Secure in God's Mighty Hands.

The words that are coming from news reporters on the radio and on television are clear and repetitive. "Get ready." "Be prepared." Take great care." "Protect your family." "Get out while you can." "Have plenty of water and food on hand." "Don't take this storm lightly." "Head to higher ground."

Head to higher ground indeed! The warnings are endless and dire.

On the advice of New York City's Mayor, the entire New York City transportation system, subway, bus and commuter
rail service in and out of the city will close today at Noon. The airports in and around NYC will soon handle the last remaining flights in and out of the city.

Hurricane Irene is coming. If you live on the east coast of the United States or in the Caribbean, it may have already arrived. Are prayers are with you.

What to do in times like these, when earthquakes, hurricanes, war and a world economy in ruins takes it's toll on our emotional state of mind? There are times that lead to our only hope of joy, peace and strength. Such a time, for many is now. I know it is for me.

With The Chapel At Union Square and Manhattan Church both located on the east and west side of Manhattan closed today in anticipation of the storm, I thought I might use this time to share a few thoughts.

It is Saturday morning. In a few hours, I head towards Manhattan to marry a couple that I do not know. A couple that came to our church door asking if a pastor could marry them, "Because the New York City Clerk's office just didn't cut it for us."

This couple is now legally married, but wanted a minister to perform a Christian ceremony for the visiting family and friends who have arrived from Europe and other parts of the country. I met Carly for the first time yesterday in the middle of the flower district on West 28th Street in Manhattan.

We were supposed to meet at the church office on West 11th Street at 11:00 a.m. but since she was running late, I told her I would drive to where she was with her mom and we could meet there. The first thing you learn if you want to minister in NYC or anywhere else for that matter, is you do what you have to do to get things done.

She was taken by surprise at the offer to pick her up and drive her and her mom, who had just arrived from Indiana, back to her apartment on West 11th Street, located directly across the street from our church. Both Carly and her mom were totally stressed out from all the "stuff" that has to be taken care of prior to any wedding. I told her that pick-up and delivery were part of the ministry of REACH-NYC and our church.

Carly is a former Baptist and her husband Partrice Louis who is from France, a former Presbyterian. I explained to her that since God really doesn't get into denominational names (I hope that doesn't get me in any trouble), it would be my pleasure and honor to marry them. I also mentioned that some of my best friends are Baptist and many more are Presbyterian. All fine people. I then told her a little of my background and that we are all part of "The Body of Christ." We were instant friends.

I learned a long, long time ago, not to be fooled by the Empire State Building or any of the cavernous architectural structures and bridges of this town. New York City is really a small town after all, if you aren't afraid to love and accept everyone, in the many small communities that make up NYC.

The wedding is smack dab in the middle of the approaching storm headed for NYC. My wife and I will be heading down to NYC in a few more hours, in the small window that remains and the thought of being secure in "God's mighty hands" is our only safety net. The wedding will take place at 5 p.m. this evening and I pray we make it back home. It
should be a fun adventure. I always wanted my hair to turn totally white anyway.

One chapter in the Bible immediately came to mind that I thought I would share with you. It is found in 1 Peter 5 and it is a chapter of the Bible that anyone in ministry or a member of God's family would be wise to read daily. It helps to keep me balanced and life's twists and turns in perspective.

I will make little commentary on the words in this chapter, as I think it speaks for itself as a call for unity, care and a decided faith in God that is available to each of us. I might just want to add one commentary. As you read these words be inspired that each of us can take care to bring love and a loving "shepherd's" touch to those we encounter in and outside of "the church." How the atmosphere would change in our daily discourse with each other if we would take hold of the concepts suggested here.

How our faith would be strengthened in the midst of a hostile environment if we relied more and "humbled" ourselves "under God's mighty hand.

1 Peter 5
To the Elders and the Flock

1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

"God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

It is my prayer that each of us will take these words of profound wisdom to heart today, no matter what is affecting your life or the lives of those you love.

As the summer draws to a close REACH-NYC is once again gearing up for the Fall and new experiences and the joy of meeting the people living in this great city. I know God is using you where you are to be a loving friend to others. May God bless you with a loving shepherd's touch as you meet people in your daily lives.
Make allowance for the differences you see in others and be accepting as Christ is accepting of each of us.

Let me take this opportunity to invite you to my first communion service at Manhattan Church on Saturday, September 10, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. in a combined service with our small group from The Chapel At Union Square. The service will also be a Time of Remembrance in honor of those who perished on September 11, just a few blocks south of Manhattan Church.

Please join us if you are in New York City and tell any university students you know that they have a home here.

Manhattan Church is located at 232 West 11th Street in Greenwich Village, NYC just one and a half blocks west of Seventh Ave. Again, Sept. 10 at 11:00 a.m. I hope to meet you there.

"Peace to all of you who are in Christ." - 1 Peter 5:14

Best regards -

Tony Romeo, Pastor / REACH-NYC

P.S.: If you have any questions you can always contact me at: reachnyc.romeo@gmail.com.


Individually and group Bible study sessions are always available. "Cafe Reach" will be reopening soon. For more information write to: reachnyc.contact@gmail.com.
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Not spam
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