



FROM PIERCED TO PRAYER

27/02/2025



The Eleventh Hour

Sometimes God does something unusual to get our attention. When trained military horses brought blood and disruption onto our capital's streets last April, and Big Ben simultaneously stopped then chimed the eleventh hour an hour early, some sat up and took notice. Even secular newspapers¹ made a link with Revelation 6, where horses symbolise future shortages, violence and a great sword of death.² Within a week, there were three major stabbings across the UK (one with an actual sword), and three months later there was another incident of bolting horses in London.

These events added to a growing sense within our and others' hearts that further judgements and shakings are around the corner – perhaps greater than any our nation has known in recent history – and that God is wanting to warn any who will listen so that we'll turn and seek His face earnestly in this eleventh hour.

Seek My Face

On several occasions in the past year, IFB's prayer sessions have been focused not on a particular prayer topic but on seeking God's face³ and discerning His heart together. In one such gathering in June, after we had confessed our sin⁴ for not paying attention to the Lord, we called on Him to say 'Seek My face!' loudly and clearly to the UK church and to give us the gift of repentance.⁵ As the meeting finished, one of us began to feel the Lord's hand and then voice strongly, receiving what we believe to be a word⁶ from Him for His followers. Part of the word went as follows:

'I have so much I want you to see, and you have not cared to know. Oh, you have been too busy.⁷ And I too have been busy. I have been busy sharpening a sword of judgement⁸ in the secret, while you go out fighting battles I never asked you to fight.⁹ I am waiting here.¹⁰ I want you to see this sword,¹¹ but I want you to know that I do not wish it upon anyone.'¹²

A Nation Pierced

A month later, 17-year-old Axel Rudakubana entered the Hart Space in Southport armed with an 8-inch-long knife, and began to attack little girls who were blissfully unaware of what was about to happen. He stabbed 2 adults and 11 children, killing three: Alice da Silva Aguiar, 9, Elsie Dot Stancombe, 7, and Bebe King, 6. He stabbed little Bebe King 122 times.

To our great national shame, this was one of many stabbings to stain our streets in recent years,¹³ and we should feel pierced by every one of them. But we believe the Lord purposefully allowed* this tragedy (and the

public outcry that followed it) to awaken the church and nation to the danger we are in – a spiritual danger that will increasingly manifest physically on our streets. We are in mortal danger, and God's trumpet of warning¹⁴ is increasingly loud for those with ears to hear.¹⁵

God has allowed this evil sword to pierce the heart of the nation because He wants us to hear Him, acknowledge our previous long-term deafness and the consequences of it, and finally respond that He might have mercy on us. He has allowed some of our children¹⁶ to be ripped away by staggering violence to awaken us to the danger of our actions, before a greater sword falls.¹⁷

He wants us to feel deeply in our hearts what He feels in His.¹⁸ In His mercy He is giving us a relatively limited but terrible taste of what will come in far greater measure if we do not stop and repent. He can and will pour out mercy in abundance upon us, but only if we turn.¹⁹

Children Buried

On 21st October 1966, a build-up of water finally caused the seventh spoil tip from a Welsh coal mine to burst, causing an avalanche of slurry to rush down a mountain slope and engulf a school and a row of houses in the village of Aberfan. An outpouring of national grief followed, as many mourned the deaths of 116 children and 28 adults; even today, as one person put it,²⁰ 'this devastating event remains seared on the consciousness of the people of Wales all these years later.'

At the time, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill was at Committee Stage in the House of Commons, and would soon make murdering unborn children legal. While God doesn't wish for any to perish, we believe the Lord on that occasion allowed* the nation to have a foretaste of what was to come if the abortion bill was enacted. Fast forward sixty years and we are a nation bereft of ten million souls,²¹ consciously killing a baby every 3 minutes and subconsciously counting the cost physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Even if Aberfan was a freak accident, one can see a powerful image in a large portion of a community's children being buried and not making it to adulthood. The outpouring of 110,000 cubic metres of colliery spoil brings to mind the oft-used 'slippery slope' metaphor, which accurately reflects how a trickle of child murders became a landslide just a few years after 1967.²² The phrase used by some survivors to describe the horror they experienced – a sense of the walls caving in – certainly gives the sense of an unborn child's experience of being crushed and suffocated in the womb. As the UK stood on the cliff edge in 1967, where was the church?

The Church's Complicity

There were seven attempts to legalise abortion from 1952 onwards, but in 1965 a Church of England board added to the momentum by releasing a report²³ called 'Abortion: an ethical discussion'. The report, informed by a longstanding pro-abortion lobby group, discussed both the 'absolutist' and liberal positions without strongly supporting either. It gave a lot of attention to human opinions and church tradition but rarely quoted Scripture, and it actually proposed an amended version of an abortion bill being sponsored by Lord Silkin.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey sent the report to Silkin to inform his efforts,²⁵ and he and other bishops worked with Silkin and then David Steel to support a 'moderate' legalisation while trying to limit it to cases of 'grave' risk to a woman's life, health or mental wellbeing. Steel publicly thanked the C of E for their report, saying it influenced his successful 1967 bill and enabled him to be a pro-choice Christian.

While the C of E bears a heavy responsibility before God for supporting abortion's legalisation, the rest of the UK church bears responsibility too for its legalisation and continuation, having been largely prayerless, silent and inactive over the issue for six decades. As we approach a seventh decade of child sacrifice,²⁵ will God find a people who will repent of the past and be different?

Our Attitude To Life

Just like the bishops in the 1960s, many of us today have failed to see life the way the Lord sees it. We do not see life as God's, and of infinite, absolute value.²⁶ Rather, as in abortion and assisted suicide, we have weighed life through the lens of personal cost and circumstances, and consequently we often fail to 'choose life'. Instead we have embraced the culture of death that hangs like a pall over our Isles. We don't speak up for the unborn or the terminally ill because inside our hearts their lives do not matter to us as much as they do to God. We have become as obsessed with control as the world around us; we use family planning and contraception just like they do,²⁷ and we secretly wonder if it's acceptable to facilitate those who want to die at a time of their choice. God is trying to pierce our hearts, because His is fully pierced, and He wants us to feel what He feels.

Our Creator, the Giver of all life, loves to create. All lives – all humans at every age and stage – are precious to Him, and worthy of welcome and celebration. We make mistakes but God does not, and His creations do not warrant abortion, gender reassignment or euthanasia. All blood cries to the God who made it and pollutes the land,²⁸ and we have been deceived into rejecting His gifts²⁹ and covering over the evidence as if He couldn't see. We have forgotten that He is a God who sees and judges,³⁰ and we must quickly regain our fear of the Lord – a fear that so often in Scripture is restored through the shock of judgement.³¹

Stop And Seek

Deeper poverty and a greater sword of death are coming upon our nation, our institutions and our children. We must urgently stop and answer His call to seek His face and His heart in a fresh, sustained, corporate way. We must together identify and agree upon what the Lord is asking us to repent of, and stay with Him humbly in that place until we are through with deep repentance and reach a place where He can show us deep mercy.

We must do this because God tells us to,³² and because all human strategies to heal ourselves³³ will have no fundamental effect in this hour. The situation is too grave, the time is too short, and the symptoms we see manifest in society are the result of a contention the Lord has primarily with us as His church.

A Second Chance

As we write, another bill to bring further death to our land (this time by assisted suicide) is also at Committee Stage in the Commons, and we deserve for it to pass, just like in 1967. Yet standing on what may be the brink of a greater outpouring of wrath, as we met once again to pray about the bill recently, we were so grateful that God gave us a word of direction and encouragement:

'Oh My precious children – I am giving you tonight, at this time, a second chance.³⁴ I grieve over the state of My church.³⁵ I grieve over what the church did and didn't do in the past.³⁶ But in My mercy and compassion, I am setting before you here another chance – an opportunity to seek My face – an opportunity to learn to cry to Me. My children, will you heed it? I offer to you again a chance to be used by Me in furthering My kingdom within a dark nation.³⁷ Heed My call, My children. I long to hear Your cries to me.³⁸ Take heart,³⁹ take courage, and pray!'

While individual prayer, fasting and repentance is vital, it is often more effective to do this together. Wherever possible we should gather like Jehoshaphat and his people,⁴⁰ so we can stand together in prayer, discern the Spirit's leading through each one's contributions, and listen together (as in Jehoshaphat's day) for any reply God may give. You can do that at IFB's prayer day in April,⁴¹ at meetings organised by others, or in gatherings you organise in your own home with other believers. As God stands waiting, may we not be found wanting!

1) E.g. www.bit.ly/ifb-136 2) Rev 6:1-8 3) Ps 27:8 4) Neh 1:6 5) 2 Tim 2:25 6) 1 Ths 5:20-21; Amos 3:7 7) Luke 10:38-42 8) Ps 7:11-12 9) Jer 23:21-22 10) Ezk 22:30-31 11) Amos 7:1-9 12) Ezk 33:11 13) www.bit.ly/ifb-137 14) Jer 6:17 15) Jer 6:10; Rev 2:7 16) Hos 4:6 17) Amos 4:6-12 18) Mat 26:38 19) 2 Chr 7:14 20) www.bit.ly/ifb-138 21) www.bit.ly/ifb-139 22) www.bit.ly/ifb-140 23) www.bit.ly/ifb-134 24) www.bit.ly/ifb-135 25) Ezk 16:20-21 26) Ps 139:13-16; Jer 1:5 27) www.bit.ly/ifb-131 28) Num 35:33; 2 Kgs 24:3-4 29) Ps 127:3 30) Ps 94:7-10; Is 47:10-11 31) Is 26:9-10; Ps 78:34 32) Joel 2:15-17 33) Jer 30:12-15 34) Joel 2:12-14 35) Eph 5:25-27; Luk 19:41 36) Rev 3:1-2 37) 1 Tim 3:15; Mat 5:14-16 38) Ezk 22:30 39) Luk 18:1-8 40) 2 Chr 20:3ff 41) www.bit.ly/ifb-events * While Satan is the one who loves and brings death, he can do nothing without God allowing it (e.g. Job 1:10-12; Luk 8:32-33). We recognise some may be shocked at the suggestion that God had a purpose in allowing situations like these, and we don't say it lightly, but Scripture is clear that God sometimes allows and uses painful situations (both for individuals and for nations) to warn us away from a path of further sin, suffering and death. God's judgements still occur in our New Testament age, even against the church (e.g. Acts 5:1-11, Rev 2:5, 16, 21-23).