

## *The Pastors Connection*

### **Jesus Came and Jesus Wept**

*“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” John 1:14*

*“Jesus wept.” John 11:35*

I was in my forties before I recognized that although Jesus displayed the full range of emotions, my heart and head were disconnected. Jesus wept when friends mourned, seldom had I openly grieved. Jesus ran religious merchants out who were taking financial advantage of worshippers (Mt. 21); I suppressed anger at injustice. Jesus insulted arrogant leaders with truth (Lk. 11); I had found no such voice.

This gospel contrast led me to intercede for God to break my heart with the things that break His. After several years of this prayer God connected head to heart; and a lifetime of tears poured out till I nearly regretted my prayer! But eventually, in God’s good timing, I was healed into a healthier place. I testify that life is better when emotions too are available as kingdom instruments!

Although Jesus was strong enough to die on the cross for our sins he did not consider it weakness to emote while addressing local politics. This week our nation experienced another horrendous act of violence by a mentally ill young man, desensitized to violence by use of video killing games, with legal access to weapons whose sole design is rapid fire.

Repeatedly I hear the tired phrase “guns don’t kill people, people do”. But if I were a dad whose seven year old was in a classroom that a deranged person was going to enter with intent to kill; and my sole power was to select which gun he would use, I would select the one-shot musket that took minutes to reload which was available when forefathers framed the second amendment right “to bear arms.” It would be a no brainer to withhold access to the current pistols and assault rifles we have been too politically weak the past decade to regulate.

The second amendment defines this right as a “well ***regulated*** militia.” So...as an unapologetic gun owner and hunter, I add my voice to better regulate! Regulation cannot prevent all airplane crashes. Yet I relax when I fly, partly because I know regulations limit who has access to the controls; who sits in the air traffic tower; who does maintenance, etc, etc.

But regulation of guns is not the sole answer. Mental health workers tell me they have limited authority to retain delusional people. Army personnel acknowledge that the science used to desensitize soldiers so they can kill the enemy in war is eerily similar to the video games so many in our society spend hours “playing.”

I pray our national conversation will successfully address these realities. But a deeper reality recognizes that only the changing of hearts can truly transform a culture. Previous generations have witnessed God releasing revival that radically transformed society. Because we live in a democracy I believe we must add our voice and our vote to shape policy. But alongside civic action, our higher calling is to intercede for spiritual revival.

Our Lord has commanded us to pray that “His kingdom would come and His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When Jesus came; his time included weeping, and speaking up with a right balance of grace and truth. He invites us to now live HiStory to benefit others!! I pray he will give us the courage, and the wisdom to disagree agreeably as we each find our voices; and the spiritual authority to help bring in the revival of His kingdom on earth.

I wish you a happy holiday and a secure and productive new year! Pastor Bob Petersheim