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Sorrows Untold and Hearts Torn Asunder

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Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

In the wake of tragedy, we need the whole Bible with all the depth of Christ's sympathy and all of God's providential and loving care.

Transcript

(music) Greetings and salutations. Welcome to Life and Books and Everything. This is Kevin DeYoung.

I'm going to read my latest world article, which has to do with the shooting in Nashville. We hear of these shootings too often and it's always a tremendous sadness wherever it happens. And yet we have to be honest that some of them strike home more than others.

And this is certainly one of those for me and for many Christians, especially in the PCA. Covenant Presbyterian Church, where the shooting happened at their school, the Covenant School, is a PCA congregation. Like I serve a PCA congregation, they have a Covenant School.

Like we have a Covenant School. There are a lot of connections even between our church and there, just inevitably in the same denomination in the southeast. People know people there, they have worship there, we're members there, have come from there.

We have students here in our church who are from that congregation. And the PCA is still a relatively small place. And this is one of those churches that almost everybody knows of because it's a bigger church.

It's a beautiful building in Nashville is a place that lots of Presbyterians come in and out of at some point. And so it really hits home for Christians and in particular for a lot of us in the PCA who know people there or connected to people there. It's a great, great grief.

Words hardly can, they can't, they can't even begin to describe what they're going

through. It wasn't my plan to write anything. I don't need to say something about everything that happens.

But Almolar and Andrew Walker at World Opinions asked me yesterday, could I say something as a PCA pastor, something from a pastoral angle to help people think about this and address this if I could get something done yet that evening. So I was happy to try to do that. And this is the article that just came out on the morning of March 29.

It's entitled "Sorrows Untold and Hearts Torn a Thunder, The Fight of Faith in This Sad World." Everyone suffers. We get that. Live long enough and you'll say goodbye to a dream.

You'll lose a friendship. You'll bury a loved one. Suffering hurts a lot.

That's why it's called suffering. We don't like it. We often hate it and yet we can almost, almost accept that pain is a part of the ordinary travails of life.

Until there seems nothing ordinary about it. They're suffering and then there's Joe Blight catastrophe and loss. That's what our dear brothers and sisters, some of them no doubt personally known to those reading or hearing these words, are facing at Covenant Presbyterian Church and at the Covenant School in Nashville.

I won't retell the tragedy or recount the horror of this past Monday morning. You know what happened and for everyone in that community, they will never forget. Well, lies ahead for the church, the school, the kids, the parents, the grandparents, the siblings, the pastor, the staff, the family, the friends.

It's a long road that no one and I mean no one wants to travel. That road will mean grief, pain, anger, confusion and sorrows untold. As Christians, we also dare to believe that there will be, in time, at times, unspeakable comfort, unexplained hope and the blessing of the light of God's countenance, a divine and supernatural light that can only be seen from the darkness of the deepest well.

The Christian life is a fight of faith, especially in the face of calamity and evil. It takes spirit given courage and fortitude to take hold of the eternal life to which you are called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses, 1 Timothy 6 12. We talk so much about faith that we can underestimate just how otherworldly it truly is to be a Christian.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen, Hebrews 11-1. That's the closest thing to a definition of faith we get in the Bible, and it's a definition we'd prefer not to rely on. I'd like to be assured of things I have, not things I hope for.

I'd like to be convinced of things I see, not things I don't see. Every Christian has said

this sentence before, and millions will say it again this Sunday. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

If you've been in the church for years, the first sentence of the Apostles' Creed just rolls off your tongue. We can literally recite it in our sleep, which is good because lying awake in the terrors of the night is when we may need this truth most. God is an Almighty Father.

That's not just something that's everything. For tenderness of expression, there is no explanation of the Creed's first line as sweet and comforting as that which comes from the Heidelberg Catechism. What do you believe when you say I believe in God, the Father Almighty? All of this, quote, "I trust him so much that I do not doubt he will provide whatever I need for body and soul, and he will turn to my good whatever adversity he sends me in this sad." Is that really true? Can we really count on such a promise? Yes, yes, a thousand times, yes.

Again, the Catechism. He is able to do this because he is Almighty God. He desires to do this because he is a faithful Father.

Hard to believe after six lives were shot down in an act of diabolical malevolence? Also, yes. That's why it's called the fight of faith. In times like this, we need the whole Bible with all the depth of Christ's sympathy and all the height of God's providential and loving care.

We need to know that God never leaves us nor forsakes us. We need to know that nothing can separate us from the love of God and Christ Jesus our Lord. We need to know that the story doesn't end with Joseph in prison or with Jonah in the whale or with Jesus in the tomb.

We need to know, after every crucifix of form Monday morning, that Sunday is coming. I often think of the ending in Exodus 2. After God's people cried out for deliverance, but years before the actual deliverance came, we are told four things. God heard their groaning.

God remembered his covenant. God saw the people of Israel. And God knew.

Sometimes with all that we'd like to know, all we know is that he knows. God is our refuge in strength and ever-present help and trouble. Lord, we believe.

Help our unbelief. ♪♪♪