forward

- A. Numbers 10:5-6 notes there were different sounds for different parts of the camp to advance in Israel indicating there were different roles various people played.
- B. Moments of crisis have the tendency to stall our efforts and it is important we know our roles as we strive to move forward in God’s kingdom, not backwards.
 - 1. In Galatians 5:7-9 the binding of Old Testament circumcision stalled the progress of Christianity among the churches of Galatia causing Paul to say, “*You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.*”
 - 2. When we get mired in the mud of problems we spin our wheels and get nowhere rather than “*reaching forward to those things which are ahead*” (Philippians 3:13-14).
- C. It is key, then, to not lose track of the goal and to not quit moving towards it!

V. Battle Side by Side

- A. Numbers 10:9a indicates the trumpet was also sounded “*when you go to war...*”
 - 1. Joshua sounded the trumpet as he fought Jericho (Joshua 6:4-6, 13).
 - 2. Gideon’s men sounded the trumpet against the Midianites (Judges 6:33-34; 7:8-22).
 - 3. Nehemiah sounded the trumpet as he was building the wall (Nehemiah 4:18-20).
- B. Don’t hide in your foxhole when your fellow soldiers need your help (cp. 1 Samuel 13:3-6; Jeremiah 42:13-14; Ephesians 6:10-13).

VI. Trust the Lord Will Take Care of the Crisis

- A. If Israel did God’s will, then they would “*be remembered before the Lord your God, and be saved from your enemies*” (Numbers 10:9b).
 - 1. God’s means of deliverance often differed in a surprising way.
 - 2. Yet, when God’s people called upon the Lord He brought about the victory.
- B. When we handle our crisis moments in a God-pleasing way, then our God will turn the situation into a victory in His way and time (Psalm 11; 1 Peter 4:12-13, 19).

Conclusion: Jesus, “the captain of our salvation,” fought Satan for our behalf and won the victory (Hebrews 2:10,14). He now calls His soldiers to press on in the battle and with great courage we can defeat the foe (2 Timothy 2:3; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6). If we hide when the trumpet sounds now, will we be ready when the last trumpet sounds (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16)?