

Synagogue Shooting Uncovers Our Tragic Flaw

I, like most people reading this article, was horrified by last Saturday's shooting in Pittsburgh. Also like most of you I have been thinking a lot about the shooting and how someone could be so evil that they could enter a synagogue and open fire on a group of unarmed people murdering 11.

The truth is that no matter how much I try I cannot wrap my mind around such hatred. It isn't something new; that type of hatred began in the garden when Cain murdered his brother Abel. We have seen it throughout the centuries. We remember the Inquisition, the Pogroms and the Holocaust.

Having concluded that this hatred has existed nearly as long as man, I have decided I will never be able to understand that level of hatred. So rather than focusing on understanding it, I chose to instead focus on a level of love that can be as dangerous if not more dangerous than the level of hatred I spoke of above. In my experience as someone who has spent my life studying faith and people of faith. I have learned that there is within the body of believers a type of love that while found in the Bible is not the type of love that the Bible encourages us to have.

The type of love I am talking about is the type of love that a person has when they love themselves, their family and even their faith group but they do not love those that are different from them. Now before you stop reading and get angry at what I am writing, let me clarify: We should love ourselves, our families and our faith communities. But that is not the end of the list of those we should love. This week, we watched as a shooting took place in a synagogue in Pennsylvania and were openly shocked, and the media covered the event almost non-stop. Yet in the same period, there were

many others who were shot with almost no media coverage and limited, if an, outrage from faith leaders and faith communities. Why, you may ask? I think it is because we have gotten used to not loving those other people. You may ask what I mean, so let me go on. When a child is murdered, we should feel loss. It should not matter if we knew them, if they were part of our family, our faith group or cultural/racial demographic. I have watched people speak of children dying around our country in ways that they would not talk about their pet dog dying.

Another recent example was the recent murder of a member of the press in Saudi Arabia. Yes, we should all be outraged by this senseless and hate-filled act. But consider how many other people have been murdered by the Saudi government with almost no press coverage at all. Why was this murder of one man international news? Simply because he was a news correspondent being covered by news correspondents. In other words, one of their own was murdered, so his death became personal; it became important to them.

I have read and listened to people since Saturday's shooting, and while I am moved by the outpouring of support and prayers, I hope that we, people of the Book, people of faith will someday soon stop loving with a partial love and begin to love with the love that G-D demonstrated. I pray for the day we will understand that G-D doesn't love humans based on race, culture or economics. For G-D so loved the world that He gave ... For while we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us (see John 3:16, Rom. 5:8).

His love wasn't and isn't limited. One day, I hope we open our collective eyes to see that all people are our people, that everyone—no matter what their shade of skin, what part of town they live in or what their culture—is part of our people group, simply by virtue of being people. There is a famous Jewish expression that says if you save a single life, it is as if you saved the entire world. When we learn to love

biblically by loving everyone, the single life we may save could very well be our own.

The truth is that any love that falls short of true love entertains hatred. Hatred opens the door to hard- heartedness, which allows us to choose which murdered senior citizens are worthy our mourning and which are not. Which children's lives sniffed out in violence we will consider atrocities and which we don't.

I don't know about you but I want to love so much and so many, that when anyone is murdered, I cry as if it were my brother, because the truth is that he was. {eoa}

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