

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

WEDNESDAY's WORD – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler
to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week
October 4 in the year of our Lord 2017 - #713

“Thoughts on Las Vegas”

We all awoke on Monday to the horrendous words, and pictures of the mass shooting in Las Vegas. **We all** sighed a deep sigh ... *“Again??!”* **We all** whispered a prayer. **We all** felt a heartache. **We all** struggled to understand how this could be.

The media as well sighed, *“Again??!”* ... spoke of prayer ... spoke of heartache ... spoke of the struggle to understand. And sometimes ... the media jumped on the various bandwagons of easy answers. *“Gun control!” “Better care for the mentally ill!” “Those darn Republicans!” “Those blasted Democrats!” “President Trump!” “Impotent Congress!”*

How does one make any sense of it all? Well I believe with all my heart that God has promised to be our **“Answer”** when there aren't really any other answers!

“God is our protection and source of strength. He is always ready to help us in times of trouble. So we are not afraid when the earth quakes and the mountains fall into the sea. We are not afraid when the seas become rough and dark and the mountains tremble.” Psalm 45:1-3 ERV

And I believe the Bible has guidance for us in times like this. **There is nothing profound here to be sure ... just my simple thoughts from God's Word** as I seek His wisdom in the midst of the mess.

1. **Jesus calls we who are His followers to be clear about the presence of evil.** There's plenty of blame being thrown around. And probably enough blame for all to share. But there are no simple or easy answers. Except that “evil” is real. And when lives are devoid of God ... devoid of His Word ... it opens the way for evil to reign. And even in those of us who are seeking to follow Christ ... evil would like to get a hold of us. We must be careful! We must be diligent!

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8 NIV

“...and don't give the devil an opportunity.” Ephesians 4:27 CSB

2. **Jesus calls we who are His followers to look to Him for peace in uncertain times.** He ... Christ alone ... is our “peace” in times of trouble & uncertainty.

“Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.” Philippians 4:7 CEV

“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart! And the peace I give isn't fragile like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid.” John 14:27 LB

3. Jesus calls we who are His followers to be people of peace. In our 300 years of Brethren heritage, our faith ancestors laid the very foundation stones of this small Church on the clear Biblical doctrine of peace. Oh dear ones, more than ever ... more than ever ... the Biblical ... and our Brethren ... lifestyle of peace ... is needed! So desperately! Let it begin in your life. How you treat others. How you handle differences with others. How you respond in social media. In your family. How you treat each other. In your church. How you deal with differences of opinion. Oh how our world, and our nation needs people who carry the message of the Gospel of peace!

“Happy are those who work for peace; God will call them his children!” Matthew 5:9 GNT

“Try to live in peace with everyone; work hard at it.” Psalm 34:14 LB

4. Jesus calls we who are His followers to be people of compassion. There are times & forums to discuss & debate the issues. Important issues! Discussions that must happen! But in the day of such turmoil let us simply, love, comfort, pray for, sacrificially give ... in the name of Christ. To those who have lost loved ones, to the injured, to the first responders & medical personnel who have gone through this life changing horror ... we have the love of Christ as our best response ... our best gift.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV

“Share the happiness of those who are happy, the sorrow of those who are sad.”

Romans 12:15 Phillips

5. Jesus calls we who are His followers to be people of prayer. Dear ones, never, ever, ever think that prayer is *“the least I can do.”* Heavens no!!!! Prayer can change the one doing the praying! And God answers sincere prayers! Pray for all those impacted by this tragedy! Pray for those on the scene helping! Pray for our nation! Pray for revival! Pray for peace! Pray for your own life & witness!

“The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.”

James 5:16 Message

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.”

Philippians 4:6 NLT

6. Jesus calls we who are His followers to be cautious of overloading on evil. It’s so easy in this day of immediate access media and social media to become infatuated in a terrible story like this and just take in more and more and more of the horrible details. To what end? The Bible invites us to open our minds more, to fill our hearts more, with the good and the beautiful. There are stories now of the heroes. Of sacrifice. Of care. Be careful what you “let in.”

“...fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable.”

Philippians 4:8 GNT

Dear brothers & sisters ... peace! Pastor Larry <><