

# A Brokenhearted Christmas: Mourning for Newtown's Grieving Families

Our hearts continue to grieve over the horrific evil that was unleashed against precious, helpless children last week at an elementary school in Connecticut. In the midst of the pain we also remember that hope rises and prevails over darkness through the Advent of God's eternal Son.

There are many questions. Answers are complex and elusive. As we try to process such unspeakable atrocities, trying to make sense of the senseless, trying to reason out the irrational, let's walk through this against the backdrop of what we *do* know. Here is what we know with certainty.

**Sin always brings tragic consequences.** The Bible is clear that all rebellion against God will exact payments. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). No matter how troubled the shooter was, there is no way to begin to understand such events without an acknowledgement of sin, evil, and the activity of the devil and his minions. Jesus called the devil "the thief" and said his intent against humanity is to "steal, kill, and destroy" (John 10:10).

Thanks be to God, sin and death have been conquered. Here's the rest of the story: "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"(Rom. 6:23). "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John. 10:10). This is indeed Good News.

**We are to minister to the brokenhearted.** Christians are always the first responders in crisis. That is as it should be. We are called to "weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15). "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2, NIV).

**The Advent of God's Son shouts that light wins over darkness.** Hope rises and prevails over darkness through the coming of Christ. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. ... So the Word became human and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son" (John 1:5, 14).

**Believers are to live in the light.** We are to renounce any identification with a culture that is increasingly fixated with blood, violence and death. Tragically, most people have chosen to reject the light—the very Light of the world whose advent we celebrate. "And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Bring every dark thing into His light! "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8).

**We are called to spread the light.** "Our Savior, Jesus Christ ... has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). Especially this year, we are to be carriers of His light to everyone everywhere. Wherever you go throughout the holidays, bring His light and life with you.

There are many grief-stricken parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters this Christmas in Newtown, Conn. And millions more have their own stories of loss that weighs down their hearts, especially at this season. For all who mourn, the advent of Jesus into the world is the great star of hope that bursts in dramatic relief on a dark canvass. God broke in on our lives—with all its sorrows, pain and death. Jesus is our Emmanuel—*God with us. God with us. God with us.*

God with us means He is also God *for* us. He's in *your* corner. "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart" (Psa. 34:18). He is there. He weeps too. And one day, "God will wipe

away every tear from our eyes” (Rom. 21:4).