

How 'Hacksaw Ridge' Helps Us Overcome Election Anxiety

One of the most powerful Christian witnesses of the 20th century is coming to movie theaters today.

Desmond Doss served on Okinawa during one of the most horrific battles of World War II. His courage under fire was so astounding that he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Mel Gibson's *Hacksaw Ridge* tells his amazing story. I saw the film at a private screening a few months ago and was deeply moved by Doss's humility and sacrificial faith. In my review, I noted that the movie is rated R for very realistic war violence. However, I strongly urge you to see it. I agree with Greg Laurie: "This is the most positive portrayal of a Christian in a mainstream film that I have seen since *Chariots of Fire*."

When Christians trust God with our fears, others see our courage and are drawn to the Source of our strength. Our witness is especially vital in these days of escalating vitriol as the presidential candidates warn us of nuclear war or a constitutional crisis if their opponent is elected. It's not surprising that the latest *Atlantic* magazine features an in-depth article on the "election anxiety" so many are feeling in these turbulent days.

Such distress is not new news. Cultural scholar Leo Braudy notes that fear, horror and terror are reactions to a collective uncertainty over the future and nostalgia for a (supposedly) safer past. In his new book, *Haunted*, Braudy reports: "Social scientists have estimated that fear is seven times more likely to spread than any other social attitude." Fears of terrorism, epidemic disease, escalating crime and

rising immigration are abetted in our day by “an ever expanding web of communications, manipulated by politicians and newscasters, liberals and conservatives alike.”

Fear is natural and even normal in the face of threats to our well-being. It's a good thing for us to be afraid to pick up a rattlesnake. But fearing the unknown future shows that we're trusting in ourselves rather than the God who knows the future.

This is idolatry, the gravest sin of all.

Everyone knows about David's sin with Bathsheba, but his son's sin was even more devastating to the nation he led. In 1 Kings 11, the Lord rebuked Solomon for worshipping false gods and warned him, “I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant” (v. 11).

Idolatry is trusting anyone or anything more than we trust in God. Why is this such a grave sin? Because it turns us from the only One who can forgive all our other sins and lead us into our best future (Jer. 29:11).

Tragically, our culture ignores and practices this sin continually. Whereas our nation's founders repeatedly called for national days of repentance and prayer, when was the last time a contemporary political leader issued such a call? When last did a national leader admit that we are facing challenges greater and graver than we can overcome in our strength?

The psalmist noted that “some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God” (Ps. 20:7). Desmond Doss made this testimony his life story.

Now it's our turn.