

How the Faith of Two Unknowns Inspired the Country

Six months ago, you'd skim over names like Davey Blackburn and Helen Strickland like useless contacts in a phone book gathering dust.

Now, the pastor and the wife of a country singer are topping Christian media headlines for a painful reason: They lost their spouses in horrific ways.

Blackburn's pregnant wife Amanda was brutally assaulted and murdered in her own home. Strickland's husband Craig disappeared in a tumultuous storm, likely dying of hypothermia.

What would drive me to tears and question everything I knew about a loving God has given this man and woman an opportunity to live in the peace of Christ and inspire the rest of us through social media.

When Craig Strickland disappeared days after Christmas, Helen immediately turned to God. When police found his body, she recognized the spiritual significance of his death.

On the day of his funeral, she found comfort in Ecclesiastes 3, proclaiming one day, she will be dancing with Craig and God.

My heart breaks for her pain, but I envy her faith.

As for the Blackburns, my stomach churns. Amanda was gunned down—in her own home—by teenagers who wanted stuff. Davey went to the gym, and when he returned, he lost what he loved most on this earth.

But God.

God used Davey's role as a pastor in Indianapolis to turn an atrocity into an opportunity. I've never met Davey, but I can imagine he uttered the words so many of us do: "Choose me, God. Send me. I want to serve you with all that I am."

That service cost him his beloved, but he continues to praise God and prays for the same faith his wife had.

Faith like the Stricklands and Blackburns' stuns—and inspires—me to put my heart on the line for God's glory.

While headlines shock readers with lines like "God isn't fixing this," it's the public faith of ordinary Christians that reminds me God isn't in the business of a temporary fix.

How long did the Jews cry out to be free from pharaoh's reign? How long did they wander in the desert? How long did they receive prophecies about the forthcoming Messiah before He made His humble entrance?

And how long are we now waiting for Him to return?

At this moment, the rise of terrorism haunts us. Radicals slay our brothers and sisters because they dare to live by a Higher Calling. Our desire to share good news is trumped by atheists' concern for "offense."

Yet when the unspeakable happens to ordinary Christians—men like Davey and women like Helen—their public faith supersedes the circumstances.

And we are left with the comfort that God will hold us through the pain. {bio}