



The Beacon

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God in times of Loss

Do not fear, for I am with you,

do not be afraid, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you,

I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. – Isaiah 41:10

As I write this article my mind is still reeling from the news that a man in Las Vegas took the life of over 50 people and injured over 500. It was/is the biggest mass shooting in the history of the United States. It is a tragedy we seem to keep experiencing. At times like this it seems natural for us to wonder “where is God in all this?” Of course, it doesn’t take a tragedy of this scale to ask that question. All of us have experienced loss, hardship, death, sorrow, despair and hopelessness at one time or another. Many have wondered, “How can a loving God let these things happen?”

The first thing I want to say is that it is OK to wonder these things. It is OK to ask God these questions and to even be angry about it. God’s shoulders are broad and He can take it. I think the worst thing we can do when we are feeling this way is to give God the silent treatment. So let your prayers be honest and tell God how you are feeling and what is frustrating.

I, like you, often wish God would just step in and alter the outcome of these kinds of events. I wish God would save us from ourselves at times. But then at other times I realize that if we had a God who manipulated our interactions and forced us to conform to His will then our relationship would be very different with God and with each other. Everything would basically be taken out of our hands and we would be like domesticated pets. We would become to God what our dogs are to us. And while pets and pet owners have a good thing going on, it is not what God created us to be.

In truth, the God we come to know in the Bible is one that invites us to shape things and be a part of guiding humanity’s destiny. We see this in the creation story when the first people are given responsibilities for caring after creation. In other words, we are called to be in collaboration with God as to the kind of world we are going to have.

So, where is God when the world we have is filled with terror and violence? Where is God when the innocent are killed? Where is God when the bad guys seem to be winning? God is with us. God is weeping with us. God is angry as we are. God knows our fear. God knows our heartbreak. I say this because we worship a God who came to us as one of us. We know God through the life of Jesus and by the same token, God knows us through the life of Jesus as well. Jesus, the incarnation of God, the fullness of God realized in flesh, knows what it is to experience loss and death and violence. Life under Rome was oppressive and relentless. Around the time of Jesus' birth, the city of Sepphoris was razed when rebellion broke out. This city is about 3 miles from Nazareth and the event would have been like 911 for the people of Galilee. Jesus likely lost his father at an early age, given that we never hear about Joseph after the birth story. Jesus was poor and so, no doubt, experienced hardship because of that. My point is that we worship a God who knows what we are going through. In Christ, God knows our every weakness and our trials and tribulations. Even death is not an experience our God shied away from.

So what does God do in this time of struggle? God comes alongside and walks with us through our times of trial. God gives us strength, inspiration, hope for a better tomorrow, and all we need as humans to make the world a better place. God is that Power that keeps us going from day to day facing down our despair and resolving to not give in. God is our constant companion and our most trusted confidante. God will neither leave us nor forsake us. And in Christ, we know that what God gives to us, will ultimately bring about the change we are praying for.

I know this article has been long, but I really think that a poem I read today captures my thoughts on this. It's called *Blessing When the World is Ending* by Jan Richardson

Look, the world
is always ending
somewhere.
Somewhere
the sun has come
crashing down.
Somewhere
it has gone
completely dark.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the gun,
the knife,
the fist.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the slammed door,
the shattered hope.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the utter quiet
that follows the news
from the phone,
the television,
the hospital room.

Somewhere
it has ended
with a tenderness
that will break
your heart.

But, listen,
this blessing means
to be anything
but morose.
It has not come
to cause despair.

It is simply here
because there is nothing
a blessing
is better suited for
than an ending,
nothing that cries out more
for a blessing
than when a world
is falling apart.

This blessing
will not fix you,
will not mend you,
will not give you
false comfort;
it will not talk to you
about one door opening
when another one closes.

It will simply
sit itself beside you
among the shards
and gently turn your face
toward the direction
from which the light
will come,
gathering itself
about you
as the world begins
again.

—Jan Richardson from Circle of Grace

Grace and Peace

Pastor Curtis

October at FBC:

- Oct 1: Rummage sale moves to the gym after worship
- Oct 2: Sorting and stacking begins at 8 am
- Oct 3: Beers and Bros at 6 pm at Fiddler's Elbow
- Oct 12: AB Women Luncheon at noon
Rummage Sale soft opening for Church members 2 pm
- Oct 13: Rummage Sale opens at 8 am
- Oct 14: Rummage Sale opens at 8 am
- Oct 17: Beers and Bros at 6 pm at Fiddler's Elbow
- Oct 19: Rummage Sale opens at noon
- Oct 20: Rummage Sale opens at 8 am
- Oct 21: Rummage Sale opens at 8 am
- Oct 22: Rummage Sale clean up following worship
Inquirer's Class following worship
- Oct 24: Gym opens
Council of Ministries meeting 5:45 pm
- Oct 29: Octoberfest

Happy Birthday to: Oct 2: Andrew Burnett. Oct 3: Lynn Christensen, Alyssa Meadowcroft. Oct 5: Celine David. Oct 11: Weston Hall. Oct 12: Alan Fox. Oct 15: Solomon Guilkey. Oct 16: Pat Ditton. Oct 17: Lois Moser, Taylor Hekking. Oct 18: Morgan Hekking, Judge Brown, Elliot Setzer. Oct 19: Steve Walker. Oct 22; Raffa Ellis. Oct 23: Mackenzie Wolters. Oct 27: Lisa Keysaw. Oct 29: Monty Rogers. Oct 30: Harriett Arreola.

Octoberfest—Oct 29th:

We will celebrate Octoberfest on Sunday morning. The festival begins with worship at 11:00 am – “Where is God when I am Scared?” This will be a special worship service and all the children are encouraged to wear their costumes to worship. Following worship we will have lunch in Keck Hall and there will be Carnival games! Fun Food! Bouncy House! Pumpkins! Candy, Candy, Candy!

This is a great day to invite families with children to join us. Watch for more details in the bulletin.

Inquirer’s class—October 22nd

Join Pastor Curtis in the Library following worship for his 2 hour class about who we are and why we do what we do. This is a great way to learn about our Baptist faith or to refresh your understanding.

Caitlyn Fellows has arrived at the training center in Senegal to begin her work for the Peace Corps for the next two years. You can follow her adventures at <http://storiesofsenegal.wordpress.com> which is her blog, or befriend her on Facebook. Please keep Caitlyn, John, Robyn, Meghan, Judy and Loren in your prayers,

Rummage Sale:

Do you have items for the Rummage Sale and need to deliver them to the church?

We ask that you bring them starting Oct 8th-11th. We will be able to drive on the new parking lot and you can drive right up to the gym doors at 8 am.

- Oct 2-11: Set up, sort and organize
- Oct 12: Soft opening for CDC and church folks noon to 7
- Oct 13: Sale opens 8 am to 7 pm
- Oct 14: Sale opens 8 am to 4 pm
- Oct 19: Sale opens noon to 7

Oct 20: Sale opens 8 to 7
Oct 21: Sale opens 8 to 4
Oct 22: Clean up after church

Sign Up Sheets are up outside the church office and upstairs in Keck Hall.

Sign up to come help us sort and stack all the treasures for the sale. Come help for an hour or a day.

Does your workplace have a bulletin board or do you know a business that would hang a poster advertising our Rummage Sale? If so, pick up a few from the volunteer desk and help us get the word out about our sale.

One Great Hour of Sharing—Hurricane Response

American Baptist Churches USA General Secretary the Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer invites all congregations to donate generously to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) in response to the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey in Texas and Louisiana and Hurricane Irma in the Caribbean, Florida, Alabama and South Carolina.

“American Baptists across the country are a generous people, and our hearts are grieved by the human suffering we have seen since the storms made landfall,” Spitzer says. “I ask that every church dedicate time this week to pray for the safety and well-being of all affected by the storms, and to express our love for them by giving sacrificially to One Great Hour of Sharing.”

Donations designated to “OGHS-Hurricane” can be made through your church; by visiting www.abc-usa.org and clicking “Give Online” at the top right of the page. In the “Comments” section, type “OGHS-Hurricane.” Or, mailed to the attention of Kim Wilkins at American Baptist Home Mission Societies, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA, 19482-0851. One hundred percent of donations go to relief efforts; no dollars are retained for administrative costs. For more information, contact Wilkins at 1-800-222-3872, x2413, or kim.wilkins@abhms.org

Donations to help with the earthquake in Mexico City or the hurricane destruction in Puerto Rico can also be made using the above information.

You are invited to a Lifetime of Service Celebration for Fran Holm on Saturday, October 21 at 3 pm at Morgan Valley Christian Church, 4500 N 3800 W in Peterson UT. The celebration will honor Fran’s lifetime of service to Morgan Valley Christian Church congregation spanning over 25 years. They will celebrate her service and wish her well on her journey into retirement from ministry. Light finger food and beverages will be served. A keepsake scrapbook will be available for you to add your well wishes, photos, and other memories. Please RSVP to fred.smullin@gmail.com