

Ed Stetzer: Boston Marathon Bombing, the Broken World and Our Maranatha Hope

Monday afternoon we were again reminded of the horrific and real threat of senseless violence. Yesterday's bombings at the finish line of the Boston Marathon are disturbing reminders of the brokenness in our fallen world.

Monday was another sad day—another tragedy. It will likely not be the last, regrettably. On days like these, commentators will ask, “Where was God in this?” or “why would God let something like this happen?” There are no easy answers to those questions. And while we may not be offered answers, we are offered hope and a promise in the midst of the brokenness.

Look around. Our world is broken. I'm not talking about the “world” in terms of nature (although creation, too, bears the marks of sin's blemish and decay). I'm talking about the “world” comprised of the people, structures and systems that make up society—the moral patterns, beliefs and behaviors that result in things like unfair business practices, racism, extreme poverty, dishonest government, dirty politics, family breakdown, cheating, stealing, oppression of the weak, and so many other distressors and defilers.

Of course, tragedy is daily living in much of the world. Churches are bombed regularly in Nigeria; sexual violence trafficking is real and growing, and poverty is deep and pervasive. The world is broken. Sinfulness impacts everything.

Yet we are reminded on days like this, our hope is in a new kingdom.

A kingdom reigned by a returning King.

A kingdom with no more terrorist threats or bombings. No more thoughts of death to keep us up at night.

How could there be, since there won't be any more "night" to experience—absolutely nothing to make us think back on a life that was so regularly troubled by fear, anger, bitterness, anxiety and lingering doubts? They're all gone. All the time.

Keep all of this in mind.

Read about it and meditate on it often.

The kingdom has come because the King has come, but it is not yet fully here. That is why we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Because the kingdom is not yet fully here and complete—and the world is not yet—well, right.

So, we remember the "not yet" reality we are here to model and live. We live as agents of God's kingdom, perhaps some ministering today in Boston, and certainly praying where we are.

The current state of life on this planet sure has a lot of brokenness. You're right to be dissatisfied with it. But it's not enough for Christians merely to recognize that the world isn't what it ought to be and that people are suffering in ways they shouldn't have to suffer. Our sorrow and indignation must lead us into action that subverts the brokenness that is real and present right now. We work to make this world more as God would intend it to be—with justice, peace, and more.

So we pray for His Kingdom to come, "on earth as it is in heaven." Yet, it does not fully come until Jesus returns to set all things right. We pray for that day to come soon, particularly on days of tragedy.

There is just one use in the New Testament of the Aramaic word phrase, *Maran atha*. Paul writes, "*Marana tha* that is, Lord,

come!" (1 Corinthians 16:22). Most translate it as a cry for King Jesus to come soon. Yet, that one word has become a cry for Christians in pain, persecution and much more.

This marathon tragedy drives us again to our *Maranatha* cry—"come quickly, Lord" and set things right.

In the meantime, may we live as agents of your kingdom—showing and sharing the love of Jesus—to a broken and lost world. But, days like these make us long for that Day, where the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our God and King.

We pray "maranatha" today—and rightly so.

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