

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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How Not To Respond To Tragedy!

By **Steve Higginbotham**

In the wake of the recent school shooting in Connecticut, pundits have expressed a wide variety of views on everything from gun control, mental illness, bullying, the Devil, as well as God. One of the most outrageous statements that I believe I have heard came from a preacher and nationally known Christian author. Here's what he said, "This is a time to go deep and pray... If you have a problem with God, shake a fist or two at him."

As I understand the Scriptures, such advice to one who is suffering is asking the sufferer to get angry at the only one who can offer hope and peace. I certainly understand that there are times in our lives when we don't understand the activity of God. There are times when we don't understand why God actively or passively caused or allowed certain events to transpire. But to encourage

people to "shake a fist or two" at God?

The Old Testament Prophet, Habakkuk received some very troubling news concerning an impending invasion by the Babylonians, a "fierce and impetuous" nation. Habakkuk couldn't quite understand why God would punish Judah by the Babylonians, who were worse sinners than Judah. So he registered his "complaint" with God. But did he shake a fist at him? You be the judge. Here's how Habakkuk, approached God with his question:

"Are You not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction. You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours

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A person more righteous than he?" (Habakkuk 1:12-13).

Did Habakkuk understand the course of events that were about to rock his world? No. Did he raise a fist at God? Absolutely not. Rather he couched his question and his misunderstandings in the most respectful terms as possible.

In times of trouble, turn to God in prayer. Ask your questions. Express your fears. Convey your frustrations. But don't charge God foolishly (Job 1:22). Rather than shaking a fist at God when you're scared and hurting, open that fist, and reach out to him as a little child would reach out to his father for help.

For What Are We Known?

From **Preaching Helps**

A few years ago, a man responded to the invitation after I had finished preaching. When he came forward, he went up on the pulpit and laid down flat on his face with his arms and legs spread out, while saying "hallelujah!"

I went up on the pulpit, whispered in his ear, and the man followed me to the front pew and I talked with him there. Following services, one of my

elders came to me and said, "What did you say to that man? How did you get him to get up and go sit down?" I replied, "I told him to get up, we don't praise the Lord here." Of course I was joking, but it does bring to mind this question, "As a church, for what are we known?"

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) said "We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love." While that shouldn't be the case, regrettably, sometimes it is. While it is true that a follower of Jesus must learn to hate sin, in all of its forms, he must also learn to love that which is pure, holy, and upright. In fact, Jesus once stated his disciples would be known by their love, not by the things they hate (John 13:35). I don't want to just be known for all the things I'm against, I want to be known for the good things to which the Lord calls us to embrace and share with others.

So ask yourself this question: "For what are you known?" Are you known primarily for the things you're against, or are you known for the things you love?

SPIRITUAL VEGETARIANS

By Wade Webster

Paul Harvey, much-beloved radio personality, once quipped, "Vegetarian is an old Indian word for 'doesn't hunt well.'" I like vegetables, but I am no vegetarian. I like meat – all kinds. I like beef, pork, chicken, fish and squirrel. You didn't expect the last one, did you? Did you forget that I grew up in rural Alabama?

I'm convinced that there are many Bible vegetarians today. There is no meat in their diet because they don't hunt well. They do not search or hunt through the scriptures as they should. Jesus declared, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Had the Pharisees truly searched, they would have known that Jesus was the Messiah (John 7:52).

In contrast to the Pharisees, the Bereans were great hunters. Of them, Luke Records, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica because they received the word with readiness of mind, and search the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"

(Acts 17:11). What about us? How well do we hunt (2 Timothy 2:15)?

Are we Bible vegetarians?

Our Next Gospel Meeting
March 3-8, 2013
David Lanius

THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Via *Exhortations & Stuff*

The great historian, Gibbons, who wrote *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, gave five reasons for the fall of the great dynasty.

First: Rapid increase of divorce, with the undermining of the sanctity of the home, which is the basis of society.

Second: Higher and higher taxes; the spending of money for bread and celebrations.

Third: The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.

Fourth: The building of gigantic armaments, when the real enemy was within; the decadence of the people.

Fifth: The decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, and becoming impotent to guide it.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

EDITOR'S NOTE: As citizens of the United States we need to recognize the similarities between ancient Rome and modern America. SJN

"Certain thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees"
 (Victor Hugo).

Wherever you go, whatever you do, you know God will always be there for you, so if you're alone, there is no need to fear, just talk to Him and you know He'll be there! Here is what the one who trust God can say: "***Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod***

and thy staff they comfort me"
 (Psalm 23:4).

(Mavhuto Hamed)

***Your absence from
worship services is
a vote to close the
doors of the church
permanently***