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Reflecting on the Texas Tragedy, on: 2017/11/6 11:21

Yesterday a tragedy occurred at First Baptist Church in Sutherland Texas. The shooter, Devin Patrick Kelley, took the lives of 26 people (last count) and wounded at least 20 and possibly more. Investigators are trying to determine the motive for the shooting.

Yet like Stephen Paddock who committed the massacre in Las Vegas, Devin Patrick Kelly does not fit the profile. At least as far as we know in the early hours of this investigation. It appears that Kelly was not a member of any jihadist or radical political groups. So the obvious can be ruled out. Preliminary investigation says he may have had a bout with domestic violence. Others are saying that there may have been mental illness involved.

We may never know the obvious motive behind why this tragedy took place. But as followers of Jesus we look to the scriptures. In Ecclesiastes 9:3 we read,

"This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead."

Paul echoes this in Romans 3:15,

"Their feet are swift to shed blood;

Evil needs no motive. Indeed the author of evil is Satan himself. Jesus tells us in John 10:10 that the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. But Jesus said he came that they might have life and have it abundantly.

Jim Richards, the executive director of the Texas Southern Baptist best summarized the tragic shooting

"The motive is irrelevant," he continued. "It is evil. We live in a fallen world. All of us have a propensity toward evil

"Only by a personal relationship with Christ can we have the power to overcome evil in our lives."

What should be our response to this heart-wrenching tragedy. There will be those conservative Christians who will say that we need to have more concealed and carry permits and security teams in our churches. Preferably security teams who are packing, carrying heat.

But what would Jesus require of us? Would Jesus require of us to prayerfully go out and preach the gospel as Spirit-filled Christians. If what Jim Richards says it's correct. Only through telling others about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ can they overcome the evil in their hearts. Should our response be to go and preach the gospel to those who are in the darkness of sin and evil.

Understanding that such a preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ can very well lead to our martyrdom. But realize the word "martyr" is translated from the Greek as "witness".

The Lord gave me a stunning revelation on Acts 1:8. We read this verse as,

"but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

We read the above verse as the Holy Spirit empowering us to go and boldly go and tell others about Jesus. And the Holy Spirit will certainly do that.

But reread the verse and substitute the word martyr for witness,

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but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My martyrs both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

It puts the verse in a whole different light. And probably its original intention. All of the Apostles save one died martyrs deaths. We see the first martyr as Steven being filled with the Holy Spirit and laying down his life as a testimony for Jesus. And so two thousand years of church history bears the witness of the martyrs of Christ.

My response to the tragedy in Texas should be to tell others about Jesus. Indeed that should be all of our response. Doing this under the power of the Holy Spirit. And realizing we may very well lay down our lives in the process.

Simply my thoughts for reflection.

Blaine

Re: Reflecting on the Texas Tragedy, on: 2017/11/6 19:44

Yesterday we were involved in a 12-hour call praying for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world. It was during this call that I received a text about the tragedy in Texas. Being strategically placed in prayer we were able to spend a few hours crying out to the Lord for those who have been impacted by this tragedy.

In my ministry of praying for the persecuted I was always reading reports about jihadists going into churches in the Middle East and Africa murdering saints down. Either by shooting them or exploding themselves in an active suicide to take others with them. But to read of an atrocity of such magnitude committed on our soil really hits in the gut.

I don't think the reality has quite set in to the evangelical church that the blood of martyrs has already been shed on our soil. That there is also an increased hatred of the followers of Christ in our nation. I think the paragraph below by Bill Wilson best sums it up.

"Blaming guns for the deaths at houses of worship is certainly politicization, especially when you see who is getting killed and who is doing the killing. Nazis, leftists, atheists, and Islamists have been doing the killing. Christians generally are the ones getting killed. The atmosphere has been established where places of worship, and Jews and Christians in particular, have become targets of a dark and evil element in our society. Jesus said in Matthew 24:9 that "ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." Sadly, in America this hate appears stronger than it ever has been. Jesus said in John 15:20, "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." This is the condition of the world. Let us respond by standing against injustice and overcoming evil with good.

Have a Blessed and Powerful Day!
Bill Wilson"

Brethren do we realize that we are in a culture that hates Christians? Have we grasped the reality of it? The question to all of us should be how are we going to respond to the tragedy that took place in Texas? For the church that we attend could very well be the next one on the list. How do we respond?

Bro Blaine

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2017/11/6 20:35

Status quo for Christian Churches...ending soon.

New Sign in front of Church says...
Attend our public meeting while you have a chance.

The other sign says...
The World hates Christians Jesus is here to encourage you.

Final sign said...
Ye are salt and Light, now you get to prove it.

How to avoid being blown up...
Aren't we all a little atheist?

tongue in cheek signage. the reality is God's sifting is a reality, God's judgments are a reality, our being hated by the world a reality, a true Christian might find him/herself in fellowship in prison in his home state. This website...I'm glad its downloadable because it too is on a short list. No matter what the outcome...Jesus is Lord, our lives are his, his name and his glory and his gospel is central not our conveniences.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2017/11/7 9:41

The event in Texas seems to be the deliberate targeting of Christians solely for the reason that they were Christians. An obvious fact but telling.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/11/7 9:44

But there are reports that the shooter had an ongoing feud with his mother in law that attended that church(although she apparently was not there at the time). So it may be domestic issue vs targeting Christians. He has a violent domestic past.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2017/11/7 10:15

Well whatever. If he had a domestic feud with his mother in law he didn't go to a nearby bar or whatever to do this. As a passionate atheist, he chose his mother in law's fellow Christians to act upon.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/11/7 10:53

I am curious where you saw he was a passionate atheist- I had not seen/heard that.

Edit: Never mind- just found it. He did kill his grandmother in law who was in the church.

I think it goes beyond atheismâ€ he had to do this knowing he would get caught, or knowing he was going to commit suicide. Although it seems he did not commit suicide until after he was grievously wounded by the guy that intervened.

I think churches to a large degree are â€œ soft targetsâ€ like a movie theater, or concert venue, where there is a concentration of people with limited avenues for escape.

Hollywood, video games, breakdown of family has more to do with this than atheism, in my opinion.

Re: , on: 2017/11/7 11:26

I am curious where you saw he was a passionate atheist- I had not seen/heard that

Uhh. Never said that bro. It must must have been in the report.

Blaine

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/11/7 11:27

Docs mentioned it Bear- it is in the recent updates that he espoused his atheism on FB posts.