

Preparing For The Unexpected

Text : **Luke 17: 22-30**

INTRODUCTION :

A. This has been a traumatic week for our country.

1. Many of us sat in horror as we learned of the worst shooting in our history.
2. 31 students and two professors died at the hands of one of their own.
3. The fact that most of the victims were young people made it even more difficult.

B. The event is so repugnant to us we struggle to grapple with it.

1. We all wanted facts and explanations. (**How ? And - above all WHY ?**)
2. News commentators struggled for words to make sense of what they had learned.
3. How could Mr. & Mrs. Cho's young son, "Seung-Hui" kill 32 strangers ?

With this lesson we will attempt to learn some lessons from this unfathomable evil that we can use to make ourselves better Christians.

I. THESE WERE NOT THE ACTIONS OF A RATIONAL PERSON. MADMAN (totally dominated by sin)

A. Every person looks at the world through his own unique eyes.

1. Each person's world view is developed by his life experiences.
 - a. Every person has a different set of experiences.
 - b. **Thus**, each person is unique.
2. Each person processes his experiences differently.
 - a. This is the problem with eyewitness testimony.
 - b. Ten people can see an event and all describe it differently.

B. Seung-Hui saw the world differently than you and I would see it.

1. He had difficulty adjusting to life in America.
 - a. He had no real help dealing with culture shock. (**parents were also struggling**)
 - b. His parents spoke Korean in their home. (**That caused problems at school.**)
2. He interpreted his American experience through Korean eyes.

C. This is how Seung-Hui was able to kill all those people he didn't even know.

1. He was killing people he blamed for his feelings of frustration.
 - a. Americans
 - b. Rich , decadent hedonists
 - c. Christians
2. In affect he was killing his pain and frustration, **not** people.
3. From the beginning of time, man has tried to blame his problems on others. (**Adam**)

D. The rants of this madman reveal a great depth of frustration.

1. Every person has times when he is down.
 - a. This is a normal and healthy part of life.
 - b. The valleys enhance the splendor of the mountaintops.
2. Everyone needs a support system in place to help them out when they are in a pit.
 - a. Family and friends
 - b. Their church family

E. We Americans lead isolated lives.

1. Sadly, we have come to feel that our isolation is normal. (**NOT normal or healthy**)
2. Our isolation causes us to loose the capacity for close relationships.
3. Our tendency toward being loners makes it difficult for us to seek out help, even when we desperately need it and want it.
 - a. Our relationships are not such that we can readily discuss problems, especially those of an intimate nature. (**Lifelong friends may not be able to discuss feelings.**)
 - b. Many of us fear rejection to the point we would rather perish than risk having our image compromised. (**This is often a problem in the church.**)

F. Periodic surveys have shown loneliness to be the #1 felt need among Americans.

1. The problem of loneliness has been getting worse since the 60s.
2. People keep pets for companionship because they don't have people in their lives.
3. The government has now legislated that landlords must permit companion animals.

G. Life doesn't have to be lonely. (**God doesn't want it to be.)**

1. God wants to be our friend.
 - a. Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross to re-establish a relationship with people.

- b. There is no need to be burdened down by life, Jesus urges people with burdens to come to Him for relief.
Matt. 11: 28- Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29- Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30- For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
- c. The entire family of God is instructed to cast every burden they have on Jesus.
I Pet. 5: 6- Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7- casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.
- d. Jesus is always there for us when we need Him. (**to help, not to condemn**)
Heb. 4: 16- Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- 2. God purchased the church and wants to place everyone in it. (**He wants you there.**)
 - a. In Christ (i.e, in His church) is the only place one can be saved. (**eternal security**)
Acts 4: 12- And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.
 - b. In Christ (i.e, in His church) there is a peace that is found no where else.
Phil. 4: 6- Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7- And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
 - c. In the church every member has a group of brethren seeking his best interest.
Phil. 2: 3- Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4- do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others
 - d. In God family, each member helps the other members bear their burdens.
Gal. 6: 2- Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.
 - e. When a member of God's family sins, (messes up) the others don't condemn.
Jas. 5: 16 ... Christians discuss their sins with each other and pray for each other.
Gal. 6: 1 ... Each Christian seeks to restore the other as gently as possible.

H. Those in the world don't have this support system.

- 1. When their burdens pile up they are crushed beneath the load.
- 2. They seek relief in many places, but find none.
 - a. Their dogs wag their tails, but cannot comfort them.
 - b. Drugs and alcohol temporarily dull the pain, but the morning comes.
 - c. Their shallow affairs give momentary pleasure, but leave them empty.

3. When the pressure gets so much they cannot bear it any more, they lash out.
 - a. At first they become self-destructive :
 - 1) Neglecting the body ... Reveals a lack of self-respect
 - 2) Some cut or burn themselves.
 - b. Then, they lash out at others.
 - 1) become contentious (**road rage**)
 - 2) murder

II. WE CAN ALSO LEARN FROM THE VICTIMS.

A. They were all innocent victims of an irrational act committed by an evil person.

* **We cannot make sense of a senseless act.**

1. One 77 year old professor ... thought he had survived his greatest danger ... **holocaust**.
2. Young professor from India ... thought he would reap the fruits of his hard work
3. Student advisor ... responsible senior about to launch a promising carrier
4. 29 young students ... industriously preparing for a long, prosperous and happy future

B. None of these victims deserved or anticipated what happened to them. (**random**)

1. They were above average, productive members of society.
2. They were young and could reasonably anticipate many years of life.
3. Typically, few if any of them would have made preparations for the end of life.
 - a. No life insurance
 - b. No will
 - c. No grave plot
4. Young people are typically the worst violators of Bro. James's admonition.

James 4: 13- Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

14- Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

C. Ready or not, all of them unexpectedly stepped into eternity that day.

1. Day by day we all live but one heartbeat away from eternity.
2. Anyone's life can end without warning.
3. In our **TEXT** Jesus described the end of all things as coming suddenly w/o warning.
4. The end can come just as suddenly for each of us. (**Heb. 9: 27** ... **Once to die ..**)

III. EVEN THOSE IN CHRIST ARE ADMONISHED TO LIVE READY.**A. We must live as those who know the end is near.**

1. No one knows when the end will come, but it will come suddenly.

Rev. 3: 3- 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

2. It will come without warning or signs and we must STAY ready :

I Thes. 5: 2- For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. **3-** While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. **4-** But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; **5-** for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; **6-** so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

3. When the end comes, it will be final and complete :

II Pet. 3: 10- But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (**NO DO-OVERS**)

B. Christians don't have to live in fear of the Lord's return or of going to be w/ Him.

1. When John wrote his book to Christians (**5:13**) he explained why we don't fear.

READ ... I John 4: 9-18

2. We have this confidence because Jesus has taken away all that condemns us.

Rom. 8: 1- Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

3. Jesus is able to make us stand before God blameless. (**happy to be there**)

Jude 24- Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

* **The key is to be "in Christ Jesus."**

CONCLUSION :**A. What would you do if you knew tomorrow would be your last day?**

1. Would you make sure your house was in order ?
2. What would you communicate to loves ones ?
3. Most certainly you would make sure you were right with God.

B. What if you knew someone you love was about to die ?

1. Would you reassure them of your love ?
2. You would make sure they had all the medicine they need.
3. Compassion would compel you to make them as comfortable as possible.

WHAT ABOUT THEIR ETERNAL COMFORT ?

4. Would you risk warning them that they are just one heartbeat away from judgment?

C. This great tragedy at VT has been a stark reminder of the uncertainty of life.

1. NO ONE is promised tomorrow.
2. Even the young can die without warning.
3. We are all precariously balanced on the edge of eternity.

D. Judgment is a certainty.

1. Ready or not, all of us will face it.
2. Ready or not, everyone we love will face it.
3. Have we told our loved ones that Jesus died to provide an escape for them ?
 - a. He will hold the door open for all who will escape.
 - b. There is no other escape. (**He is the way, the only way.**)
 - c. But one must accept it in order to receive it.

Invitation ... :