



What's Going On In The World?

I have so much to be looking forward to and yet I find myself, well, I guess the best word to describe it would be - burdened.

This week my church is focused on impacting the next generation for Jesus! Arguably one of the greatest things I could be involved in. My church has some of the most creative and amazing people sacrificially giving their time and talent to do an excellent job. And we will! I am really looking forward to VBS this week!

It's also summer! I always look forward to summer. It is my favorite time of the year - even with the heat of SoCal. Not only is it a time for shorts, no shirts (I know, scary!), flip flops, swimming and BBQ's, it also a time where my family takes a few weeks for

vacation. I also enjoy the feel and pace that summer provides.

But even so, today I find myself struggling - feeling a bit heavy hearted. I think I can attribute it to what is happening around our nation and the world right now. I want to go around quoting the well known L.A. philosopher Rodney King... "Can't we just all get along?!"

Along with most people, I'm disturbed by the macro of current world events, but I am also troubled by the micro of people assigning evil to "those people" who do "those things," while excusing meanness in themselves.

I realize simply acting kindly towards other people isn't going to entirely stop

the crazy evil around the world. But I also recognize that often we attribute the atrocities found in the headlines today to "evil people" (and they certainly are), while giving quite a bit of room for evil in their own life.

Jesus connected evil to something deeper than action alone. He connected it to issues of the heart. After all, Jesus said in Matthew 5,

"You're familiar with the command to the ancients, 'Do not murder.' I'm telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder."

And even as someone who influences a community of people called a church, I often feel powerless to affect a real difference in the world.

And the truth is I probably am. But I don't believe we are. When we add the sum total of all the individual lights of my church - and shine brightly together, we can affect change. When we express kindness, grace, truth, love, actions of genuine care, individually and corporately, we impact people around us. It's all the littles making a lot... of change.

So even though I'm struggling a little today, I know the truth of the Bible and promise of God's Word, which says that good wins over evil! I also know it doesn't just happen. God has chosen to use me. God has chosen to use His church family to affect change. What were You thinking Lord?!

The light and the good in this world (which all comes from a good, good heavenly Father) is experienced by this world through me and through

God's people who choose to reflect the light and share His goodness.

But part of reflecting the light and sharing good is to combat the evil within us. Reflecting the light and sharing the good is in part about not allowing any form of gossip, self-centeredness, mean-spiritedness, rage, hateful online interaction (seems like so much ugliness comes out online), among a list of other things. Crushing that evil within me is what affects people around me. Choosing with every big and small situation to be a bearer of the Father's goodness, will add up and help create change. I have to align my private life with my public life. Integrity demands my character is the same as my personality.

So what is going on in the world?

Lord, I pray that it is Your people rising up to action. Action that overwhelms the darkness and consumes the evil that seeks to find residence in our hearts.

Personal Prayer:

Lord, I know the most dramatic affect I can have is one person at a time. Lord help me be caring by being present with every person I'm with at any given time. Help me love more than I lead. Lord help me be a change agent by allowing Your light to be reflected through me in all situations. Especially in those times when my brokenness would be inclined to spew hurtful, even hateful behavior. Help me repay evil with good and hate with love and revenge with grace. Help me be a reflection of You!

Lord help us "Do VBS" like the world depends on it - because it very well may!

Pastor Scott