

God and the Devil In Light of the Newtown Massacre

One of the most difficult things a pastor has to do when a tragedy occurs is to try to find the words to comfort a grieving family and explain how God can allow such a horrible thing to take place. While I do not purport to have all the answers for such situations—sometimes it's best just to be there for grieving families and offer prayer for them rather than give explanations—these instances do highlight the existence of evil in the world.

On the day of the shooting in Newtown, Conn., I was shocked to hear both a prominent television news anchor and the governor of Connecticut use the word *evil* several times when referring to the heinous act of the shooter. Where does evil come from?

Jesus said that the thief (Satan) comes only to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). He also called him a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). Rather than cause me to doubt the existence or goodness of God (like Satan wants), heinous acts like this should remind us that there is a real devil in the world who revels in destroying human life while seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Philosophically, the existence of evil is one of the proofs of God's existence, because without belief in a gracious God there would be no standard for right and wrong. For example, if the universe wasn't created by God but was the result of a random natural process and human life evolved from "matter in motion," then there would be no rational basis for distinguishing between good and evil, and between right and wrong, since a transcendent standard to ground human ethics would be lacking. If God did not exist and living things are the result of natural processes, then it would be just as wrong to kill a water bug or a cow, as it is to kill a human.

The godless humanists have tried to ply away moral absolutes from the conscience of our nation to justify their lifestyle choices, but when push comes to shove, moral relativism gets jettisoned quickly whenever evil raises its ugly head.

If there are no moral absolutes, then there is no such thing as right and wrong or good and evil, and the Newtown tragedy is defined relative to the pain or circumstances surrounding the psyche of the shooter rather than as an evil act. I doubt any of the Connecticut parents of slain children would say there is no such thing as evil. Every unfortunate person scorched by the indifferent, insidious action of a murderer or rapist knows firsthand that evil exists.

Rather than cast doubt on the existence and or goodness of God, it should cause society to pray, repent and bring God back into every facet of our society. We should rather submit to God and resist the devil (James 4:7), not resist God and open a door to the devil by taking faith out of the public square and policy.

We need not only to pray for the families in grief, but we also need to pray that during this time, the reality and love of God will permeate our whole nation.

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