

**March 2018**

I wept today.

The pain in my spirit, mind and body kept the corners of my eyes wet all \_ day \_ long . . . and into the next day.

***Another senseless and obscene human tragedy.***

17 students and teachers dead, 14 others wounded at a high school in Florida. Untold millions left shaken and dumbfounded . . . the whole nation perhaps . . . some who sympathize with us around the world.

“This could have happened to our children.”

STOP ALREADY. Enough of that talk . . . they WERE our children . . . because they are ALL our children. Don't you get it? THEY ARE ALL OUR CHILDREN, OUR FAMILIES, OUR NEIGHBORS.

The ache in my being is relentless.

I know you feel it too. You've told me so.

PSALM 13

<sup>1</sup>How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

<sup>2</sup>How long must I wrestle with my thoughts  
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

<sup>3</sup>Look on me and answer, LORD my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

<sup>4</sup>and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”  
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

<sup>5</sup>But I trust in your unfailing love;  
my heart rejoices in your salvation.

<sup>6</sup>I will sing the LORD's praise,  
for he has been good to me.

This is a Psalm of lament. It encapsulates how I feel in these moments. It's not how I always feel, but it is how I feel today. The feelings are raw, and they are real, and they are deep. It is important that we boldly own what we feel, and to at least TRY to process it.

We can do better, much better . . . and we must. *A recent study of the World Health Organization data published in the American Journal of Medicine found that, among high-income nations, 91 percent of children younger than 15 who*

*were killed by bullets lived in the United States*(By John W. Cox and Steven Rich, Washington Post).

We **HAVE** to do better. . . here in America, and around this world.

When talking about the brokenness of this world and the source of this brokenness, Jesus spoke of Satan and his principalities and powers in this way: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may **have life**, and have it **abundantly**.” (John 10:10)

At our baptism we received a taste of that abundant life. We were (and are) forgiven, re-claimed by God, given a new beginning, empowered by the Holy Spirit and given a clear purpose for living. Because of this, we become agents of “abundant life.”

The powers that want to steal, kill and destroy continue to assail us and we are often personally affected by their indiscriminate actions. Jesus also said, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! **I have overcome the world.**” (John 16:33)

The very Spirit of the One who overcame the world lives in us. So, yes, we feel the intense pain and the emptiness when confronted with such loss, but we cry out in the context of faith to our God who is trustworthy and faithful. And then we rise, empowered by abundant life to work for abundant life in Jesus’ name . . . often with tears still in our eyes.

~PASTOR TODD