

Sunday, April 29, 2018
Did You Know?

How to Process Tragedy

All of us are aware of the terrible tragedy that occurred in our city this past Monday. At the time of this writing, ten people have died, many are hospitalized, and our city remains in shock. Sadly, these tragedies have now become far too common in Europe, North America, China, and now in our great city. It's unlikely that this will be the last. How are we to process events like these? Why did this happen; why did he do what he did? It's not a new question. The same question was brought to Jesus, but before we look at his answer, there are some things that we definitely must do.

We grieve. We grieve the loss of life. We grieve over the physical scars that will remain and the emotional damage that will linger for the survivors, the survived, and the witnesses. We grieve over the senselessness of it. We grieve over the impact of this sin on so many people. We even grieve over the perpetrator.

We comfort those that have been affected most by this. If you know of anyone impacted by this, listen to them and pray with them.

We must pray. Let's not underestimate the power of prayer. Our secular world says, "Our thoughts and our prayers go out to them" or we have "moments of silence." Prayer for the Christian is not just a thing to say when tragedy strikes. Rather, it is entering the throne room of God, where we, as his children, have immediate and direct access to God and we believe, and know that God does, in fact, answer our prayers -- for healing and for justice.

Now, back to Jesus' response. In Luke 13 some people came to Jesus asking about a tragedy that had occurred when some Galileans were executed by Pilate.

² Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ³ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. ⁴ Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵ I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

When you read his response, I don't think we could ever conclude that Jesus was sentimental. Rather, his response seems even a bit insensitive. What Jesus is telling us is that all loss of life, all death is tragic; but as tragic as it is, it acts as a reminder to all of us that every human being will stand before the Judge of the universe. Hebrews 9:27 says, "Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." Jesus' words may sound insensitive, but they are actually the most compassionate words one could speak. Death comes to all, whether it's from old age and natural causes or from a senseless tragedy. If there ever was a 'senseless' act of injustice, it was the cross. Jesus, the most innocent man, a sinless man, was killed for guilty sinners like you and me, so that when we die, we would escape judgment and live with God forever.

Soli Deo Gloria.
Pastor Peter