

GOD'S WAYS ARE HIGHER

The last time my family and I visited the United States I attended a funeral. While the occasion of a funeral is usually a somber event, this one was particularly heartbreaking, even sobering. This one made national headlines.

The Rev. Kyle Lake, 33, head pastor of University Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, was tragically electrocuted in the waters of the church baptistry while addressing the congregation prior to a baptism. With 800 people in attendance, Kyle reached for an ungrounded microphone while standing in shoulder level water. Doctors tried to resuscitate Kyle but were unsuccessful. Kyle is survived by his wife, Jenn, and three children under the age of 6.

Kyle and his wife were personal friends of mine at Baylor University in Waco. Kyle was known for his free spirit and passion for serving Christ. In 1995 he helped establish UBC and served as the head pastor for the last seven years. UBC quickly became a popular fellowship for university students and the Waco community. Kyle also wrote two books, respectively entitled, *Understanding God's Will: How to Hack the Equation Without Formulas* and *(re)Understanding Prayer: A Fresh Approach to Conversation with God*. Kyle's charismatic leadership and giftedness impacted hundreds of people for the Gospel.

The number of "why" questions surrounding this tragedy are numerous, all fitting under the umbrella, "Why would God let this happen?" Why would God take the life of a man who was making a real difference for the kingdom? Why in this horrific way? Why would God leave three young children without a father? Why a young widow without her husband? The "why's" could go on and on.

I'm sure Joseph, a man with so much promise and a bright future, cried out to God in a similar manner while lying deserted at the bottom of the pit, left to die by his own brothers (Gen 37). Mary wept over the death of Jesus at His tomb (John 20:11). Undoubtedly all of those that followed Jesus were devastated too when their leader, teacher, and friend died on the cross (Mark 16:10). Sometimes life is hard to understand—the *Christian life* even harder.

All of us find ourselves from time to time asking God "why?" because something does not make sense to us. These may be subjects of a large scale (death, disease, disaster) or small components of our own lives (mistakes, disappointments, uncertainties, dead ends). And yet, while we may not understand at the time, God only has our best interests, *and the kingdom's*, in mind (Jer 29:11). Joseph understood this after his suffering (Gen 50:20). The disciples of Jesus understood this after His suffering (Luke 21:34-35). God had a larger plan that had to be carried out. Often, it involves a road of suffering.

We may never fully understand why events such as Kyle's passing must take place. This side of heaven, you and I are never promised that we will see and/or understand the happy ending. The higher calling of faith, however, is to *trust* in the goodness and sovereignty of God *when we cannot see* (Heb 11). In such cases, we can count on a special blessing, for Jesus said, "Blessed are those who haven't seen and yet believe" (John 20:29).

Do you feel blinded or confused by the difficulties of life? If so, may you worship, pray to, and trust the One who is not confused. This week, may each of us cling to the One who sees perfectly.

Steven D. Mason

Day 1

Isaiah 40:28-31

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. ²⁹ He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰ Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹ but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, may I remember today that you are so powerful and intelligent that you created the world and everything in it. Your understanding is beyond measure, you never tire of being the God of the universe. While I do not understand your ways, you certainly do. May I place my hope and trust in you. If you can create the heavens and the earth, I know you can create a new heart in me. May I be strengthened by your Word, and your promises. May I walk by your Spirit and your understanding, today. Amen.

Day 2

Psalms 25:1-5

“To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; ² in you I trust, O my God. Do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. ³ No one whose hope is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse. ⁴ Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; ⁵ guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.”

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, I give you my life today. I give you all my cares and burdens. You know what is in store today. May I trust you with every detail. Lord, I know that following you will incur great reward. While I may have to wait until eternity you will bless me for faith and obedience. May I not be like those who do not trust you. Make me different. Lead me down your path and teach me how to go about my day in a Godly fashion. Thank you for being my God and Savior. Help me to remember you all day long. Amen.

Day 3

John 14:1-7

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for showing us the Father. Thank you for giving us direction in this life. That direction is you. You have provided access to God the Father and eternal life that awaits. I know that this life is fleeting, but that you are preparing a special place for me in heaven. May these facts give me more incentive to trust you with all my cares. Sometimes my heart is troubled, Oh God. May I give my heart to you, the One who came and will come again. May I keep the big picture in mind today. Amen.

Day 4

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Prayer

Dear Father, may I work hard today unto you and your glory. May I remember that laboring for your sake will not go unnoticed in your eyes. May I be strong in Christ and in faith even when or if my world crumbles around me. May I remember that the death and chaos of the world does not have the final word. You will raise from the dead, you will renew the heavens and the earth, you will come back and reverse the curse of evil and sin that plagues this world. Thank you for coming back for us and your purposes. Help me to live today in light of your return that could take place at

any instant. May I be ready for you whether that be at your return, or if the end of my life comes first. I praise you for your faithfulness. Amen.

Day 5

Revelation 21:1-7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. ⁷ He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, I look forward to the day when there is no longer any pain or suffering. There seems to be so much of it in my life and around the world. Your presence in the new heavens and earth will be enough to vanquish any sorrow. You will make all things new and will wipe away every tear. May I live a life of faith remembering your goodness and graciousness to me. I am thirsty for your living water. I am hungry for the Bread of Life. You never fail to satisfy. Thank you for being my inheritance. Thank you for being my all in all. May I trust you today and remember the future that you will grant to me and the rest of your people. May this make a difference in my daily walk. Amen.