

- ***Read Psalm 11:4-7*** Some of you might have seen this front page of the Daily News floating around social media over the past few days. This front page was created in response to the terroristic shooting that took place in San Bernardino, California this past Wednesday and the responses that followed by certain members of one of our main political parties. 14 people were murdered and around 20 more were injured when two terrorist opened fired in a medical facility. These two individuals were then pursued and eventually killed by law enforcement officers. Many politicians used their position to extend thoughts and prayers to those who had been affected, and the Daily News decided that they would have something to say about that.
- The Daily News created this front page to put certain politicians and our God on blast and to say that God isn't powerful enough to do anything and that these men are hiding behind their faiths. Multiple people have written articles and such in response to this front page. One being national columnist Matt Walsh, and another being a brother in Christ who is working the Kingdom up in West Harlem, NY Caleb Churchill. Both of these men responded much in the same way and it led me to want to share some similar thoughts with you this evening. I recognize that I just taugth on what we can do to help improve society, and I'd like to continue on somewhat a similar train of thought this evening. We will have people who will disrespect and blame our God for bad things happening. How will we respond to such accusations? I hope we will be able to know who to answer ever a little bit better once we have finished tonight.

I. This statement seeks to do nothing but discredit God & make faith seem useless.

- A. Atheists and agnostics have used evil and violence as proof against God for years.
1. One of the skeptics greatest (in their mind) arguments against the existence of God is to say that "a good God wouldn't allow such wickedness and evil to exist in the world."
 2. They are convinced that evil is a result of something that God has done. They would also contend that God directly controls all things and thus it is illogical for evil to exist in a world where a good God exists.
 3. The problem with this argument is that God created everything perfectly in the beginning. He recognized it as good in **Genesis 1:31**.
 4. The problems of evil and suffering are a direct result of man's decision to turn their back on God and His will. All suffering and evil can be traced back to the sin of man. We are to blame for our own problems. Not God.
- B. They also create a false dichotomy between prayer and action.
1. The creators of this page also want to create a false "either/or" choice between praying and and acting to help the situation.
 2. Because the political figures mentioned that they would be praying for the victims and situation, the creators of this front page (along with political motivations) want to paint them as people who fail to take action.
 3. The fact of the matter is that our God has said that "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." (**James 5:16**) We also know that "the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer." (**I Peter 3:12**) Therefore, knowing this we do not allow ourselves to become anxious and overly worried. Instead, we go to God in everything by prayer and supplications. (**Phil. 4:6**)
 4. However, we must understand that prayer is not a magic genie type of thing. We should not be a people who only pray when we are in need. We ought to be a people that pray continuously. (**I Thess. 5:17**)
 5. Also, we don't just pray "meaningless" prayers as these people would suggest, but we pray putting our faith and trust in God, and then we go and take action as well. It is totally possible attempt to help a situation through prayer and action. The dichotomy is void and hollow, and those who would make this accusation have a poor understanding of God and his blessing of prayer.

II. God has done something to fix society's problems. He gave His Son for mankind.

- A. In order to turn people from their sins & towards righteousness, God sent His Son to die for mankind.
1. When people ask why God isn't fixing our problems, they fail to recognize that God, many years ago, did something that should put an end to the problems of man that come through sin.
 2. **John 3:16**, probably the most well known verse in the Bible, tells us that God put into action a plan that would cure the world of sin and evil actions. It is God's will that those people who would obey His Son would begin to behave themselves in a way that would eliminate sin.

3. Many who misunderstand how God operates would think that God is more like a puppeteer and that he directly controls what happens in this life. That just isn't the case. All throughout the Bible the big little word "if" is used to show that doing good is conditional on man's decisions to do so. **(John 8:31)**
4. Man has the decision whether or not he will take advantage of God's plan to do something about sin.
- B. If a person would be converted to the way of light, then they wouldn't do those things which are wicked and evil.
 1. Generally speaking, conversion to Christ should make a major turning point in life per **Rom. 6.**
 2. The person who is converted to Christ no longer lives by the flesh, but instead, he lives by the Spirit. **(Gal. 5:16-25)**
 3. Paul specifically makes the point that the Corinthians had made this change in their lives. **(I Cor. 6:9-11)**
 4. Peter also admonishes the brethren receiving his letter to recognize that they had spent enough time living as sinners and that they were now to live according to the will of God. **(I Peter 4:1-6)**
 5. None of this would be possible if Jesus had not come, had not given his life, and had not been raised from the dead. But Jesus did do all of those things and because of that we have the chance to be new creatures and allow our new lives to influence those who are around us. **(Matt. 5:13-16)**
 6. If men would simply turn to Jesus and live quiet and peaceful lives as He desires, then we wouldn't have to worry about the hate, violence, and bloodshed that seems to be all throughout our society.

III. It is up to us whether something will be done about our society's problems.

- A. First off, we need to be praying.
 1. We should not allow skeptics and haters of God and faith to discourage into thinking that prayer is meaningless and useless.
 2. We ought to be a people of prayer. We ought to be people who do believe that God's ears are open to us when we cry out to Him. **(Psalm 34:15 which is quoted in I Pet. 3:12)**
 3. We ought to have confidence that God hears us when we righteously pray according to His will. **(I Jn 5:14,15)**
 4. A praying people is a trusting people, and especially in these difficult times we should be a people of trust and prayer.
 5. We ought to pray for all men and especially those in authority that they will do what is necessary so that we can live peaceful lives. **(I Tim. 2:2)**
- B. But we don't only need to be praying, we need to be acting.
 1. Again, prayer isn't some bandaid that frees us from any sort of responsibility. We ought to be a people that pray but then seek to do what we can to help in difficult situations.
 2. If our society is struggling with violence, then first off, we need to be sharing Jesus with those struggling with it. We need to teach them that Christians are not to be aggressive people. We are to strive to have peace and quiet in our lives. **(I Thess. 4:11)**
 3. These people need to come to know and live according to the will of Jesus. We can do our part with those who are around us to make sure that we do not allow this pattern of foolishness and hate to continue without our family and friends.
 4. With God's blessings and help through our efforts, We can do those things that will help to change the violent culture that is around us.
 5. This is not to be political at all, but we must recognize that laws and restrictions will not help. The only thing that will truly help is for disciples to do their part to change the hearts of man towards God. May we always be striving to do our part within this life.

We can't hardly turn on the TV anymore without seeing someone having hurt someone else. Many would cry that all hope is loss. Others would scoff at those who turn to their faith as a means to cope with the difficulties. Many would scoff at the mention of God, and they would go so far as to chastise those who look to God for help. Hopefully it has become clear to us that those people are misguided. They are blinded to the power of God. His power has been clearly shown to us through the giving of His Son. His Son came and died for us so that we might be able to have our sins forgiven and so that we might be able to change our lives into ones that mimic our Savior Jesus Christ. May God be praised through our efforts to have our lights shine for Him in all that we do.