

# Hope Amidst the Horror

By Brian Kuch

As we were all contemplating the topic of **hope** this past month, we were slammed with the **horror** of what happened in Aurora, Colorado, on July 20th, and now we're confronted with trying to work through how these two conflicting realities fit together: where's the **hope** amidst **horror**?

I'd like to thank all of you who have been praying for your prayers and concern for the people in Aurora, Colorado: for those who were in the movie theater that night, for the 58 injured, and for the close friends and families of the 12 that were killed in this terribly frightening and tragic event.

The nation watched as breaking news came out from Colorado about the rising number of those injured and killed. We watched as information was released about the unthinkable extent to which this man went with elaborate booby-traps and explosives rigged in his apartment. For some, this information has been food for prayer. For others, it's been like watching a big-budget reality TV show. Perhaps in this past week there have been more prayers offered to our Holy God for the people of Colorado than there have since the 1999 tragedy at Columbine High School, just 17 miles away from the theater. How has this event affected your prayer life?

But already Aurora, Colorado, is fading from the headlines. I've even found that my prayers for these people have faded right along with the headlines. If people's lives, struggles, and pain fade from our memories so easily, where is the hope in tragedy? The reality of our existence on earth is that we will all die. Solomon put this in perspective for us when he wrote that "*death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart*" (Ecclesiastes 3:19).

Is there hope in pain, in tragedy, and in death? Paul says in Romans 8:18, "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*"

Paul is talking about his own personal sufferings he's endured here, but wouldn't you agree that the suffering in Aurora is personal for the people living there? We mourn those who have lost their lives, but we especially mourn those who died without the Savior. That day was a tragedy in Aurora for those without Christ. Let me clarify further – EVERY DAY is a tragedy for ANYONE without Christ!

Scripture even tells us why there are such tragedies, horrors, and frustrations in this life. Paul explains, continuing in Romans 8:19, "*For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility [the NIV uses "frustration"], not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope.*" HE SUBJECTED IT – IN HOPE.

Whenever you feel overwhelmed by your own sufferings, or the sufferings of the world as you see it on television, remind yourself that this is not the final point of the Universe. We all suffer, and we're all going to die! But where will you go when you die? Those of us that have the Eternal Hope of the Resurrection of Christ – we will live eternally with Him! We will be dispatched to Glory! "*In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death*" (Proverbs 12:28). What a perfect answer to Solomon's observation in Ecclesiastes earlier.

Paul was not the first person in the Bible that we see endured suffering – look at Job. Where did Job's Hope lie? Job boldly declares his hope in God when he says, "*Though He slay me, I will **hope** in Him*" (Job 13:15a).

In Ecclesiastes 7:3, Solomon writes, "*Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness the face*

*of the heart is made glad."* What does that mean? I think it means that this life is full of sadness and sorrow... and that life's difficulties have the potential to awaken a spiritual dimension in us. Sorrow makes us think about life, its meaning, and our priorities. Sorrow and suffering often bring us to God.

For Christians, even these sad times **ought** to give us HOPE, peace, and strength. There is a maturing in Christ that takes place through affliction that cannot be obtained any other way. Hope doesn't always come easy. In Romans 8:24, we see that *"in this HOPE, you have been saved* [by the securing of our souls through Jesus Christ]. *But who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it, with perseverance"* (emphasis added). It takes perseverance, and God willing, we will persevere in our hope with unshakeable Joy!

John 1:12 says that *"to all who receive Him, who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God"*; thus, we who believe on Jesus can also cry, *"O Death where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?"* (1 Corinthians 15:55) Are we sharing this Hope? Are we praying for our friends and family who don't yet know the love of Jesus?

*My Hope* is in Jesus, and my Hope is *eternal*, but how many people in our own families or close circle of friends don't have this same Hope? Life can be tragic and sad and hard, and we see in the Bible that we are not promised a life free from tragedy and affliction; Jesus tells us in John 16:2 that *"they will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God."*