

08-07-19 Wednesday Musing

Well... it's happened again... another mass shooting... actually, two separate shootings... in two completely different states... in a matter of hours... According to data from the Gun Violence Archive (GVA), which tracks every mass shooting in the country... there have been 255 mass shootings in the U.S. as of August 5th.... Which was the 217th day of the year... That's more mass shootings this year than there have been days... A mass shooting is defined as any incident in which at least four people were shot, excluding the shooter. In the past 10 days there have been five high-profile massacres... a shooting in Dayton, Ohio = 9 killed, 27 injured... El Paso, Texas = 22 killed, at least 24 injured... San Francisco Bay Area = 3 killed, 15 injured... Brooklyn, N.Y. = 1 killed, 11 injured... Southaven, Miss. = 2 killed, 2 injured... The GVA reports there have been a total of 33,237 shooting incidents... resulting in 8,796 deaths and 17,482 injuries as of Monday afternoon...

Obviously, we have a problem... and as to the solution... well... I can't even begin to figure one out... but we're all aware that guns don't shoot themselves... someone has to pull the trigger... Sure... we can tighten up our gun control laws... and actually enforce them... but that still will not solve the problem... and even if we could completely outlaw the sale of guns in the U.S. we would not get rid of them all... that's virtually impossible... we would just be disarming the law-abiding citizens... so perhaps our part should start at the base of the problem.... In the heart... our own hearts... and the hearts of our neighbors near and far...

Personally, I don't own a gun... but there is one in my house... personally I don't like to shoot guns... but I have been taught how to and do have that ability... Personally I am not a shooting victim I do not know any... but I can pray for them... I can pray for the government leaders to be granted God's wisdom and strength to implement a solution to this devastating problem... I can pray for all shooting victims and their friends and family members, that they might walk free from anxiety surrounded by God's grace... 2 Timothy 1:7 **"for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."**

Anxiety plagues both young and old... and is something we all struggle with from time to time... whether as a way of life or due to circumstances beyond our control. Anxiety shows up in many forms... shaking... increased heart rate... shortness of breath... sweating... insomnia... PTSD... OCD... even frustration and anger.

Jesus addresses anxiety... in Matthew 6:25-35... He starts this address boldly... **"do not worry about your life"** He says... then adds reasoning we can grasp. **"²⁵ Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"** Matthew 6:25-26.

Look up... there are five hundred million birds flying around... and God is taking care of each and every one of them... essentially as His pets! So how can I... how can you... think He will not take care of us... we who He made in His own image... we who He made unique from any other creature on earth for a specific purpose... We who He has placed His Spirit within... We must look up and remember that He cares deeply for us... that He will provide for us... God designed us... knows us... and wants to guide us into a fruitful and productive life.

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Near the end of this passage in verse 33 Jesus calls us to shift our focus "³³ **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,**" (Matthew 6:33a) He tells us to move our minds from worries of this life to issues of greater importance, to shift our focus to eternal values. Breathe... trust... transfer your anxiety to God... shift your concerns to where it belongs... on the things of God. When our mind is focused on what God is concerned about... anxieties dissipate... and God provides us with what we need.

When our load gets too heavy for us to carry... when our plate gets too full... we are to take our plate to the table of the Lord... bow our heads in prayer and let Him take the lead.... And as we do let us remember all that suffer as a result of these senseless shootings... our government leaders - that God will give them wisdom... for those who feel the need to carry out acts of violence - that they might find peaceful resolution....

Also let us lift in prayer: Family of Elizabeth Woodlief—Mother of Peggy Johnson, Bobbye Mebane, Nancy Thomas, Anna Gerow, Family of Jeanne Williams, Family of Mary Jane Pettigrew, Frances Morgan, Harvey Sharpe, Donna Freeman, Doris Massey. And friends: Randy Davenport, Larry & Vickie Miles, Shirley Clodfelter, Family of Edwin Stewart, Families of victims of mass shooting in Gilroy, CA, El Paso, Tx., and Dayton, OH., Barbara Garrison—Mark Garrison's mother, Jud Bricker—friend of Elsie Bolick, Children and Adults at our Southern Border.

The Scripture for this Sunday's worship will be read from Matthew 15:1-20 and James 3:1-13. The sermon title is "Words Have Power".

Grace and Peace from our Lord,

Joan ☺

