

A Nation in Pain

When our forefathers came to America, they desired a new beginning. When we give our lives to Christ He gives us a new beginning in Him. (John 1:1; 4:10-14)

Many things in our world today can cause us concern: ISIS, same-sex relations, killing of police officers, armed forces in Afghanistan; terrorist attacks; children being taught evolution in grade school and gender-sexual differences, unisex bathrooms and the list goes on.

It seems what God meant for good, man continues to turn away from God in sin causing harm.

So... what is or should be our response?

1. We must choose FAITH not FEAR. (Hebrews 11; Proverbs 19:23, 2 Timothy 1:7)

God is sovereign and in control of all things. (Isaiah 46:10; Daniel 5:21 and Acts 4:24). He holds the past, present and future in His Hand. We must have absolute trust & confidence in Him. When our eyes see evil, we must see through His lens.

2. We must LOVE. (1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 2 John 1:5)

Love covers a multitude of sins. We are to love the sin-filled, but not the sin. (Romans 3:23). We all fall short of His glory. Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not dishonor others and keeps no record of wrong. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes and always perseveres. LOVE never fails. (1 Corinthians 13) Will you extend Love to those considered unlovely before? Will you reach out a hand to your "neighbor"? (Luke 10:30 – 37)

3. We must PRAY for them and not about them. (2 Chronicles 7:14; Matthew 6: 5-15)

God acts upon our requests (Matthew 7:7). He hears our cries and He answers. (Psalm 61:1-5) Do not allow defeat or hopelessness to overtake BUT remember the cross. (Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.) Remember Jesus came so none would perish but all who desires would have eternal life. He saves. He heals. He transforms. He can do the impossible. Take Him at His Word.

4. Be-friend someone unlike you. (Luke 15: 10-24)

Are all of your friends and people in your close circle like you? Do they have the same perspectives as you? Do they like the same food? Music? Go to the same events? How about inviting someone who is not like you to join you for church? Or join them for their church service? Eat a dish- or make a dish with them from their country. Invite them to join you for Christmas? Or visit them at Rosh Hashanah, Purim, or other celebration. The point is to go into the world and befriend someone not like yourself to embrace, disciple, and love as Christ loves you.

5. Invite someone to church. (Matthew 7:1-5)

The church is a body of believers who are saved by grace, need Christ's mercy and yet still need forgiveness for sins committed or omitted. We all need His forgiveness. We are all in church to grow in our relationship to Him. Who needs your invitation? Can you pick up a CD of the sermon to

share with them? Do they need a bible? Do they need to be picked up and brought to Sunday School?

6. Start a small group/bible study in your home and invite those who don't attend a church in your neighborhood. (Acts 4:1-22)

You don't have to be a teacher. God will equip you with what He desires you to have to reach out to others. Share your love of Christ over baking bread, sharing recipes. Share your love of Him in a non-threatening way. It could be you host a book club study. What a great way to get to know your neighbors.

7. Last but not least, Support and/or Intercede with someone outside of your circle. (Matthew 6:3-4; John 13:1-17)

Do you have a group of friends who supports you in prayer? Do you know someone who doesn't have such a circle? Visit a neighbor in the nursing home, senior citizen's home, hospital. Take them fruit, water, books if they are doing an overnight. Or just stay and chat and pray with them. Listen to their stories. As they if you can pray with them. It doesn't have to be eloquent. (Lord, comfort them; bring them peace and heal them and/or their loved ones in Jesus' name. Amen.) Walk their dog. Cut the grass. Water their outdoor plants. If it is a single mom or dad, take the kids for a couple of hours – watch a movie with popcorn; teach them how to change the oil in the car or change a tire? Play basketball. Bottom line get involved in their lives and serve their needs.

Our nation will heal when we set aside our needs and serve others through prayer, journeying and discipleship. Let your light shine that men can see Jesus-not you. Love the unlovely and do so with joy- not grudgingly.

Pain dissipates with time and in a loving environment. We are never alone (Hebrews 13:5). So... let's walk alongside others who need what we have. Walk hand in hand; step by step and watch God turn what seems impossible around for His purpose and His glory. (John 17: 20-26)

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