

JACK'S CORNER

In lieu of my traditional question/answer format, I want to offer some thoughts regarding the recent events at Columbine High School.....

I don't want to minimize in any way the pain and the evil that was done. I was truly saddened by event itself, but I was not surprised by this evil. On the contrary, **we Christians should be surprised this is not happening far more often.** As believers, more than anyone else, we should understand the human heart's capacity for evil. The veneer of goodness in humanity is extremely thin. If not for the mercy of God, imagine what we would be doing to each other. Sound darkly cynical? "The heart is desperately wicked", the prophet Jeremiah says, "who can understand it?"

In our prideful arrogance, most of us think ourselves incapable of the same kind of actions. Given different circumstances in our own lives, we too might walk into a school for the purpose of murder. How little we know our own hearts. As I ponder this event, I am drawn inextricably and humbly toward my Savior. How I need Him! How our world needs Him!

What a opportunity for God's true church to reach out to a lost and confused world. What will we do? What words will we say? Who will we be? Tuesday afternoon, a clergyman was interviewed and asked why things like this happen, and how can we understand these kinds of events. I was so hopeful. Now was the church's chance to shine. The world was asking us! He said: "We don't know why these things happen." Then: "How can we understand something like this?" My heart sank. I don't know why this Pastor said what he did, but I think he missed a chance to shine. I know he couldn't give a half hour discourse, but he gave the impression that the church is just as "in the dark" as the rest of the world.

The fact is, there is an answer to the "why?", and there is a way to understand this event, and we Christians know it! Sadly, **people don't really want the answer; they are unwilling to accept it.** The question "why?" is not really a question at all. It is more of a demand that God explain himself. It is a frustration and disappointment that God is not the God we want him to be...nor does he do things that way we think he should. He lets things happen that call into question his goodness and strength. We neither want nor accept his answers.

Most people have a set of false assumptions about life, people, and God that they believe are true.

1. **People say: all bad events should be prevented.** Most of us believe the logic of this statement is so intuitively obvious, we never challenge its validity. **God says:** In my love, I can use the all bad events as opportunities for good. I will use them to shape my people into the image of Christ. I will draw them to complete dependence on me. I will make them look beyond the here and now so that they long for heaven...where all evil will be erased forever.

2. **People say: God's priorities should be the same as ours.** The elimination of pain and the maximization of pleasure are usually number one on our list of priorities. Happiness and smooth sailing through life are the ultimate goal. **God says:** I am more concerned with developing faith, bringing my people to true repentance, molding them into the image of my Son, and having an eternal relationship with them....(happiness usually makes them forget me.)

3. **People say: Life should be fair...as I define fairness.** **God says:** Instead of being fair, I will give them what they don't deserve....grace!

4. **People say: Physical life should always be preserved. God says:** I am far more concerned with spiritual life and where my people will spend eternity. Physical life is not the lasting reality.

5. **People say: We are basically good. God says:** All have sinned and fall short.

If we don't understand that God does not think like us, act like us, and share our priorities, we will find it hard to really love, worship and trust him.

What will we do? Will we get involved in the lives of our neighbors to share the wonder of the Gospel? What words will we say? What answers do we have? Can we sit with them, weep with them, and share words of truth and hope? Who will we be? Will we open our hearts, shine as lights, be people of integrity, and lead our neighbors out of darkness? **THIS IS THE TIME FOR US TO SHINE! OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS JESUS IN US!** We need deep convictions that come from God's Word to transform a world that sits in darkness.

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