

COPING THROUGH THIS TRAGEDY

By now all of us have seen or heard the news about the terrible tragedy that took place in Uvalde, Texas on Tuesday. We were all shocked when we learned that a man carrying a gun entered Robb Elementary School and killed 19 children and 2 teachers. Just 10 days earlier a similar incident happened in Buffalo when a man carrying a gun killed many people both inside and outside a Tops grocery store. Both incidents are sad and tragic. I have noticed a greater outpouring of frustration and anger on people's part after Tuesday's event. The frustration may have to do with both incidents happening so close together, or Tuesday's shootings taking place in a school that mainly consisted of students in Grades 2-4. As I watched various news outlets report from the scene in Uvalde, I began seeing people I know post messages about the shooting. People I do not normally see post too often felt the need to share their feelings about the tragedy. I took a moment to reflect upon the situation and just stood in silence listening for God. The message He planted on my heart was this:

Let the little children come to me!

After God's Spirit placed these words on my heart, I began to understand why He did so. I immediately began to think about when Jesus spoke these words to His disciples. One day some parents were bringing their children to Jesus so He could touch and bless them. The disciples actually began to scold these parents for bothering Jesus. When Jesus saw this happening, He was not angry with the parents, but rather with His disciples. He said to them:

"Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children." (Mark 10:14)

By remembering this story, my thoughts turned immediately to what the young children who were killed on Tuesday were experiencing that very moment. I envisioned Jesus coming to each of those children as they entered heaven on Tuesday and all of them sitting around Him as He comforted them. I do not know what these children felt in those horrific moments when the man carrying the gun entered the school, but I do know Jesus would have made them feel blessed being comforted and loved by Him. What these children needed at that moment is what we all need right now, to **come to Jesus for comfort**

and support. We are all children of God, and **He invites us all to come to Him right now for comfort and healing in order to deal with these tragedies.** He hopes we will take Him up on this invitation. I hope everyone affected by these two horrific tragedies will do so. By everyone I mean:

- Everyone who lost a child or adult in these tragedies and is in need of comfort as a result of their grief.
- Everyone who was in that grocery store in Buffalo and in the school in Uvalde, Texas while these events were unfolding and happening and needs help dealing with the effects of this trauma.
- Everyone in these two communities who have been traumatized by the horrific events happening in their own backyard.
- And every one of us who might be struggling as a result of these unsettling tragedies.

May each and every one of us come to Jesus at this time and be blessed by the support and care He wants to offer us. As we experience His comfort, may it hopefully move more of us to pray in love for all of those mentioned who have been most affected by these tragedies. May this time with Jesus also move us to begin to pray the Lord's Prayer more often, and in particular asking for God's will to be done here on earth as it is in Heaven. We know it was *not God's will for these terrible tragedies to happen.* If more of us keep praying for God's will to happen here on earth, maybe it will result in **people's hearts changing for the better** so that we see fewer acts of violence and more instances of living together in peace and love.

Jesus has invited all the little children to come onto Him. As His children may we accept this invitation and find the help and comfort we need to deal with these tragedies.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean