

How to Pray for Victims of Sri Lanka's Church Attacks Right Now

The terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday remind us that terrorism continues to be a tactic of choice for Islamic extremists.

The terror tactic has a long and tragic history. Military historians tell us that the worst terrorist of all time was Genghis Khan, whose armies destroyed the agricultural hinterlands of their enemies, drove the peasants into the cities and then destroyed the cities without mercy. Second to the Mongolians were the Romans, who merely destroyed the cities without mercy. Modern examples abound, from the London Blitz to the 9/11 attack.

As a military tactic, however, terrorism is a double-edged sword. More often than not, it backfires on to the terrorists. Thus, the London Blitz steeled British resolve, and in the end, it was the cities of Germany that were reduced to rubble. Palestinian terrorist intifada attacks brought swift retribution and isolation behind the Israeli wall. The 9/11 perpetrators were tracked down, and their Afghan sanctuary was overrun by Americans. It turns out, according to military historians, that terrorism only works for militarily dominant powers like Genghis Khan and Rome. For weaker opponents the terror tactic only leads to destruction.

Even so, terrorists inflict much suffering from their self-destructive path. There is also a spiritual battle, as terrorists hope to paralyze their enemies with fear and goad them into overreacting in order to create more terrorists. This is truly spiritual warfare, and we must use our spiritual weapons to defeat the terror tactic of the ultimate terrorist,

Satan.

We must first learn to pray blessings on our enemies. Not blessings for their violence, but blessings that their eyes be opened and that they will be satisfied with good things and desire to live in peace. Judgment still belongs to God, and it is for Him to avenge, not us. At the same time, God wants our enemies to come into His kingdom, and we must not let bitterness or unforgiveness set us against God's purposes. Instead we must deploy the powerful spiritual weapon of love to stay in step with God.

We must also turn back the spirit of fear which has been sent against us. We know from the famous Psalm 91 that our protection comes only from God, and that He will be with us in our trouble. Yet we also know that we can overcome the evil one if we do not love this life more than the next (see Rev. 12:11). Let us live fearlessly in faith as God intended, looking forward to the day when we will be called home to heaven.

Let us not forget the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka. Pray for pastors like Woody Blok of Overcomers Church in Sri Lanka who are working to bring help and healing to the victims and their churches. You may make a gift through Pastor Blok's ministry at .

Yes, we will mourn for the victims of these cowardly terrorist attacks and pray that God will comfort them. But we will not quit loving our enemies and living by faith.

And, just as the terror tactic is a losing strategy for weaker opponents in the natural world, so is the terror tactic futile against the most powerful kingdom on earth, the kingdom of God. {eoa}

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