

Faith, Family, and Freedom - the Cultural Mandate

"A Seed Planted, A Harvest Realized"

Acts 8:1 NIV

Psalms 33:12 NIV

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD."

Because of what happened last week with Charlie Kirk, many of us feel like a wet blanket's been thrown over us, and it feels like the world's a little darker than it was before. So, this isn't just about having a memorial service for Charlie Kirk, but it's saying, *"What can we learn from this and where do we go from here?"* *Nine-eleven* was devastating, but this is a different kind of weight. Part of our commitment to engage culture as a church is that we will engage things head-on. We will *not* look the other way.

Some Christians actually believe the lie of the separation of church and state, which by the way is not in the Constitution nor the Declaration of Independence. It was a letter from Thomas Jefferson to the Danberry Baptist Association assuring them that the state, the government would never interfere with their freedom to worship. That became an aberration of what it was intended to be and it's been used as a stick to try to tell churches to stand down, to try to tell pastors not to say *anything*, and not to endorse any political candidates. Well, we will endorse whoever we feel God has *led* us to endorse. We will say what needs to be said. We will not cower or back down, and it doesn't matter *what's* happening.

It's interesting because some of the mainstream media people are saying this could cause many people to stand down and back away. But, it has done just the opposite. A fuse has been lit for revival and spiritual awakening. This is not political. In fact, Charlie Kirk was even labeled in the news as a "conservative activist." This man was, in reality, a man after God's heart. He was one of us, someone who was taking a stand, who was having civil debate and discourse. He went to college campuses all over America inviting healthy debate, healthy discourse, and saying that it's okay to disagree.

We've got to be careful because social media is going to drive us down the rabbit hole and to get angry and become more divided than ever, but we need to put a bookmark on our life and go with what we know. We need to put down our screens and pick up our Bibles and come back with a response that would blow the minds of those who are enemies of Christ - that we would come back speaking the truth because of love.

“A seed planted - a harvest realized” - A Daily Grind

I don't remember a time when the violent death of a public figure so rocked me to my core as what we experienced this week in the evil and public assassination of Charlie Kirk. Charlie was "one of us." He stood for what we stand for and articulated it as concisely and clearly as anyone I have ever known. He stood for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He stood for his family and for all families. And he stood for his country and a return to the biblical values that made America great. Charlie not only impacted the younger generation through his lively, respectful, and intelligent discourse and debate, but he also impacted me and my generation. He showed me what is possible when you are focused, resolute, and committed to Jesus.

I have remarked, "When I grow up, I want to be like Charlie Kirk." It was not a joke. It was a bar this young patriot raised for all generations to aspire to. Charlie became a grain of wheat that fell into the earth and died. Jesus said, "But if it dies, it bears much fruit." I believe thousands of Charlie Kirks will be raised up in the wake of this tragedy. A harvest is coming. May we turn our grief and mourning into definitive and righteous action, and continue to pray, stand, and engage.
- Pastor Jimmy

Post from Engaged Politics

“Charlie Kirk was murdered today. And instead of burning buildings, rioting, or throwing rocks at cars, the right is posting scripture, prayers, worship songs, and praying for peace and healing. The left is gloating and mocking. We are not the same.”

Letter from Kara and Rick Green - Patriot Academy

“Dear friends, As I write this, Rick and I are still in shock as we process the horrific murder of a fellow freedom fighter, Charlie Kirk. The words are hard to find. Seems like a bad dream that we will all wake up from tomorrow. Many tears have been shed today from our staff, grieving for his sweet wife and children. The one thing that has stood out to me on social media is how many people who didn't know Charlie personally and who didn't even agree with him were moved to tears as they watched in horror as he was assassinated. Even those who didn't agree with him still respected him and appreciated that he gave everyone a platform to defend their own views.

“We all saw in real time what evil looks like, and I believe it woke up the hearts of those who God was pursuing all along. Charlie inspired patriotism in thousands of young people and people like me and taught a generation what it looks like to defend their faith in an articulate, respectful way. By murdering the best practitioner of civil discourse in America, the enemy is trying to bait us into civil war, but we will not fall for the bait of Satan. Rather, we will double down on civil discourse and raise up a thousand Charlie Kirks to wage a campaign of sustained public persuasion just as William Wilberforce called for in the fight to end slavery.

“Our fight is to end the violence and tyranny of the Marxists in America by rebuilding the principles of liberty in the hearts and minds of our people and taking back every single cultural institution from those who sowed the hatred that led to Charlie's martyrdom. But the most important weapon we have is truth. We must saturate our minds with the word of God which has the answers for every single challenge we face. We must, like Charlie always did, have the courage to boldly speak truth and defend the faith.

“And we must give as Charlie did. Give of our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor in whatever way each of us has been called and equipped to do. Like MLK at 39 and Dr. Joseph Warren at 34, Charlie was murdered because he was the most effective voice of his generation and was defeating the lies and the evil of the enemy. Much like those acts of evil in previous generations, the assassination of Charlie has lit a fire of passion and purpose in a generation of patriots ready and willing to dedicate their lives to the exact same things for which Charlie gave his life. the gospel of Jesus Christ first and a free society where we can live out our biblical citizenship.

*“For us at Patriot Academy, we are committed to raising up a thousand Charlie Kirks, the Navy Seals of civics, weapons sharpened with the skills of rhetoric, persuasion, humility, character, and courage. This should be a wakeup call to everyone to the evil that our country is up against. For anyone who has been sitting on the sidelines too afraid to have an opinion or too afraid to offend someone, it's time to get on the playing field. Every freedom-loving American has to suit up and show up. Let's remain in prayer for Charlie's family and staff at Turning Point.”
For Freedom - Kara & Rick Green*

Acts 7:54-60 NIV

“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.’ At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep.”

He died. But he said the same thing right in the line with what Jesus said on the cross, “Father, forgive them. They don't even know what they're doing.” Sound familiar? Acts 8:1 says, “And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.”

When this great persecution happened, they were scattered out, literally like a beaker full of mercury poured out onto a concrete floor. It would scatter and permeate everything it touched. Why? When the enemy comes at the Church and persecution arises, it doesn't stamp out the Church, it moves *out* the Church. It actually *grows*. The Church actually *explodes*. The Church is growing the fastest right now in the countries across the world that have the most persecution - Africa, Somalia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan. The Church is growing and proliferating like mercury being poured out onto a concrete floor. Why? Because it just doesn't ever stop.

Surely the people then were asking, "*Why did Stephen have to die?*" They were probably in shock and in horror. Steven was such a *gentle* man. He was out there sharing his faith. He was full of the Holy Spirit. He was one of *us*. Why did he have to die? It's the same way some people now are asking why would Donald Trump's head turn *just enough* so that the shot missed its intended target but only went through his ear. He was saved and everybody cheered and clapped, and he stood up and said, "*Fight-fight-fight!*" and the nation stood up and we've been fighting and gaining ground ever since.

So, why would God protect President Trump and not Charlie? Why would Charlie get hit in the neck and die while he's in the hospital? He's such a spokesman for the kingdom and for what we believe and cherish. He's such a model for the next generation. Over a hundred million followers on social media per month. *100 million*. The influence he's having, not just in America, but all over the world. It just felt like a defeat. It felt like a loss. It felt like something has been taken and we had been *robbed*. In one sense we have, but in another sense, like Stephen, what happened after that was that the Church exploded.

When the hammer of Rome came down on the early Church, and Saul was approving and had gotten permission to go and persecute the church, Saul didn't realize that everywhere he went, and thinking he was stamping out the church, he was actually inadvertently *lighting fuses* to powder kegs that were about to blow up. When it did blow up, persecution happened and the Church was scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, and as they went out, they didn't get quiet - they got *louder*. This is what *we* have to do now. This is our time to get *louder*. This is our time to say *more*. This is our time to take the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, and share it with *everybody*.

This isn't a political issue - it's a *gospel* issue. It's a *kingdom* issue. Politics get pulled into it and it gets trapped into the net that we cast, but it's not the *whole* of it. It's only a part. What's more important now is that people need to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their life. They need to be born again. And if there was ever a time for us to get loud, it's *now*.

That means where we live - at our kitchen table with our own family - it's time to speak up. It's time to begin to say it out loud. It's also where we work and where we play. If we're out at a winery or out enjoying time with our friends, let the Gospel be the conversation. Don't be freaked out over that. The first thing Jesus did, his first public miracle, was turning water to wine. And all of Fredericksburg said, *Amen*. But wherever we live, wherever we work, or wherever we play, we need to open our mouth and talk about Jesus. When we start doing that, we get a different lens and filter, and we'll hear people at other tables. We'll see people praying over their meal, and it won't just be cursory. And we're three tables over going, "*Amen. Amen.*" That changes the way we see *everything*.

Now, we begin to live *on-mission*. We begin to say, "*Lord, yes. Now, what's the question, Lord? What do You want me to do? I've already said yes. Now, I'm just waiting for the question.*" When we live that way, God will open doors for us to share our faith. It's not always dramatic or big, but maybe it's a seed here and a seed there. We always think that witnessing means we have to be a Billy Graham everywhere we go, but that's not the case. The Bible says, in Matthew 28, "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.*" But what it literally says is "*as we are going, disciple the nations.*" As we are living, as we are working, as we are playing, make disciples of all nations. This is what happens when the fuse gets lit. When Stephen died and his life was over in terms of the way we see it, that's on this side. What happened was his life was multiplied by the thousands as the Church was scattered.

Revelation 12:10-11 NIV

"Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.'"

Here's the good news. The "accuser" has been cast down. When we hear his voice in our head saying we're not good enough, smart enough, or spiritual enough - that what we say doesn't matter and nobody really cares because we only got three "likes" on our last social media post, then we overcome him by the blood of the Lamb. We put the blood over the doorpost of our lives by faith. We plead the blood of Jesus Christ which washes away our sin and empowers us to live an overcoming life every day. We're not yet who we *will* be, but we're not who we used to be. We overcome by the word of our testimony, and, like Stephen and Charlie Kirk, we will not love our lives to the death.

Charlie said, *"I just want my life to matter. I want people to say about Charlie Kirk that I was courageous and that I loved my God, and that I had a great faith."* We don't talk much about being willing to lay our lives down for the gospel, but it's not just about dying - it's about laying our life down on a daily basis - making choices in our life that honor God. This is how Charlie Kirk lived his life. This is how Stephen lived *his* life. So, how did they overcome?

Evil looks for the weak and vulnerable to manipulate and possess, so we need to be in a community of strong believers. We need to keep ourselves surrounded and not be the sheep on the outside of the pack who are weak. The wolf doesn't go into the middle of the pack. He picks off the straggler. Connection is protection. That means the more of the body of Christ we can have around us, the more protected we are.

The Bible warned of these times and history has given us many examples of people who have lost their life, but history has also given us examples of how righteousness, truth, and justice rose out of those ashes and out of that pain. Charlie Kirk's assassination is a seed that has been planted and will bring forth a massive harvest of gospel truth, godly righteousness, and biblical justice. Charlie was a thousand-watt light bulb in a world of 25-watters - a *brilliant* young man.

We literally do not have to know *everything* about why things happened the way they did. And that's hard. We don't like mystery - we don't like unknowns. We don't like not having an answer. And sadly, the internet and social media are manufacturing a lot of "answers" for us right now, but we shouldn't run down that rabbit hole. We all need to take a fast for about a week from social media. We need to push back and not take everything that's coming our way, because the enemy will use it to take us down with the idea that we have to be in-the-know and constantly be chasing conspiracy theories. We need to become conspiracy *therapists*, not conspiracy *theorists*. ...*may we be inspired, and not just motivated to action.*

Prayer

Father, we honor You in all of these things. We don't want anything that has happened over this last week to ever be in vain. We don't want to miss any opportunity to grow, to learn, and to be inspired through this, to start showing up, rising up and speaking up, to begin going to meetings, begin going to places and, even in our own spheres of influence, to speak up without fear or shame, to not hide who we are on the inside for fear of what other people may think. Lord, may thousands of "Charlie Kirks" be raised up, that we will stand and be counted, and may we begin to say, "I want to be like Charlie Kirk when I grow up!" We honor You, Lord. In Jesus name. Amen