

Compassion and Outrage

By Bob Bakke

While I was writing this article, Hamas unleashed 1,500 terrorists from Gaza into the south of Israel. They murdered, abused, raped, and kidnapped unarmed Jewish revelers and the residents of nearby kibbutzim—raining thousands of missiles on civilian neighborhoods. Hardened Israeli soldiers and first responders could not believe the grotesque slaughter in Hamas' wake. So many dead. So many are yet to die.

The camera lens made us eyewitnesses to revolting images. Global tensions are thick. By the time you read this, who knows what evil will have played out. World war? Maybe Jesus will have returned.

Prayer Clues from Jesus

When humankind degrades itself, how should we pray? Does Jesus give us clues? What about revival? Personally, Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus in John 11 helps me.

The town of Bethany was grim when Jesus arrived. Lazarus was dead. Jesus' enemies were conspiring to kill him. Lazarus' sisters met Jesus with such pathetic and brokenhearted disappointment that Jesus Himself wept.

John tells us that Jesus was “deeply moved in the spirit” (vs. 33). “Deeply moved” is the verb *embrimaomai*, describing fervent anger. It's combined with *pneumati*, “in spirit”—or “to the core of His being.”

Jesus was also “troubled,” John writes. Raymond Brown translates this “shuddered.” Jesus was so angry that He trembled. But there's more. The Greek indicates that Jesus was stirring Himself up to this anger—a conscious gathering up of

divine potency and holy indignation.

In his book, *The Dust of Death*, Os Guinness argues that Christians need these two things:

1. the compassion of Christ, and
2. the outrage of Christ.

Guinness points to John 11: “John [states ‘deeply troubled’] twice in his account of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. This deep emotion is usually interpreted in relation to the verse ‘Jesus wept.’ . . . Weeping, or sorrow [however], does not exhaust what is meant by Jesus being ‘deeply moved,’ for Jesus knew that Lazarus would be alive and standing beside Him in a matter of moments. Where is the sorrow in that? . . . the root meaning of *embrimaomai* is to ‘snort in the spirit.’

“It was used by Aeschylus to describe Greek stallions before battle, rearing up on their hind legs, pawing the air and snorting before they charged. Similarly, Jesus ‘snorted in the spirit’: He was moved deeply in the sense of a furious inner anger. Entering His Father’s world as the Son of God, He found not order, beauty, harmony, and fulfillment, but fractured disorder, raw ugliness, complete disarray—everywhere the abortion of God’s original plan.

“Standing at the graveside, He came face to face with a death that symbolized and summarized the accumulation of evil, pain, sorrow, suffering, injustice, cruelty, and despair. Thus, while He was moved to tears for his friends in sorrow, He was also deeply moved by the outrageous abnormality of death” (pg. 385).

Outrage to Prayer

What did Jesus do with His outrage? He channeled it into prayer. He lifted His head and hands and prayed for everyone to hear. Then, with three thunderous words—“Lazarus, come

out!”—Jesus cried out. Revival came. Death was transformed. Unspeakable love led to divine outrage funneled into prayer and answered by Triune power bestowing life and glory.

Jesus so loves the world that He is outraged by our ruin. Whether it's news from Gaza, catastrophic earthquakes in Afghanistan, hundreds of churches burned in India, or the trafficking of children, our love should produce praying that eclipses the serene and beatific and, instead, looks and sounds like war—a gritty, furious, passionate battle to conquer evil and to save the dying—flowing from the heart of Christ.

For the Next Generation

This is how we intend to pray on February 29—the Collegiate Day of Prayer. The broadcast, hosted at Baylor University in Waco, TX, will lead millions of us in crying out to God for 22 million students and 4,300 college campuses across America.

Many campuses are spiritual war zones where the godless conspire against Christ; where faith is assaulted and truth is mocked. Millions of students are casualties.

We cannot be unmoved by this. Grieved by how Gen Z is abandoning Christianity and compelled by the love of Jesus and His readiness to revive that which is dead, let's answer the call. We are raising up an army to respond.

Let's get ready for battle. Come fight for this generation. Come pray.

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