



The Monthly Beacon

"When Jesus spoke to the people again, He said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

- John 8:12

**"Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever."**

Psalm 73:25-26

Unimaginable, that is only one way to explain the loss of lives in the mass shootings in Ohio and Texas. And what about the devastating effects of the tornado that ravaged Dayton, Ohio only three months ago? How much can one community take? These events are only the tip of the iceberg. Situations like these are happening all over the world. How do we wrap our heads around the unexpected, the senseless loss of lives, and the individuals who seek to kill people they don't even know? It is simply unfathomable. People are angry and want to know why anyone's anger has resulted in so much carnage. We may speculate that it is the result of a person's upbringing, bullying, poor parenting, mental disabilities and in some cases for no logical reason at all other than to induce and incite panic.





Who can we turn to in times of uncertainty, pain, and grief? We are not in control and when bad things happen we want to believe that there is something we could or should have done to prevent it. So, we review the events in our mind trying to sort out the behaviors that caused this calamity but without any sense of relief. Hard times can't be avoided but there is something we can do. We can look to the One who is not surprised by any of the events that we have experienced.

Whether you knew someone affected by these tragedies or not we realize that they are close to our own front door. Cocooning ourselves from the outside world will not prevent such events from happening. We are vulnerable and yet we can find strength in our vulnerability. Dr. Brene Brown describes vulnerability as “uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure. It’s that unstable feeling we get when we step out of our comfort zone or do something that forces us to loosen control.” Dr. Brown also states we try to sidestep the feelings of vulnerability by emotionally armoring “to avoid feeling shame, anxiety, uncertainty, and fear”.

The Apostle Paul encourages us to armor up but not in the same manner. He tells us to put on the “whole armor of God” (Ephesians 6:13). God’s armor consists of; the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the shoes of the gospel of peace, and the sword of the spirit. Will any of this ease the pain and the grief of those who have been directly impacted by such devastation?

In all the hard times experienced it is our hope that we gain wisdom with the realization that nothing is promised to us. God has ordained our days (Psalm 139:16) so we live lives of uncertainty but not powerless. We must live in the atmosphere of hope for a better day because that is what God promised. He knows our pain, has experienced our anguish, and sees our tears but we are not without expectation:

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away (Revelation 21:4).”

A better day is coming...
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