

Why???

The question of “why do bad things happen to good people?” is such a prevalent question in religious circles that there is actually a term for it. It is called Theodicy. Theodicy asks the question: how can God be good and evil still exist? Considering the evil of this past week, displayed in Las Vegas, Nevada, it is natural that this question comes to mind.

In one of the more famous chapters of his book to the Corinthian Church, Paul, the apostle noted that a church, who because of the opulence and wealth of the surrounding community, had often used status and a secular title to define their worth rather than internal values of God’s love and love towards one another. Yet, quite amazingly, they seemed surprised whenever misplaced priorities often resulted in chaotic tensions. However, Paul addresses the Church in chapter 13 and provides them with one of the most beautifully written sections in all of literature concerning the power of love; used as a standard passage to encourage new couples on their special wedding day each year.

What’s interesting is what Paul writes towards the end of his soliloquy on love; likely captured by nearby penmen. Paul speaks these words. “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; but then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; but then I shall know fully, even as I am know.” (1 Cor 13:12) As if to encourage this faith community, to prepare them for the discrepancy between their image of a loving God and the tragedies that they often feel are far from the loving God they have heard about. Paul writes, plainly and honestly that there are some things that are beyond our knowing. Just as a small ant, crawling on a beautifully embroidered rug, cannot possibly understand how the strand, on which he stands, helps to contribute to the entire design. So to, there are times when we cannot discern all, and often, the effort of trying seems to much to bear. In these times, we must trust the weaver's hand.

In addition, we must be careful in assigning to the weaver what has been threaded by our own design. When tragedy strikes, we often question Providence as though it excuses the damage of original sin as well as the more damaging chain reactions that we often contribute to through our own negligence. Whether it is natural disasters or societal ones, we must ask what part do we play in contributing to the imbalance that is now a regular part of our world? And, more importantly, what can I do to help where I am?

My prayer for you this week, even if your faith is tested, is for your trust to remain firmly rooted in God’s Providence for your life. Even when you can’t trace His hand, I pray you continue to trust the unfailing love of His heart. However, I also encourage you to respond to the pain by asking what role did my actions play for or against current realities? And how can I, through tangible efforts, work with God to bring healing, hope and love to my nation, my family and my immediate community?!

Remaining In His Light,

Rev. Rae