



Risen Savior Lutheran Church

14700 Leavenworth Rd., Basehor, KS 66007 913-724-2900

Some Galileans were killed, no accident. Pilate slaughtered them, while they're worshipping; like being gunned down at the Lord's Supper. What did they do to deserve that, were they really bad people? Jesus said, **No. Unless you repent, you will likewise perish.** What about the 18 people who died when a tower fell on them. Was God punishing them for being bad? Jesus said, **No! Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Unless you repent.** So much for those who hold God loves you just the way you are.

Why do these bad things happen? Here is God? Why He allows evil, terror attacks, natural disasters, the constant stream of shootings? Disease that ravages the body? Why suffering, Why tragedy?

The world wonders at this. I pray no one here is ever uncertain, why. It's a broken creation. We know God will bring a greater good thru every tragedy, always, working a greater good for you and His people. That's always the answer to why? God has not abandoned His people. He is here, working all things for good; calling on all to repent, caring for His people. All tragedies are meant as warnings, to see the frailty of life; life is short, it could end today for any of us. No one knows what the future holds, God's wrath is real. Take heed. Lest any should perish. Our response to all tragedy...repentance.

And something else -because God's mercy, those bad things that happen, as evil, hurtful, tearful, things that prevent us from enjoying life with loved ones, obstacles – are turned into blessings, to draw you closer to Him, teach you to trust Him more, to build character; to not hold so tightly to this world because your true home is in heaven. Even death is not a bad thing, for His children -immediately delivered into paradise, never to suffer from this world's burdens again, delivered into His arms, reunited w/loved ones in Christ.

Unless you repent, you will perish. By God's grace you've been spared much evil and natural disaster. We're more like this: You're driving along, minding your own business, running a little late, come-up over the hill, then you see it. The police car. Your thinking, I have good reason for driving fast; then the anxious anticipation, is he going to pullout and follow me. How can one of our finest, be coming after you. You're good people. The lights come on. For a moment you pretend like, maybe he'll just go right by me on a call to catch someone who's really bad. "Chief of sinners though I be, there's always

someone worse than me.” No, you’re the guilty one. The excuses start to flow. Also, maybe if I’m really polite, “yes sir, no sir. I’m sorry, thank you sir” - I can get out of trouble, just a warning. Maybe some spite; what about the people that flew by me, why doesn’t he catch them. Why isn’t he out catching thieves, drug-users. I’m a not a criminal, he should be out stopping real criminals. Maybe some anger. How much is this going to cost. \$250. I’m a good citizen, pay my taxes, responsible. I have to pay that much for a little mistake when I do so much good in the community. That’s not fair.

I’m a good, decent, law abiding citizen. How dare I be treated like I’m a reckless person, bad, criminal? I wasn’t really hurting anyone. I had good reason. I’m not like other law breakers. I’m a good, decent, law abiding citizen of heaven... **Unless you repent, you will perish.** Excuses don’t work. Trying to make up for it, being polite doesn’t help. Pretending you’re not caught and guilty; angry you can’t help it, why the tough standard of perfection. Excuses, we’re good at that. Other people are worst. Minimizing God’s law and sin, “No one really got hurt.” Maybe God will pass right by me going after really bad people. Excuses, I’m good most the time, I don’t cheat on my spouse, I don’t use bad language, I work hard; nice to others, I just break little laws of God. I’m good people.

Notice how Paul there includes testing God and grumbling against God with idolatry and sexual immorality! Woe to us? **The wages of sin is death.** That’s what you earn each day. You stand accused as a sinner, a criminal. Thank be to God, it’s not fair. If it was fair, you would be punished for your sins. But neither here or for eternity you will never be punished for your crimes. It’s not fair. It’s called grace. He gave His life, endured your punishment for your sins.

What Lent’s all about. The Holy Spirit convicting, exposing us in our sin; and pointing you to a love beyond comprehension: Christ crucified for you. As Luther says, “Repentance is nothing other than a daily return to our Baptism.” In Christ’s promises, the Holy Spirit works repentance in you.

Repentance is God’s gift in you, work in you, that you know what you are. As you confessed earlier, we “justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment.” Cry out, “Lord, have mercy on me a sinner.”

Rejoice, for Christ comes to dwell only among sinners. As a fig tree, He digs, prunes, fertilizes you. He is not done with you. He interferes, intervenes in your life. By His death He bears in you, the living fruit of His suffering, death and resurrection. Saving fruit of His water, word, body, blood.

Unless you repent, sorrow over sin, to turn to the Lord, to rely on the Lord. *To repent is the highest of praise, the ultimate praise.* For that is how He

wants to be known: to seek forgiveness from Him who sealed that promise in His own blood. To be known as God on the cross. The God of forgiveness. The God with nail-scarred hands, whose death guarantees the day when all tragedies will be forever ended. You abide by His presences. You live by His mercy. He teaches you to number your days, keeps you ever in this faith, that you will never, ever perish.