

What does Jesus say about terrorism and disaster?

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Scripture: Luke 13:1-5

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On 22 March 2017, a terrorist attack took place in the vicinity of the Palace of Westminster in London, seat of the British Parliament. The attacker, 52-year-old Briton Khalid Masood, drove a car into pedestrians on the pavement along the south side of Westminster Bridge and Bridge Street, injuring more than 50 people, four of them fatally. After the car crashed into the perimeter fence of the Palace grounds, Masood abandoned it and ran into New Palace Yard where he fatally stabbed an unarmed police officer. He was then shot by an armed police officer and died at the scene.

On 22 May 2017 a suicide bomber detonated a shrapnel-laden homemade bomb at the exit of Manchester Arena in Manchester, England, following a concert by American singer Ariana Grande. Twenty-three adults and children were killed and 119 were injured, 23 critically.

On 3 June 2017 an attack took place in the Southwark district of London, England, when a van mounted the pavement of London Bridge and was driven into pedestrians. The van crashed, and the three male occupants ran to the nearby Borough Market pub and

restaurant area, where they stabbed people with long knives.

On June 14, the 24-story [Grenfell Tower](#) in Kensington, West London. The residential high rise was built in 1974 and contains 120 homes.

The fire broke out shortly before 1 am. According to several witnesses, the blaze started on one side of the tower block, before sweeping around the building and engulfing it in flames from the second to the top floor.

Prayer.

Even though it is Father's Day and even though I don't really want to preach this message today, I have been led by the Lord to this subject and this text. I have been moved by the horrors of the news these days. Seems disaster or terror is everywhere and happening at a rapid pace. But by the grace and mercy of God, it will only be a matter of time before Hong Kong is experiencing something like this. I sincerely hope and pray not, but we know that the 'rain falls on the just and the unjust'.

Our only hope is that we have a ROCK to stand on in the midst of the storms of life. Our ultimate hope is in the eternal life offered to us in Christ and the eternal security he promises to those who believe.

This morning, I simply want to ask Jesus what he would say about these things. “Lord, how are we to think of these things....of terror and disaster that comes upon us?”

He answers us in **Luke 13:1-5**

13:1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Now, what can we learn from our Lord in this passage. That’s the point today.

We have 2 historical events that actually happened. The first one happened to some people from Galilee and the second happened in Jerusalem. The first one was an act of terror. Murder. Brutal killing of some Galileans by Pilate. The second is a disaster that happened when a tower fell and some people lost their lives. We don’t know much about the events beyond this.

The first thing that we need to see from this passage is this:

- 1. The people who died in both events- did not die because they were worse than other people.**

Jesus says, **“Do not think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans?”**

Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them. Do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?”

In both cases, Jesus says, “No, I tell you.” They weren’t. They weren’t worse sinners. They weren’t worse offenders.

So, we shouldn’t think that when someone loses their life, {whether it is in a crash, an act of terror, or a tower that falls} that it is because they were worse than others.

- 2. The people who died by the hands of Pilate and by the tower that fell, died because they were sinners and offenders.**

Notice Jesus says they are not WORSE sinners than all the others or WORSE offenders than all the others. No. **All** are sinners and **all** are offenders. Now, this may not seem very applicable but it is crucially necessary to get this right. All are sinners. All are offenders. The truth is

that deep down inside, many don't think that they are all that bad. "I'm not really a sinner. I'm a pretty good guy." "I'm not an offender. Offended who? I'm a likable fellow."

Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death."

We were all born in sin. We all have a sin nature. Our natural bent is to sin. You're not good. You're bad. "Well, compared to others, I ain't so bad." But what about compared to God? We are all sinners and offenders.

Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgement."

Death is a product of the fall; of our sin. It will happen to us all. So, whenever or however someone dies....it's because of sin. If you had no sin, you'd not need to die.

3. There are two types of dying. There's a type of dying called 'perishing' that is different than just dying.

In Luke 13, Jesus a conditional statement in both cases. He says, "UNLESS YOU REPENT, YOU WILL ALL LIKEWISE PERISH." Now, what he cannot mean is that if you repent, if you turn from your sins and offenses that you will never die *physically*. He cannot and doesn't mean that. He must mean something else. So, follow his train of thought here:

All will die. Somehow or someway.
If you repent....you won't perish.
If you don't repent....you will perish.

the Bible can help us here.

Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death (we saw this earlier) but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Dying... for the person who believes in Jesus is just a passing on...to be with Jesus and to have eternal life. And that doesn't matter whether you die in your sleep or cancer or a tower falls on you or a terrorist attack. For those who repent of their sins and turn to Christ, death is far better.

Dying for those who don't repent is called 'perishing'. It is separation from God and his goodness to a place of torment; a lake of fire...called hell.

Let me summarize the main points.

- All of us will die physically because of sin.
- How someone dies doesn't mean they are worse.
- Those who repent and believe in Jesus will not perish. They'll just pass on to heaven.
- Those who don't repent or believe in Jesus will perish.

TO CLARIFY: Jesus, nor I, are making light of death. He is showing that the real issue isn't physical death but spiritual death. That is more serious than any of us can fathom. If you think today that this topic has been inappropriate, then consider that fact- Eternal separation from God.

In conclusion, what should be our response to terrorism and disaster?

1. We shouldn't fear as Christians. God is in control of your days. Luke 12:4-7 says, "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

2. We should echo the message of Jesus to others.

“Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

May God break us! May he break our hearts with what breaks his! Do we care? Do we care that people are perishing? Dare we ask God to *make* us care? May God give us boldness to tell people that they need to repent. We usually only go so far as to tell them that WE have repented. That's not sharing the good news. Sharing the good news is telling people that THEY need to repent and trust Jesus.

Would you pray that for your pastor?

Pray that for yourselves?

Amen.