

DEALING WITH DISASTER

Luke 13:1-5

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(Transcript of Pastor John's Sunday Morning Message
Delivered 5 Days After America Was Attacked By Terrorism)

Turn with me this morning to the gospel of Luke, chapter 13. We are not going to look at Corinthians this morning. For obvious reasons I, like you, have a heavy heart. And I'm concerned about our nation and praying every day for our nation, for our President and praying fervently for those that have lost loved ones and family members and have seen all the broken lives on TV. We've watched in horror the images that have come to us. Wednesday night I shared Psalm 46. If you get a chance to get that tape I would encourage you to hear what I had to say Wednesday night from that Psalm.

But this morning I want to look at the disaster that we experienced this week in our country from a different perspective. Some of the lessons that we should learn from it. I've titled my message "Dealing with Disaster". My text is Luke chapter 13, verses 1 to 5. I want you to follow with me as we read Luke 13, verses 1 through 5.

Luke says, "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered those who came with this report, verse 2, saying, 'Do you suppose that those Galilaeans were sinners above all Galilaeans because they suffered such things? I tell you no, but except you repent, you will likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, do you think that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you no, but except you repent, you will likewise perish."

What is amazing in light of this tragedy that has struck the United States this week, is how vividly and how graphically it has come to us by way of television. The cameras that were there in downtown Manhattan, were able to see the airplane directed into the building and the explosion. And you could hear the screams in the streets as the buildings came down. That image has been played over and over and over. It's just engrained in our minds. There are so many things that are running through our thoughts and our minds and our hearts at this hour.

Naturally we are grieving with all of those who have lost loved ones. How hard it is to see the reports that are now coming in. The personal stories of people who lost loved ones and who are missing in the rubble. And the stories of the tragedies and so forth, our hearts are broken. But one of the main things that

disturbs us about this disaster is the meaninglessness of it all. It all seems so meaningless. And it brings to us so many questions that are hard to answer.

Why did God allow this to happen? Could not God have prevented this? Could not God have steered the airplane just a little to the side and missed the building and landed in the water? Or, could not God have prevented them from getting the plane altogether and been arrested? Why did God let this happen? Is there really a sovereign God of love in our universe? We also ask, why did anyone do such a thing or why would someone be so wicked and evil and cruel as to do such a thing? And, what is wrong with our world? And, is there any hope for a better world? And, is this the judgment of God upon our nation and upon our sin?

Many are saying that God is directly punishing us as a nation because of our sins. Francis Havergail said these words. She said, "In perplexities, when we cannot tell what to do, when we cannot understand what is going on around us let us be calmed and stated and made patient by the thought that what is hidden from us is not hidden from God." You know there is a lot that is hidden from us. Why God allowed it. I don't know. And what happened, why they were able to get the plane and why they were able to destroy so many lives, I don't know. And I don't have answers to all of these questions.

But I DO know that God still loves me and loves every single person that perished in the disaster this week and God loves us. I think, as a nation, God wants us to come to Him. And the Bible says God is love [1 John 4:8,16] and being love, God can never do anything contrary to His nature. And I do believe that God still sits on the throne, that God has not vacated the throne. That God is in control. He knows what is happening. And what may be hidden from us is not hidden from Him. In Isaiah 41:10, God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, said, "So do not fear for I am with you. Do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. And will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness." I think God would say that to us today as a nation. That God wants to strengthen us and help us and uphold us with the right hand of His righteousness.

Now, I've chosen this text this morning because, in verse 1, it says there were some who were present that came to Jesus and they brought Him a story of a tragedy or disaster that had happened in Jerusalem. Evidently some Galilaeans had been worshiping God, no doubt in the temple, and they were offering their sacrifices to God and Pilate came in, this evil man, this wicked man, this "horrible person". And he came in with soldiers and he destroyed all of these worshippers and their blood was mingled with the blood of their sacrifices! Think about that. They were offering lambs in sacrifice but they were slaughtered themselves and their blood actually mingled with those of their sacrifices. Now, they were hoping to embroil Jesus in a political argument and so they asked Him to comment on this recent tragedy in Jerusalem. Notice that Jesus, first of all, does not deny the fact that disasters do come. No where in this text, or anywhere else in the Bible, are we taught that we live in a world that is free from sorrow or free from suffering or free of disasters.

We live in a fallen world, because of Adam's sin, because of Adam's disobedience. And because of our own sin and our own disobedience, suffering and sin and sorrow has come into the world. We see disasters upon people and families and cities and nations. And we have experienced one of the greatest tragedies in the history of our nation. The magnitude of it is more than we can fathom and comprehend as we witness, with horror, what took place this week. But we need to understand that religious people, and what we would call "good people", they suffer as well in this tragedy.

Notice in verse 1, they were offering sacrifices. So here we have what we would call "religious people" who suffered a tragedy. They were murdered or slaughtered. And then in verse 4, evidently, there were the ordinary workmen. The tower of Siloam that fell upon these eighteen is believed to be a tower in the southeast corner of Jerusalem that was under construction at this time. Something happened, something gave way. And the tower fell and eighteen workers were destroyed. Now that may seem like a small number but never the less, when someone dies, it's a sad thing and a tragic thing. We're struck by the magnitude and the numbers that have died all at once. And it seems so meaningless.

Jesus doesn't deny that sorrow won't come and tragedies will not happen. Now, we need to ask the question, "Why do disasters and tragedies come?" And the simple answer is, we live in a fallen world. Sin has brought in death and sorrow. But death is the last enemy that God will conquer. Death will be vanquished. Paul said to the Corinthians, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The strength of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, that He has conquered sin and He has conquered death. [1 Corinthians 15:55-56]

You see when Jesus died on the cross (I might add a very cruel, vicious, heartless, shameless death). You know we speak of death with dignity. Jesus didn't die with dignity. And He died with a great deal of pain. He suffered with us as a man and, then on the cross, He suffered for us. He died and He rose again to be able to conquer sin and conquer death and conquer the grave. The only hope that we have of immortality and eternal life is in Jesus Christ. But why do bad things happen in this world? Because we live in a fallen world. And the world will not see that curse reversed until Jesus Christ returns and He sets up His righteous reign and His righteous kingdom.

But a question that has been asked for a long, long time (and is being asked again today) is, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" No doubt there were a lot of good, and even godly people, that were in that building, or those buildings, both the Pentagon and the Twin Towers in New York that were destroyed this week. And many times, people ask, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" And, again, the answer is because good and bad people both dwell in a sinful world, and "the rain falls on the just and the unjust" [Matthew 5:45]. There are no Christian fallout shelters. God doesn't protect His people from sorrow or from sadness. But you know, in asking that question, you are assuming

several things. Let me mention **three assumptions** that are found in the question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

THREE ASSUMPTIONS

1. There Are Values In Life

First, in asking that question, you are assuming that there are values in life. Some things are "good" and some things are "bad". So you are assuming that there are values. You say, "This was a bad thing." And then you see something happen and you go, "That's a good thing". But my question is, "Who determines what is good and what is bad?" Who says it's a bad thing and who says it is a good thing. Where do we get this sense of values or what do we base our values system on? You see one of the things about this tragedy this week, for us as Americans, is that it should shake us to the core and we should be reevaluating our values system. What is it we value most? Do we value things or do we value people?

Where are our values, where do they lie? And when we say, you know, "This is a good thing, this is a bad thing", we have to ask ourselves, what do we base that on? What are our values? If there is no God and He hasn't spoken in His word, then we really have no basis to say something is good or something is bad. When Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers and he was thrown in prison falsely accused and he was in the dungeon there. And then finally, yes, exalted to second to Pharaoh and his brothers stood before him. He said to them, "You meant it for evil, but God intended it", for what? "...For good." [Genesis 50:20]

Now there were evil men this week that intended it for evil. But how do we know but what God intended it for good. And let me get ahead of myself, just a little bit at this point, and say someday we are all going to die. You know God's business is populating heaven. And we have no lease on life, and none of us know when we're going to go. There's no one that can save his soul from the hand of the grave. Every single one of us will die some day. You go, "Yeah, but, you know, why was it so tragic? Why was it so horrible?" Well, there are things that are more horrible, like dying without God. Dying without knowing God. It's not how you die; it's being ready to die. That's the important thing. We're focusing on how people died, but the question is, were they ready to die?

2. There Are Good And Bad People

The second assumption you make, is not only that there are values (and I think those are set by God), but secondly you assume in that question (Why do bad things happen to good people?) that there

are good people and there are bad people. Now don't get me wrong. I have actually wept this week, with you, over the stories that I hear about people that have died. They are human beings, created in the image of God. But the Bible says, "the heart is sinful and desperately wicked" [Jeremiah 17:9]. What's a good person? What's a bad person? Who decides who's good and who decides who's bad? On what basis do you determine what a good person is and what a bad person is? You say, "Oh there were so many good people" or "They were such a good person".

You notice the stories that are coming out; everyone that died was just a real loving person. Everyone that died was just a really great person and really loved people and stuff. Everyone thinks they were so good, but the truth is all have sinned. And all have fallen short of the glory of God [Romans 3:23]. There is no one righteous. There is no not one [Romans 3:10]. We are all sinners. And if you're going to determine, these are good people, these are bad people, again, what do you base that on if there's no God, if there's no foundation for good or bad, then who determines who the bad people are? You know when Hitler was destroying Jews in World War II, he thought he was a good person and Jews were bad people. Now, obviously, we feel he was wrong. But what do we base that on? Who determines who's good and who's bad?

3. There Is Order In The Universe

And then the third assumption that you're making in that question, you're assuming that there is order in the universe. You're assuming that there is a cause for the bad things. And your protest says that you believe in an orderly universe, one that makes sense. By asking that question (Why do bad things happen to good people?), you're saying that there's order in the universe. That things need to make sense. Now I think that because man is made in the image and likeness of God [Genesis 1:26], because of the nature of man, that there's this inbuilt sense of justice. Of right and wrong. We have this consciousness that is wrong. It was wrong what happened and we have that built into us. But if there is no God, and God hasn't revealed Himself in His Word, then what do you base a question like that on?

If there's no God, there's no purpose, there's no meaning, there's no cause behind anything. Why do bad things happen to good people? It didn't just happen, that's just part of life. And if you're an evolutionist at this time, then we only find that in the evolutionary struggle and process that the weak have been destroyed and the strong go on living. It's all just part of the evolutionary process, there's no purpose or meaning. Those people who leaped to their deaths from the top stories of those buildings, trying to escape the

flames, no doubt just a kind of a natural instinct to get away from the fire and the heat. But they leaped to their deaths.

A few weeks ago there was a woman in the Seattle area that jumped from a bridge. One woman. I didn't see the nation mourning and weeping for her. And, when the woman was standing at the edge of this bridge to jump, the people who were driving by were yelling at her to jump. They were taunting her. Americans. People from the United States. "Go ahead and jump!" Wanting her to jump to her death. And she finally did jump. We find that our values must come from God. What we value must come from God. We really have no basis to even ask that question if we do not believe in God and believe in His Word; and the question is, who determines who are good people and who are bad people.

THREE LESSONS

1. Do Not Judge The Victims

Now, from our Lord's instructions, or interpretations, of these events here in Luke, chapter 13, we can discover at least three lessons we need in this hour. I would encourage you to write them down. Three lessons we need to learn from this story. The first is, we must be careful not to judge the victims. Notice in the second verse, Jesus answering said unto them. They told Him this story about a disaster. "Jesus, did you hear about the Galilaeans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices? Oh, it was horrible." Jesus looks at them and said, "Do you think they were bigger sinners than everyone else and that's why this happened to them?" Jesus saying, "I tell you no, they were not." But He brings it back around to them and says, "Unless YOU repent, you likewise, are going to perish."

Now, it's a pretty sad thing to do when someone has suffered to say, oh, it was because of their sin. If Eliphaz were watching the television scenes of the Twin Towers come down he would no doubt have said, "Consider now, who being innocent has ever perished?" - Job 4:7. There are a lot of Eliphazes still in the world today. "Oh, it's because New York is such a sinful place. God is judging them. God is judging us as a nation." Now I don't know how you'd really know that. Unless God called you on the telephone and told you that. How would you know that? How do you know what God is doing? How do you know *why* God is doing it? We don't. And it's very cruel and very heartless to say, "Oh, it's because of their sins".

In John 9:1-3, the disciples saw a man who was blind and they used him for a discussion on "who did sin, him or his parents?" Probably he even could hear what they were talking about. How do you think he felt? You're blind, you can't see, and these people walk by and go, "Jesus, did he sin or his parents?" Notice the

options, it was either him or his parents, one or the other. And that's the reason he was born blind. Jesus said, "Neither hath he nor his parents sinned that he was born blind." He answered their question. It's neither one.

And we need to understand that sin is not always the cause of some disaster in a person's life or in a nation. Yes, we as a nation have sinned before God. And there are many horrible sins that we are practicing on a daily basis. And I would pray that we would turn from them and repent of them. But, to look at somebody who suffered and say, "oh, it was because of their own sin". The Bible says, "the rain falls on the just and the unjust" [Matthew 5:45]. A few months ago missionaries were shot down by government planes, in South America, thought to be drug trafficking. But they were missionaries. They had Bibles. They were going to share the gospel and a woman and a child was killed.

Tragedies happen to both the good and the bad. The righteous and the unrighteous. We should pray for the families and friends of the victims of this week's tragedy. Now, let me make it very clear, from a biblical perspective, praying for those that have died does no good at all. That's not a mean, cruel, heartless statement. That's the truth! There are many in the media and many in even some of the church services that are being done on television, that are praying for the dead and talking about praying for the dead. There's no need to pray for the dead. The Bible says "it's appointed unto everyone once to die and after that the judgment" [Hebrews 9:27] and their eternity is fixed. There is nothing you can do to change their condition or state. But we should be praying, as Christians, for the family members of the dead. For the loved ones of the dead. For those that are mourning. We should be weeping with those that weep. And you should continue to pray this week.

How should you pray? You should pray that God would bring them to Himself. He is the God of all comfort. And we should pray that God would send Christians by, if they are not a Christian, that God would send Christians by to share with them. We pray that they turn to the Lord and come to Christ. To know the comfort that He, alone, can give. But we need to be careful that we do not judge the victims in this tragedy. We really don't know the hearts of those who suffered and died.

2. Do Not Judge God

The second thing we need to remember, and heed, is that we must not judge God in this tragedy. We must not judge the victims and we must not judge God. Certainly God could have prevented soldiers from murdering worshippers in Jerusalem or from towers

falling on workmen or terrorists commandeering airplanes and running into buildings and killing thousands of people. Certainly God could have prevented that. God is omnipotent. God is all-powerful. People say "could not God have stopped this tragedy, prevented it from happening?" You know, nobody knows how many times God *has* stopped tragedies like this. And many times God has intervened and prevented things that we are often unaware of and God gets no credit for. How often do you see in the headlines of the newspaper, "GOD PREVENTS TRAGEDY"? Normally, after a tragedy happens, it's "WHERE WAS GOD?"

Now listen very carefully, it's important to understand that God has allowed man to be free to choose good or evil. That man is a free moral agent. And that if men choose the evil over good, and choose sin over righteousness, and they reject God and follow their own sinful hearts, then it's going to result in suffering in our world. So much of the sorrow in our world today is the result of man's sin. It's not the result of God. Let's not forget that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" [John 3:16]. That this world that spit in the face of God and rebelled against God and turned away from God, that God is reaching out to by sending His Son into the world. And just the fact that God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ means that Jesus suffered with us. He was, in all points, tempted like you and I are.

You've been shedding tears this week. Jesus stood at the grave of Lazarus in John 11, and tears rolled down His face. You think God doesn't know what we feel this week? You think God isn't concerned. You don't think God loved those people more than their family and friend's did? You don't think that God is broken? That God is concerned with man's sin and that God has called out in His Word "turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?" "I have no pleasure", God says, "in the death of the wicked." [Ezekiel 33:11] He wants us to turn to Him. And so Jesus suffered *with* us, in the flesh, and Jesus suffered **FOR** us on the cross. When Jesus died on the cross, He suffered for you. He suffered for me. And every one of those who died this week, in this tragedy, Jesus Christ suffered and died for them. God, alone, knows their hearts. But Jesus suffered for them, and died for them, and paid the penalty for their sins.

God is not to blame for this tragedy. God is respecting human freedom. Men that are evil and sinful. Notice, it's Pilate, in verse 1, who is mentioned, who mingles their sacrifices with their blood. Pilate was a sinful man. He was a wicked man. A lot of people are asking questions about these terrorists. Who were they? What were they? Why did they do such a horrible thing? You know, in the liberal media, you're not really getting the full story. No don't get me

wrong, I don't believe we should have any hatred in our hearts, for anyone. Even our enemies. The Bible is clear that we should love our enemies. That if we are filled with hatred, we will be the losers. And that because of a person's skin we shouldn't judge them and they may be Arabs from the Middle East. That has nothing to do with it.

But what motivated these evil men was a religious system that is false. They were Islamic fundamentalists. They were following the Qur'an. There are people saying "we Muslims, we don't condone violence". But they are not reading their own Qur'an or they must be ignorant of their own history. We have watched their violence for a long time. Now it has come to our own shores. Why would they attack America? Because of our alliance with Israel. Because of our Christian culture and Christian influence. Because of our western ways. Islam is an attempt to return to seventh century Arabia, with all of its laws and precepts. All of its tribal wars and killing the infidels in the jihad and so forth.

These terrorists believed they were serving their god, Allah (which isn't really the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), following in the footsteps of their prophet Mohammed (which they consider to be more important than Jesus, they deny the deity of Christ and His sacrifice for us on the cross - they actually teach in Islam that Judas died on the cross, not Christ), they don't believe Jesus died on the cross for our sins. They have a different god and they are motivated by a desire to destroy the infidel, the unbeliever. It's interesting that the very word "*assassins*", the English word assassin, is actually an Arabic word that comes from Latin (*assassini*), which is taken from the Arabic (*hashshashin*), which means, literally, "smokers of hashish". It was used as a description of the Muslims who smoked hashish to whip themselves into a religious frenzy before killing their enemies. It came into European vocabulary through the Muslim sect called the assassins, who believed that Allah had called them to kill people as a sacred duty. The assassins terrorized the Middle East from the eleventh to the thirteenth century and even made the western explorer Marco Polo fear for his life.

Now it has come to us in a modern version, which is no doubt flamed and influenced by the Arab-Israeli conflict and because of our commitment to Israel, it has come to our shores. But it's really a spiritual problem. In the *Qur'an (Koran) in Surah, chapter 9, verses 5 (S-9-5), 29 (S-9-29), & 41(S-9-41) we read, "***slay the idolaters whomsoever you find, wherever you find them. Take them captive, besiege them and prepare for them each ambush. Fight against such as those who have been given the***

scriptures as believe not in Allah nor the last day. Go forth, light armed, heavy armed, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the way of Allah." Those that resist the Islamic religion, in Surah chapter 5 verse 33 (S-5-33), their punishment is to be ***"murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned."*** That's from the Qur'an!

Jesus says love your enemies, pray for those which persecute you and despitefully use you, bless them and curse not [Matthew 5:44]. He says "you've heard it said, an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth but I say unto you, if someone smites you on one cheek to turn the other cheek." [Matthew 5:38-41] Now, He's talking about our attitudes and our hearts. I don't think it has to do with justice, meted out on those who have committed a crime, but our hearts need to be protected and guard that we do not harbor hatred toward anyone. Even those that we know to be our enemies and bent on our destruction. Certainly we should not blame God when sinful man, following a false religious system, or no religious system, commits a horrible crime. God is not to be blamed for man's sin. God has done everything He can, in the person of Jesus Christ, to save us from our sin.

3. We Need To Judge Ourselves

But there's a third thing we need to learn from this tragedy this week. We shouldn't judge the victims, and we shouldn't blame God, and, thirdly, we ought to honestly judge ourselves. We ought to honestly judge ourselves. This tragedy should be a wake-up call to the United States of America. We have forsaken God. We have thrown His Word behind our backs. How interesting that we can call a national day of prayer and the President can pray and the Senators and Congressman, ex-Presidents. How my heart was touched and blessed by that. But we can't pray in our public schools. We can't have the Ten Commandments on the walls. We can't even have religious Baccalaureate services at graduations at High School anymore. They claim to be illegal, which, in reality, is not illegal, but pushing their agenda that, you know, you can't pray, you can't talk about God, you can't mention the name of Jesus, separation of church and state. Which is not true. And yet, we, as a nation, have forsaken God. If we're going to plaster posters and signs all around the nation "God Bless America", then let's turn to God that He might bless America. Let's humble our hearts and ask God to forgive and heal us. Let's get back to the Bible upon which our nation was founded. And our institutions were founded upon.

It should also be a wake-up call for us as Christians. Don't you wonder if there weren't some people that died this week,

unbelievers that died, that knew Christians, that maybe were never witnessed to by Christians? What if you worked in an office and the people you worked with perished and you never shared the gospel with them? Have you shared the gospel with those you work around? You might come to work and find out that this is their last day on the job. No one has a lease on life, we never know. We as Christians should have a wake-up call here. We need to seize the moment. We need to be more eager to share Christ with others and to preach the gospel. You know, one of the best ways to prepare for something like this is to KNOW God personally. The very foundations of our nation have been shaken and our own personal lives. You need to have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. You need to be grounded in the Word, the Bible. You need to have a foundation that is sure in the Word of God.

There are a lot of people during this time of tragedy, that are asking, "where do I go? I want to go to church. I haven't been to church in thirty years, what do I do?" How sad they're are not already integrated into a fellowship and part of a Christian body. You need to strengthen your family. Husbands need to love their wives and wives need to love their husbands and their children. You need to kiss your children and love them. It should be a wakeup call to our values, priorities, what we're living for. How interesting that the financial center of our nation was destroyed. In what do we put our trust? In where lies our confidence? Now, this is not the tribulation. This is nothing to be compared to the destruction and the devastation and the horror that will happen during the time of the tribulation. All of the major cities of the world will crumble and fall, within an hour. Can you imagine *all* of New York and *all* of Los Angeles and *all* of San Francisco and Hong Kong and Singapore and London all crumbling within an hour? What kind of chaos, confusion and horror that would bring?

In Revelation 18:11-20 it talks about the merchants standing afar off and looking and wailing and weeping. For all of their wealth is gone and all of their merchandise is gone. This is just a precursor. This is just a kind of wake up call to us as Christians. The reality that we are living in evil days and no where does the Bible say that the world is going to get better. The world is NOT going to get better. It's not going to get nicer, kinder, gentler and more loving. It's going to get more violent, it's going to get darker and it's going to get more wicked. You know, the Jewish day started just after sundown. And it got darker and darker and darker just before the dawn. And so we are entering into the Day of the Lord, when it's going to get very dark and usher in the tribulation. But then Christ comes, in the Second Coming, and He will establish His kingdom

on earth for a thousand years and reign in righteousness. And from that, then, will be ushered in the Kingdom Age.

But we need to be woken up as Christians to pray. To get into the Word. To be serious about Bible study and serving the Lord, and not have such a lackadaisical attitude. Would to God that every Sunday the church was full, as it has been this week. Attendance has been up. Why? Where were these people three weeks ago? Should not we be founded and grounded in the Word and have a foundation BEFORE the storm comes? Do we run to God only after tragedy strikes? God help us. God wake us up!

Thirdly, we ought to judge ourselves as unbelievers. This should be a wake up call for those of you today who are not Christians. This is the day the Lord hath made [Psalm 118:2]. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the acceptance time [2 Corinthians 6:2]. If you're reading this and you have not been born again, and you haven't received Jesus Christ, you need to give your heart and your life to Him today. You know, in this text, they came to Jesus and they wanted to debate the death of the Galilaeans. Isn't it interesting that everyone is willing to talk about other people when they die? But Jesus said, let's talk about you. Jesus said, "You're going to perish unless you repent. You're all worried about those that died by the Pilate's violent hand. You're all worried about those that died when the tower fell. Except you repent, you're going to perish. Unless you repent, you will likewise perish."

He's bringing it back to them, personally. I'm as sad as you are. This has been a horrible week. But unless you repent, you are going to perish. And the issue is not how you die; the issue is are you prepared to die? No doubt there were some in that building who were prepared to die, praise God for that. And thank God that this week Billy Graham made it very clear that they went to heaven and they wouldn't want to return. Because heaven is a far more beautiful place. But there were, no doubt, MANY who perished in that building, who are in hell right now. They are separated from God for all eternity. The Bible says it's a place where the fire is never quenched, where the worm dieth not and where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth [Mark 9:43-48]. They went to work thinking it was a normal day, but it was their last day and they weren't ready to die. They didn't make peace with God. They hadn't received Jesus Christ.

Now I don't know where you're at, God alone knows your heart, but I'll tell you, if you're not a Christian, I would get right with God. I wouldn't worry about what other people think or what other people may say. And I would be ready to die. I would be right with God. We're living in the last days. We're living in a very dangerous, evil, sinful world and you need to know that your sins are forgiven.

You say, "Well what do I need to do?" You need to, number one, admit that what God says about you is true, that you have sinned [Romans 3:23]. And the Bible says, you have "...fallen short of the glory of God" [Romans 3:23]. You need to agree with what God has said about you and I, that no one's righteous, no not one [Romans 3:10], that we've all sinned [Romans 3:23]. And that yet Jesus Christ, when He died on that cross, He paid for the penalty of your sins. Jesus died for your sins! But it won't do you any good unless YOU personally receive Jesus Christ. That's what repentance is. It's changing your mind about sin in your life and turning away from your sin, and around to following Christ and saying, "Christ, I've sinned. Come into my heart. Forgive my sins. I receive you as my Savior."

That's what you need to do. You need to be forgiven. You need to be born again. You need to receive Jesus Christ as your savior. Unless you repent you will perish. Where do people go when they die? They go to heaven or they go to hell. The sad thing is that, no doubt, many people went to hell this week. And they have perished without hope. But you're still alive, you're still here, and have this opportunity and God brought you here today to hear the good news; that Jesus Christ can forgive your sins and give you eternal life. I pray that God would convict and convince you of your sin and draw you to Himself. If you don't know for sure that if you died today you would go to heaven, I pray that God would help you to come, to put your faith in Him, the one who died for you and rose again and is alive. Receive to yourself the one who loved you so much that He laid down His life so that you might have life eternal.

* - The Qur'an (or Koran, which means "the reading" in Arabic) is the sacred book of Islam and is broken up into 114 chapters called Surahs (which means "a step", each verse is called an Ayat, which means "a sign") which cover the subjects of ethics, history, law, and theology. It is considered to be the absolute and infallible word of Allah.

Actual Quotes:

Surah 9:5 - So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush, then if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, leave their way free to them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Surah 9:29 - Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax in acknowledgment of superiority and they are in a state of subjection.

Surah 9:41 - Go forth light and heavy, and strive hard in Allah's way with your property and your persons; this is better for you, if you know.

Surah 5:33 - The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His apostle and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite

sides or they should be imprisoned; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement,