

CGGC eNews: Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done

July 8, 2016

I am heartbroken this morning. I'm sure many of you are as well. As we've watched the horrific events unfold in Louisiana, Minnesota, and Texas this week many of us have been overwhelmed with emotion as we've witnessed so much senseless violence and so many lives horrifically impacted.

Right now I have African-American brothers and sisters who are brokenhearted, frustrated and even afraid because of the events of this past week. Many of my black friends have had enough personal experience with similar situations to know that there is a real possibility that the same tragic circumstances might occur within in their own communities, to their young friends and sons, or even to themselves. They feel that their lives do not matter in a society like ours.

Right now I also have brothers and sisters who serve in law enforcement who are brokenhearted, frustrated and afraid because of the spiral of violence we've witnessed over the past several hours. These men and women have pledged their lives to protect and serve and know that they put their lives in danger every day when they put on their uniform and go to work. They are placed into situations on a daily basis that are ripe for escalation and require split second decisions under tremendous pressure. They feel misunderstood and under attack.

In moments like these we're prone to make the "other" the enemy. May I humbly offer that our enemy is not young black men nor is our enemy the men and women who serve as police. While there are real, systemic issues that need to be brought to light and addressed, to demonize one another and make the other our enemy does little to resolve the serious matter facing our culture, in fact, it just plays into the spiral of violence and hate that we're reeling from right now.

We do have an enemy and Jesus made it clear that that the enemy works to bring death and destruction into our world. In John 10:10 Jesus tells us that "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." Death and violence were never part of the design for God's creation. These entered into the human experience as a result of Satan's deception and the reality of sin. The violence and tragedy we witness on a daily basis are the work of our true enemy, Satan.

Many in our culture hold out hope that we can bring a political solution to this problem we're facing. We long for leaders who will ride into town and save the day. We yearn for the day when we'll educate ourselves beyond the age old problems of hatred, racism, revenge and violence. As followers of Jesus, we know that such noble hopes are ill-placed. We are broken people who are unable to repair ourselves.

Our world needs the Good News that's only found in Jesus! The Gospel of Jesus Christ, which reconciles us to our heavenly Father also reconciles us to our fellow human being as well. Sin has broken our relationship with the Father, broken our relationships with our fellow human beings, has broken our relationship with nature and even our relationship with ourselves. Only the Good News of Jesus is able to reconcile us and make us whole.

The Apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:14-21:

“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

The Gospel is our lone hope for reconciliation with God the Father, our fellow human beings, nature and even ourselves. Only the Good News of Jesus can make us whole.

How do we demonstrate and proclaim this Good News at a time like this?

1. Let’s mourn with those who mourn today. Children woke up this morning without parents and parents woke up without their children.
2. Let’s continue to pray for “your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Only Jesus and His Gospel can fix our brokenness. Political answers will fail and educational efforts will fall short. Only the power of the Gospel working to reconcile people to God and to one another can heal us, restore us and change our present reality. In the kingdom of God there is no racism, violence or death. Let’s ask Jesus to continue to advance His kingdom and His rule and reign over our world.
3. Let’s listen well. Let’s listen well to our black friends and hear their pain right now. Let’s listen well to our friends in law enforcement and hear their pain too. Let’s commit to listen to others, especially those who are different from us or the “other.”
4. Let’s be faithful to our work as agents of reconciliation and ambassadors of Christ. Because Jesus has reconciled us to Himself, we can be reconciled to one another. Let’s embrace this truth. Let’s look for opportunities to live out this truth to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Reach out to a black neighbor in your community today. Reach out to a law enforcement officer in your neighborhood. Ask God to send you opportunities to serve as an agent of reconciliation.

Know that I’m praying for you today and asking God to bless you as you serve Him!

Christ’s Peace,
Lance