

Editorial: May we lament, and may we not look away

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Lord, I'm supposed to share some wisdom here, some keen insight, some direction. I laugh. What wisdom, what insight, what direction do I have at a time like this?

The world is on fire, literally and figuratively, and I don't know how to play the violin.

Lord, I'm supposed to speak words of comfort, encouragement. I groan. Where can comfort and encouragement be found under such weight?

The times, they pile on and press down, and I am Sampson shorn.

We think we know what our government should do in the world, but we do not know what it will and has cost.

Indeed, it has cost us dearly—in money and lives—and it has and will cost dearly those left behind in Afghanistan, while we watch from across thousands of miles of ocean and sand.

We weep for our men and women—some hardly older than boys and girls—who gave themselves—physically, mentally, spiritually. Some did not return in body; many did not return in mind and soul.

We weep for the men and women, boys and girls holding the pieces of what we left them, some so desperate upon our leaving that they clung to the slightest handholds.

May we repent of our hubris, that we thought we could do what empires before us could not, and our willingness to incur the immense cost to try.

May we lament, and may we not look away.

And what, Lord, of our Caribbean neighbors? At least one of our leaders has said his piece, condemning Haiti to excrement status.

Yet, are they not human, too? And as our fellow humans, are they to be overlooked in their need, because so many consider them unworthy?

We weep with them, again. Yes, we weep for the unrest that took their leader. We weep for the unrest of the ground under them, that reduces their homes to rubble. We weep for their weariness in the face of storms that care nothing about their need for rest.

May we repent of our hubris, that we look down on men and women, boys and girls who aren't simply fellow humans, who aren't simply our neighbors, but many of whom are our brothers and sisters in you, Lord.

May we lament, and may we not look away.

We don't even have our own house in order. Our federal government fights itself. Our state governments fight themselves. Our local governments fight themselves.

Our country is on fire, literally and figuratively, and our leaders are fighting for first chair of the string section.

Our churches are fighting themselves, too. As if we have the luxury of turning our attention away from the charge you gave us, we bicker about

whether we will be expected to wear a mask to church this Sunday. We wear down our pastors and ministers with our bickering, expecting them to serve us, not lead us.

Meanwhile, your people elsewhere in the world are threatened, even hunted. Masks are the least of their worries, these your people, our brothers and sisters.

May we repent of our hubris, of our many sins against you and each other, that we turn aside from your command to be set apart, instead cleaving to the character of our nation.

May we lament, and may we not look away.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Lord, we are not afraid of you. May we tremble.

We are haughty. We trust in ourselves, our knowledge, our power, our government, our money. Even though we claim to know it is folly to trust in such things.

We are lost, Lord, and the sooner we admit it, the better.

May we lament, and may we not look away.

Lord, you do great things. You turn tears into songs of joy.

In your mercy, may it be so.

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