



by Delores F. Bryant

HOW DO WE HANDLE CHAOS? IN A WORLD FILLED WITH CONSTANT DISTRACTIONS—TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR TELEVISION AND INTERNET ACCESS, TEXTING, INSTAGRAM, SNAPCHAT, AND FACEBOOK—HOW CAN ONE EVEN TRY TO CONCENTRATE ON ACADEMICS OR BEING SPIRITUAL? How can you really find God in the midst of all the insanity we see in the media? Turn on the television and you will hear every day about a new tragedy—another mass shooting, another unarmed African American being killed or brutalized by the police, or another person gone missing without a trace. Where do you turn? Whom can you trust? Where is our God in the midst of all the chaos? Where is the Sovereign One? Where is the Jesus that our grandparents knew? Where is that Jesus and how can we get Him into our lives?

Before trying to answer all the questions, stop and ask, “Am I so busy or wrapped up in my circumstances that perhaps I cannot see Jesus? Do I even know where to start looking?” One good answer to our problems and the chaos around us can be found in the Scriptures—in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 3:1 gives us a road map for understanding where to turn and to whom when we find ourselves in the midst of chaos: “Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.” It is great advice: “fix your thoughts on Jesus”—not on the latest tragedy, the hottest fad, or the newest trend. Focusing on these things, the things of the world, will only leave you dissatisfied,

confused, depressed, and/or empty. Peace is an internal matter, and with Jesus you can be settled and secure even when everything around you seems to be falling apart. Jesus is the principal messenger sent to us to reveal God's will. As the High Priest, He satisfies God's righteous requirements by forgiving our sins and making intercession for us.

So where is Jesus in the midst of all the chaos? Where is the Sovereign One? Where is He? Hebrews 4:14 tells us that "therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess." Jesus is seated in heaven at God's right hand, interceding on our behalf; that means He is pleading our case before God. Jesus is busy handling our sins and the sin of the world—taking care of things that benefit us. Jesus knows us and is always thinking of us and what we need.

Be confident that the One who loves and intercedes for us has what it takes to get us through whatever we are facing. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus is no stranger to our struggles. In fact, He knows all about them: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin." God sent His Son, Jesus, to live on Earth as a human—to walk in our shoes, to feel our pain, to know our struggles. But although Jesus was human, He was different from us—He never committed sin. He submitted Himself to be set apart, separated for purposeful ministry—a ministry that was just for our benefit.

The world is full of many temptations to sin, problems, crises, emergencies, and threats. Every day, millions of youth get caught up and confused looking in all the wrong directions for peace and answers. When life gets chaotic and confusing, they know how to phone a friend, but they don't know how to find Jesus. A friend can listen but often is unable to offer reliable answers or real, lasting help. The Bible tells us that Jesus is not just an abstract concept, a historical figure, or a distant deity—He is a real person who is actively interested and involved in our lives. Specifically, the Gospels show us that Jesus was not only engaged in the lives of adults, but He also frequently stopped to reach out to children and young people who had a need.

Are you connected to the God that your pastor or parents seem to know so well? Regardless of what else is going on around you, God wants to be the source of your power and strength. He encourages and welcomes you to come to Him for the answers you need for the issues that matter most to you. Hebrews 4:16 extends this invitation: "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." In the midst of busyness and chaos, the only way to God is through Jesus. It is not as difficult as it might seem—He has said that if you look for Him, you will find Him (see Matthew 7:8). Spend time with Him in worship. Reach out to Him in prayer. Listen to His voice as He speaks to your heart. Look for His advice and guidance in the Scriptures.

Millions search in vain, looking for peace in all the wrong places—in the arms of people who don't truly know or love them, in the temporary highs that come from alcohol or drugs, or in the latest outfit or hairstyle. They look for it by trying to be sexy, heroic, popular, or funny. But in times like these, there is only one place to find real peace, real security, real hope, real meaning, and real answers—in Jesus. There is nothing and no one else that compares to what we find in the One who is our Savior, our answer, and our hope.

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MEDITATION CORNER

Scripture: "The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth" (Psalm 145:18).

Song: "Speak to My Heart," by Donnie McClurkin

Remember that the Lord is Near:

N—Never Far—Jeremiah 23:23

E—Everywhere—Isaiah 43:2

A—Available—Isaiah 55:6

R—Refuge—Psalm 62:6

Prayer: *Lord, save us from the confusion of this world and from the sin in and around us. Show us which way You would have us to go and what You would have us to do. Open our ears to hear Your voice above the many voices of the world. Open our eyes to see Your face amid all the distractions that beckon for our attention. Thank You for seeing us, hearing us, and loving us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*