**Light in the Darkness**

I am heartbroken over the events of November 5th in the little town of Sutherland Springs Texas. Words simply cannot express the frustration and anger and sorrow and confusion that I feel. To think that a self-centered, mean-spirited monster could allow himself to murder innocent men, women and children in cold blood in a place of worship seemingly over some petty perceived personal grievance is so infuriating and upsetting.

Christians understand that we live in a world of darkness that is dominated by one who seeks only our destruction. Acts 26:18 reminds us that by sanctification through faith in Christ we have been turned from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God. Colossians 1:13 says that God “rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” But even after being rescued from His control, the Devil continues to “prowl around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Often the devices Satan uses to trip us up are subtle and deceptive. John said that he appeals to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the vain-glory of life to tempt us to betray the commitment we have made to walk in the light (1 John 2:16). But at other times he hits us right between the eyes with shocking displays of pure evil with the intent of frightening us and discouraging us. The latter seems to be happening far too often of late.

Perpetrators of such wickedness are sons of the Devil, not because they have been directly controlled by him. The whole idea that “the Devil made them do it” removes the accountability for their heinous acts which they so richly deserve. Jesus said the religious leaders of His day were of their father the Devil because they had chosen to do the desires of their father, a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies (John 8:44). When we see wicked men causing harm to their fellowman, we should recognize the unmistakable influence of the “prince of the power of the air”; the “spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).

Disciples of Jesus Christ remain undaunted. We are but strangers and exiles on this earth, but while we are here, we are called to be the light of the world. Our Lord said, “A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Followers of Christ shine the brightest when the skies are dark; not because of their own righteousness or purity, but because their behavior reflects the glory of the One True Light (John 8:12). The Book of Revelation has fostered a good deal of disagreement about the correct interpretation of the symbolism, but the main theme is clear: The Devil and his supporters may appear to have the upper hand at times, but ultimately they will find themselves on the losing side and their losses will be catastrophic and devastating.

Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, strength and mind and love your neighbor as you love yourself. That is a source of light that no amount darkness can overcome.

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