

Statement on Charlie Kirk's Assassination

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good evening, Steel Valley Church. The elders wanted to encourage all of you in love and God's word and God's word and God's word I guess a watershed moment is what it's being labeled as. And this is a critical moment in history, and we need to think about this biblically and do well in this moment. And so like many of you who have been sitting in the hours of quiet since September 10th, turning over the week in prayer and maybe getting lost in confusion. While many of us didn't know Charlie Kirk personally, his assassination has weighed on me specifically. It's weighed on the elders. Maybe it's because of his similar phase of life that he's in, or maybe his age. He's in his 30s. He was married, father of two beautiful little ones. Or maybe because of his love for the Lord was evident in his actions and words and deeds. Maybe it's because despite the ridicule, the misquotation, and the threats, he remained bold and held to his convictions that we all shared of faith, family, of our duty.

And he took what he saw and he read in the world. He took everything and ran it through a biblical lens before he ever spoke. And he was admired by so many, especially the students and this younger, rising generation. We have to confess that we as elders were mad that his life was taken.

We lost sleep. We mourned. I mourned. And yet we affirm with trembling trust. Even this falls under the mysterious will of God. Scripture gives us words for moments like these. Like Psalm 4, it teaches us to cry out to the God of my righteousness, to tremble, yet not sin, to ponder on our beds and be silent, and by grace to lie down and sleep. Because the Lord alone makes us dwell in safety. Ephesians echoes the same sentiment. Be angry, Paul says, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger and give no opportunity to the devil. Anger at evil is not forbidden, church, but it is guided. Our heat, our emotional heat must be harnessed to God's holiness. We take our anger, we take our anxiety, and our lament not to vengeance, but to rest our case in God's hands.

We are also a people who believe God works through the common grace of government. Paul forbids vengeance in Romans 12. He says, never avenge yourselves. And Romans 13 continues, he calls us to respect the authorities that God has appointed. And so we grieve, we speak truth, we engage lawfully, and we entrust the processes of justice to the leaders in our domains, making our voices known with clarity and yet charity.

We ask God to uncover the whole truth, to restrain further violence, and to render right judgment through those charged to keep the peace. And at the same time, we must name the thing for what it is, the deliberate taking of life, particularly a calculated political assassination, because of a person's beliefs, Christian beliefs. Assaults on the image of God and the freedom to speak the truth was taken away.

[3 : 5 6] What you are feeling is not wrong, whether it's shock or sorrow or even anger, righteous anger. What is wrong is letting those feelings commandeer your heart into bitterness, slander, and revenge.

Christians are not insulated from pain. We are instructed within it. And we refuse to be disciplined by outrage. We are to be disciplined by Jesus. And so 10 things that we as elders want you to ponder and do in this moment. Number one, pray daily by name for the grieving and for those tasked with seeking justice. If you're able to, fast a meal this week or next week or whenever you feel led, and ask God for mercy over our nation. Number two, read Psalm 4 each evening and practice its pattern. Pause, ponder, pray, and then entrust your sleep to the Lord. Number three, guard your heart and speech. Tell the truth, refuse to gossip, and do not pass along unverified claims. Test everything.

Let your words heal rather than inflame. Number four, seek reconciliation quickly and do not let the sun set on resentment. Number five, work diligently and set aside a gift to share with anyone in need and turn sorrow into service. Number six, show hospitality. Write a note, make a meal, sit with those in sorrow. Number seven, engage civically with humility. Contact your representatives, support lawful and peaceful advocacy for life and liberty, and vote your conscience. Number eight, love your enemies and bless those who oppose you and persecute you. Pray for their repentance and salvation. Number nine, care for the vulnerable, especially widows and orphans, and invest in the rising generation.

Encourage students, invite them to our worship services, and engage and strengthen the gospel witness in our campuses. And number 10, in all things, seek to overcome evil with good. Therefore, we pray, we encourage you to pray. Pray for comfort for the Kirk family, for a wife who now carries the weight that seems unbearable, for two children who will grow up with their father's testimony, a bunch of videos, but not his embrace. We pray for the Robinson family as well, that truth, repentance and mercy would meet them in this moment. We pray for those who witness the violence, whether in person or on social media. We pray for the first responders, for leaders at every level.

And because our Lord commands it, church, we pray for our enemies and for those who in blindness and hardness of heart celebrate this demonic act. May God shatter the lies, soften hearts, and bring many to repentance and life right now in our culture. Church, let's carry this week with a Christ-shaped resolve.

[7 : 21] Grieve with hope. Refuse the easy intoxication of rage. Seek reconciliation quickly. Don't let the sun set on the resentments in your home, your relationships, or your words online.

Turn sorrow into service. Work what is good so that you may have something to share with anyone in need, like Paul tells us in Ephesians 4.28. Honor authority rightly. Contend for justice lawfully.

And ask God to heal our nation's wounds. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. And keep clinging to the gospel that does not fade. Keep loving in the way that Christ has taught us.

Keep praying without ceasing. Keep sharing the good news of Jesus with humility and boldness. In the nights when sleep is thin and the mind races, return to Psalm 4. Whisper it, pray it, breathe it, and entrust your spirit to the one who guards your life. Then rise, church, to live as people of peace, of people of truth, and people of hope. Something to invite the world into that is desperately searching. In the words of Charlie shared just days before his assassination, he said, Jesus defeated death so you can live. That's the gospel truth. Because Christ is risen, our hope stands, even here, even now. Amen. I pray this encourages all of us as we navigate the days, weeks, and years ahead, and that we represent Christ well in our culture and in this city. Talk to you soon.