

Ask the Pastor

Pastor: "As a Christian, Should I rejoice at the death of Osama Bin Laden"?

As a military veteran who lost Navy friends in the Pentagon attacks of 9/11, and saw brave young people die in the wars in Iraq, I have a particular point of reference on this matter. But the real issue here is the response of faith to the death an enemy.

Some Scriptural References on the matter.

Matt 5: 44- " But I say to you, love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you"

Ezekiel 33:11 -" As I live, declares the Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked"

Proverbs 21:15-" The exercise of justice is joy for the righteous, but terror for the workers of iniquity".

So in a quick response, we as Christians should act differently than the pagan, the secular, or the humanist in the death of that or those who yes, are very evil. My father, for example, worked in Saipan in the Pacific at the end of WW2 and the preparation of the Atomic Bomb that only killed 300,000 Japanese. He never gloated, never saw it as revenge on his own older brother killed in the Battle of Midway in 1942. He was a Sailor; he did his duty, as God gave him strength. In the first Gulf War in 1991 my ship USS Concord (AFS-5) was directly involved in he retaking of Kuwait and the death of at least 50,000 Iraqi military in the process. I did my duty, I did my mission. And Justice was indeed done.

We as believes need to soberly reflect on the fact that at times the wrath and justice of God at times is expressed through human agents. When real evil is punished, Hitler in his bunker in Berlin, Sadam at the end of a rope, and yes, Osama in his bedroom, a coward, surrounded by his dead wives and pornography, the universe is working as it is supposed to work. But remember, and never forget, in faith as well established in Holy Scripture, revenge is not justice, nor is the justice of God ever considered "revenge". Proverbs 21:15 speaks to this. As does Romans 13:4. If Paul could write this about a Rome that was about to cut his head off due to his faith in Christ, it certainly applies to America today.

Again as Christians we all called to a different and far higher ethical and moral standards than the pagan culture that surrounds us. At the same time we all called to remembrance that as evil and bad as some are, all of us are sinners, all of us deserve the same justice of God, but in His Mercy and Grace, we are forgiven and made a new creation. Romans 5:7-8, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. So should we all go out dance on the streets and shout "USA-USA"? Some will, but I think as believers it is far more productive and keeping with God's Will that upon news of his death, we all should have been on our knees in prayer, asking God's mercy on those who died on 9/11, in Iraq and Afghanistan since, and those who do seek to do the justice of the Lord at times, Seal Team 6.

Pastor Gregory