

Title: When Reason is Silent

Text: Psalms 23:4

There is a sobering reminder about our meeting today: the old MUST die, and the young MAY die.

But, as always, out of death, reason stirs slowly. This is so when the oldest die. (Sometimes, reason does not stir at all- especially when the young die.)

This is one of those times when reason slumbers. It offers us no explanation. Reason is silent. And its silence only makes our questionion, all the more real.

We turn to each other and ask: "Why?" But the "why" is not answered. The best minds cannot explain this tragedy. Our closest friends cannot find proper words to explain this tragedy. ~~Why?/What?/How?~~ We can only offer comfort - and that feebly.

We turn to people who have lived through such tragedies and ask them if, in retrospect, there is any word from reason. But they can offer us no encouragement. The lengthening days and weeks, even the months and the years, have not answered their "why". So, our questions persist. No one can answer them.

Everywhere we turn, in these hours, we find the doors to reason closed. And, standing as we do outside the room of reason, we are lonely. We are afraid even. But this is always where tragedy, (stemming from hatred) will lead us. It leads to a lonely island and to unanswered questions. We are there, now. We know.

But the terrible consequences of ~~violence and hatred~~ ^{this death will always be} are ~~always borne~~ by those who ~~are~~ ^{love} innocent. They suffer. They stand, today, in the lonely corridor, just outside the door of reason. And, ~~they stand there because someone allowed the venomous droplets of hatred to run through his mind until it expressed its ugliness.~~ ^{we} ~~And~~ Now, reason is silent and will not explain to us the "why."

Everyone, now, is silent. Everywhere we turn, we only receive a shrug of the shoulders and a nodding of the head in disbelief. But, the words we want to speak come slowly.

I know some of you are wondering if this preacher is saying that even God has been silent in these hours. Yes --- and NO.

Yes, God is silent, because ^{*This act*} the ~~mean acts of men~~ can never be explained when so much love has been given to redeem man and make him whole. God, who gave his only Son to heal man's brokenness, is silent when that healing is ignored and when the brokenness persists.

Yes, I'm even convinced that God, on occasions, ask: "Why?" And, certainly, if God asks "why" we need not be ashamed that the questions flood our minds.

May I say, however, that God has not been totally silent? He never is. While he may not answer our questions, he does come to us with his presence. He does promise us that he understands our sorrow. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1). "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27),. God is never totally silent; even today, he wants to place words of comfort upon our hearts.

So, God speaks to us. He does not answer our questions, but he comforts our hearts. He does not clear away all the rough spots, but he comes to walk with us through our loneliness.

So, where you find the doors to reason closed and bolted, God, while he does not answer the "why" promises strength and courage to live with the 'why.'

And, isn't this really our need in this hour? To find something - or Someone - that helps us live a little more peacefully with the "why?" Isn't our real need, now, to find something - or Someone - to linger with us, to walk with us, to be with us when friends are gone, when the days are long, and when the nights offer a thousand questions?

This is how God answers us - with His presence. He does not come with all the answers, all wiped up in a bundle. But, He comes with his presence. He comes to slip his strong arms around our frail bodies, and to set us on our way again.

He comes with comfort for our exhausted hearts, and reminds us that he has walked the lonely avenue of tragedy before, many times. And, somehow, his coming makes us feel better: not because of his answers, but because of his presence.

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; they rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

I leave you, today, with His presence.
