

Passing Judgment on Virginia Tech? by Carl McMurray

In Luke 13:1-3 we read, *"Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."*

This past week a young senior at Virginia Tech premeditated and then gunned down 32 of his classmates and faculty before turning the gun on himself. Words used in reports of the deed were words like shocking, terrifying, and the greatest massacre of any school shooting. Radio hosts were shouting, call-in listeners were weeping or yelling. Angry words flew hot and heavy all week.

The consequences of this man's actions were certainly far reaching as literally thousands were brought to grief and sorrow over his decisions and actions. But in spite of the accusations and recrimination, does anyone think that there is a part of hell that burns hotter for him than for anyone else? Although, from the receiving side, I must admit that I would rather be hated than murdered; Jesus put them very much in the same category in Matthew 5:21-22. I can hardly point my finger judgmentally at the young student murderer while harboring hatred in my heart for another.

The passage at the top of the page might give us cause to go slowly when we tend to sit in judgment on the sins of other men. It is not for one sin or two that Christ was crucified. It was not for big sins or small ones that he suffered and died. He was a sacrifice for all sin. Big, little, black, white, action, attitude, yours or mine, He gave his back to the lash and His hands to the nails for all sin, period.

Unless we are willing to repent of (turn away from) our sin, then He assures us that we will perish. We will perish in the sense that we will leave this life separated from God and without hope. We will face judgment alone, with no one to speak for us. We will stand there guilty before a just God and face the sentence of darkness, torment, separation and despair knowing that the moment has passed, it is too late now to act, and there is no end to be had. Our sin of lying, of abandoning the Lord's Supper with brethren, of refusing baptism, of laziness, of carelessness, of greed or lust or of coveting will place us standing shoulder to shoulder with the young murderer. And we will perish. Sin is sin with God. Resist it, fight it, deny its power and defeat it with God's grace to help. There's help to be had and hope for the hopeless, in Christ.