

## **“How to make sense out of the senseless”**

October 8, 2017

I can remember watching the news conference in which the number of fatalities at the Virginia Tech mass shooting was announced. 32 killed. There was an audible gasp from the reporters. It was unthinkable, and just down the road.

When I heard that 50 people were killed in Las Vegas, now 58 ... I didn't gasp. I think I have become numb to all of it. How do we make sense of this? It's so senseless, how do we sort it out in our head?

### **A. Know that we live in an evil world.**

Ephesians 2:1-3, Once you were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins. You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passions and desires of our evil nature. We were born with an evil nature, and we were under God's anger just like everyone else.

- People refuse to obey God, and instead obey Satan.
- People follow their evil passions and desires.
- People (even us!) are born with an evil nature, but we “used to live like that.”

### **B. Believe that Jesus lives in an evil world, too.**

Hebrews 13:8, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

That same Jesus who created the Universe and everything in it (John 1) and came to earth as a little baby (Luke 2) and now, having died for our sins and being raised from the dead now reigns at God's right hand (Hebrews 10:12) ... is the same Jesus who lives within us and through us to redeem an evil world.

1 Peter 3:9-12, Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate when people say unkind things about you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God wants you to do, and he will bless you for it. For the Scriptures say, "If you want a happy life and good days, keep your tongue from speaking evil, and keep your lips from telling lies. Turn away from evil and do good. Work hard at living in peace with others. The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil."

- Jesus is made more alive by our voices.
- Jesus is made more alive by our actions.
- Jesus is made more alive by our prayers.

QUESTION: Where is God in all of this?

James 1:13-17, And remember, no one who wants to do wrong should ever say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else either. Temptation comes from the lure of our own evil desires. These evil desires lead to evil actions, and evil actions lead to death. So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God above, who created all heaven's lights. Unlike them, he never changes or casts shifting shadows.

- God cannot be blamed for wrongdoing.
- God IS the source of anything good that comes from this.

### **C. Pursue peace with God.**

2 Peter 3:3, 13-14, First, I want to remind you that in the last days there will be scoffers who will laugh at the truth and do every evil thing they desire ... But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world where everyone is right with God. And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to live a pure and blameless life. And be at peace with God.

- We will always have evil people among us.
- Know that a time is coming when God will make it right.
- Live a pure and blameless life.
- Be at peace with God ... relentlessly pursue a growing relationship with God.

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, our world is broken with sin. We long for the day when everyone we see is right with You; until then help us each to life up Jesus with our voices and actions. Lead us to live a pure and blameless life. Bless those in Las Vegas and elsewhere who have been impacted by this tragedy. In Jesus' name, amen."