

Connecticut
December 19, 2012 Bible Study

SERMON SUMMARY The killing of 7 women and 20 first-grade children in Newton, Connecticut on Friday was one of the most tragic events to occur on *modern* American soil. It was likely the subject for many pulpits across the country. There are for remaining more questions than there are answers. Some even ask, “where is God?” There are no easy answers when there is great loss of life. There are no neat and tidy answers for why the innocent suffer. But, be assured that God was, God is and God will be with us. God remains and endures. My prayer, for the sermon and bible study, was to provide some verses to help undergird our faith and to create a context for discussing this tragedy and others in a biblical way.

Three themes emerged. First, it is important for us to remember that we live in world of sin. We should not be surprised when evil occurs; it has been with us from the beginning. Second, our God is one who is deeply familiar with our pain and our suffering. The suffering savior is central to our faith. Third, is to remind us that God shows up. Even in the worst of circumstances, God will take what evil meant for bad and use it for good.

We are in the Midst of Evil This is not meant to frighten but to strengthen. We our faith is mature, we recognize that “evil is present on everyhand.” This doesn’t necessarily help us feel better but it allows us to operate as wise people of faith. Tragically, man’s inhumane treatment of his brother has been with us from the beginning.

- Consider Cain killing Abel (Gene), Joseph’s brother’s selling him into slavery (Genesis), Stephen being stoned to death for speaking the truth. What does this tell us about how long man has been cruel to man?
- Jeremiah 17:9 tells us “the heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” What does this tell us about ourselves?
- Read Romans 7:21-25. What is Paul saying about the human condition?
- Read 1 Peter 5:8. Should we be surprised by evil in the earth?

We find ourselves in need of a savior!

We Serve a Suffering Savior Paul said, on many occasions, that “we preach Christ crucified.” (for example, see 1 Corinthians 1:22-23) This is a mystery that is

fundamental to our faith. Our God elected death . . . to come down from heaven, suffer and die alongside God's people that we might have eternal life. In moments of trial and death, this is worthy of deep reflection and mediation. The Christian faith is deeply familiar with suffering.

- Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the OT text most quoted prophetically in the New Testament. It speaks of the suffering Messiah. 52:14 tells us that he was beaten until he was beyond human likeness – for our sins. Reflect on what it means that God elected (see also Philippians 2:5-11). Would you do what Christ did for a thief? A crack addict?? A murderer?? A sinner? Discuss
- What does John 3:16 mean to us and for us? What would you do for your child? For those whom you loved??

Human kind was in need of a savior. Christ came (Philippians 2:5-11)!

God Shows Up If we are mature in our faith, we start knowing the world is corrupt. But we finish knowing that the world does not have the final answer! We praise God for the ultimate victory over trial, tragedy, temptation, fear, doubt, death, hell and the grave!

- Romans 8:28 This is a reminder from a sermon a couple of weeks ago. Remember that all situations are not good, but God work good out of the situations. What good can God work out of current tragedy?
- We are not accountable for the ways in which God shows up. Remember 1 Kings 19:11-13. How did God show up for Elijah? How can and does he show up in your lives and others as He did for Elijah?
- Look at 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14. How might someone grieve if they have no hope? What can the body of Christ, the church, do in times like these when people are overwhelmed with grief?

Remember, this is world Christ came into. Look at Isaiah 53:3 and consider again what it means to have a savior that stepped from heaven because of His love for His people. This is why we celebrate his birth. For God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whoever would believe on Him, would have everlasting life.