Contemporary Comments

“Joyous and Thankful” | July 28, 2012 | Order Info

Text: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 Timothy 1:15; Galatians 5:19-23; Daniel 12:2.

“We pray for all the victims and their families of the shooting in Aurora.”

“We pray for peace and an end to senseless violence, and for your love to wrap all of us in your arms during this difficult time.”

“So we pray for our city, and pray for those who are hurting this morning. We pray for those who are in fear, and those who are questioning their faith.”

“In spite of the circumstances and tragedy, God, you are good all the time."

These are some of the prayers offered a day after the horrific shooting in Aurora, Colorado last Saturday. At a midnight showing of “The Dark Knight Rises,” a gunman entered the theater. When it was over, 12 people were dead, and 59 wounded.

Much of the city turned to God in prayer on Sunday. In addition to local church services, a non-denominational prayer vigil was held in the evening. Still in shock and experiencing intense grief, many citizens attended. They brought flags, flowers, signs, and balloons to show their support. One banner read, “Be praying for the families! Colorado is a family!”

“The prayer helped a lot,” said a young man who had witnessed the shooting. “It gave me strength.” Another survivor told a local policeman, “The outpouring of light and love, is so much more powerful than any darkness.”

As Mayor Steve Hogan read aloud the names of the 12 fatalities, the crowd chanted, “We will remember,” after each name. The vigil ended as the crowd held candles and sang “Amazing Grace.”

The people of Colorado know the importance and power of prayer. The Apostle Paul did, too. That’s why he began his letter to the Thessalonians like this: “We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”
Paul knew that prayer would be invaluable to the Thessalonians as they faced challenges as new converts. He himself prayed, thanking God for them. And not just once, but “remembering without ceasing” their faith, labors of love, and patience in hope.

Often new believers are eager to serve God. They have a mountain of faith. They thrive on laboring for God as they witness and evangelize. And they are patient in the hope of the second coming. But as the years go by, faith can grow dim, labor can get tiring, and patience can wear out. It is then that they need our prayers.

Paul also made it clear to Thessalonica that they had been chosen by God to fulfill a purpose. And he encouraged them by telling them that they were already making a difference in Macedonia and Achaia. They were being role models to others, as he had been to them.

Prayer encouraged the people of Thessalonica. Prayer encouraged the people of Colorado. And prayer can encourage us, too.

~ nc

Additional resource: YouTube

1. Denver Post
2. US News

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