

Just last Sunday I made the comment that the world has solved the bulk of our problems. Whether it is through financial resources, technology, medicine, or other general advancement there is a great deal of things that the average person needs little outside trust or faith to get through. The one thing that did stand out, the one thing that all of these different avenues do not have an answer to though is death. Death is unavoidable, it may be able to be run from, eluded, postponed, or staved off, but the reality for all people is that a time will come when we will all die. And of the resources in the world will not have prevented that death from happening. The other thing that none of these resources truly help or give answer to is how the loved ones left behind are to cope. It is in light of this that the words I am about to share are of such wondrous impact.

Last Friday at a manufacturing plant in Aurora, Illinois a disgruntled worker who knew that he was going to be let go opened fire on his coworkers killing five. One of those five, Josh Pinkard, sent a text to his wife before he died simply saying, "I love you, I've been shot at work." As she moved forward she writes, "With my pastor's help, since family was still on planes to get to us, I told my children their dad did not make it and is in heaven with Jesus." A day after she wrote on facebook:

"I lost the love of my life yesterday in a tragic workplace shooting. The world is darker and more sad now. A huge bright light has left this world. But God. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. I am lost and devastated beyond words. Things that mattered yesterday do not matter today. I will praise the Lord for giving me this mountain of a man. I will praise the Lord for the children we have together. And I will cry out to God during this immense time of sadness and need. Please remember us in the coming days, months, and years."

These are the words of a 37-year-old now widowed mother of three! These words are amazing! This is what faith looks and sounds like. It is sobering to think they were the same age as my wife and I, and just 1 day after losing her husband she says, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." Yes those are the words of Job from after he lost his children and all his possessions; yes, those words are a part of the funeral service and are meant along with the preceding phrase, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away," to help redirect our focus back to God as our source of hope and comfort in the midst of all circumstance. But the rest of the words are completely her own. She is he one who praises God for the person she has lost, and for the children she will now be raising on her own, and who will likely remind her regularly of the "mountain of a man" that she has lost. And yet with confident faith she professes her trust in God in the midst of this unexpected and trying time.

This woman's words reflect the strength of faith that we each need to have, want to have, and hope we will have if we ever find ourselves in this type of situation, in which we never want to find ourselves. This raw, honest, true faith is something otherworldly. It is something which comes only from God, or as Jesus says in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." The eternal peace with the Father won by Christ through His life, death, and death-destroying resurrection is something in which we find eternal confidence, peace, and trust.

God's Blessings on your month,  
Pastor Nick