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Where Does The Hope Come From?

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It's 6:30am, Friday, July 15th. I'm trying to see if I can write this essay before 8am, so I can go type this up, and send it out. I've got a cup of coffee, a cup of ice water, my radio (I may jump from station to station), and my Bible.

Yesterday, I went to a Memorial Service for an inmate: Clinton Dewayne Smith, who was murdered in a Special Housing Unit cell, on July 5th, 2016- by an Aryan Brotherhood inmate- who TOLD the officers that if they put him in the cell with him, he'd kill him.

And... they did... and he did.

How are we, as inmates, but first as human beings, make sense of this? A man was murdered... almost WITH consent by the prison. Clinton, as I heard at the Memorial Service, and from those who knew him, was a good guy.

He attended many functions in the Chapel, and was on the Prayer Team. He was in the "Challenge Program" a type of "Honor Program" for inmates (though I STRONGLY debate that). He was a kind and generous man, giving a lot to help others. He was certainly a believer of Jesus Christ, as his actions



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testified for.

So... why would he end up in such a terrible end? The man desired to become an Evangelist.

I don't understand the...pure evil...of a person that put- or clearly allowed- a man to be put in harm's way, and left him defenseless.

Nearly every person I've talked to about this has said it was very clear. Clinton was put in a cell with an inmate who made it very clear that if they put Clinton in the cell with him, he'd kill him.

Why would an officer ignore the glaring signs of a tremendous potential of an inmate at risk?

How do you make sense of it?

The Chaplain offered the department's help, should anyone want to talk about it, and Psychology obviously too, but let's be honest: they work FOR the prison and they both know what happened just as well as we do.

How do you justify a murder of a good Christian man?

No question or words I could say to the Chaplain would even BEGIN to create understanding of how some prison officers have no regard for human life- and are no better than the



police officers that kill people in society. The public outrage is at a tipping point- and yet prison officers continue to abuse inmates because "no one will know" or "no one will believe criminals".

But God knows... and maybe that's where we oughta go.

Jeremiah (The Book of) is good to read (not that I'm saying it's a starting point) because many of these scriptures were written for captives... prisoners. Some of the words Jeremiah got was while he was actually IN prison (like Chapter 33, verse 1).

But Jeremiah 29:7 says, "And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace".

There is certainly a lack of peace when an inmate can be put in a life or death situation, with no help at all. How can anybody justify, or make sense of a good Christian man who was quite literally, put to death by an ignorant officer, who cared nothing for another man's life? How do we get past that?

We have to pray... it's all we can do.

And we NEED to, before it happens again.



I have zero confidence that this prison would have learned the extremely wicked consequences of hatred and abuse of bad officers. I am not saying they're applauding the murder- but I noticed very few <sup>ranking</sup> ~~making~~ administrators were at the memorial to lend moral support.

Yet, we have no closure. A man was murdered, and every story I heard was quite clear that Clinton Smith should have NEVER been put in a cell with a high-risk and violent gang member.

This... cannot be ignored.

SO, how do we prevent this from happening again?

Believers need to pray for peace.

And while I just sent 2 or 3 letters to ministries to pray for us, the scripture in Jeremiah 29:7 is actually directed at US... captives. WE have to pray for peace, so that there will be peace.

And it makes sense. When I first got here in 2012, I prayed that USP Tucson would be safe. I mean, while I'm here, I need to be able to live through it, so when I tell people about how I got through prison, they'd know that there is a God Who watches over those who trust in Him.

So... what happened to Clinton? Didn't he deserve



protection too? What made those terrible officers think that they were doing the world a favor by sending a believer in Christ to his death?

Perhaps it is revealed in the Bible. Consider:

Matthew 10:26&28 "Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known...And do not fear who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both the soul and body in Hell.

Matthew 25:40&45 "...inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to Me...inasmuch as you did NOT do it to one of the least of these, you did NOT do it to Me."

Matthew 25:46 "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life".

John 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know it hated Me before it hated you".

John 15:20 "...if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.'

Matthew 24:12&13 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved".



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John 16: 2&3 "They will put you out of the synagogues; yes the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you, because they have not know the Father nor Me".

Now, that's a lot to digest... it's 7:23 now as I need to finish this before 8am. There is no justification for a cowardly murder, using the shield of authority to cloak it. But for a believer, a Christian, there is always the threat of persecution. Sure Clinton was in prison- but so was Jeremiah when God gave him some words. Paul spend time in prison; John wrote Revelations from Pathos- in captivity. Good people- God fearing people- have spent time in prison.

But did Clinton deserve to die?

Of course not! There is absolutely no way around that.

So our prayer for peace isn't just for the peace of the place we're doing time, but also a plea to God to bring justice to officers who abuse their authority. They seem to forget that the power they have- and abuse, can easily be taken away by God.

Officers who are cruel and oppressive to inmates are doing so to Christ.



And if we, as believers, want to change that, we have to appeal to God concerning this issue. If the prison covers it up, or worse, justifies that "he's just an inmate", then true justice fails. God can't get involved until we open the door to it.

Let's not be ignorant: God saw EXACTLY what happened. He knows not just the officer (or officers) involved, He knows the inmate who killed Clinton- and every thought each one of them had. The prison won't tell us anything... be we kinda know.

So peace has to include justice. The people responsible for Clinton's death must be dealt with.

You simply cannot let an officer administer an execution without penalty.

As inmates, we can't do anything; to react in any physical form would be wrong, and after seeing the shootings in Houston, there ought to be a real concern for retaliation.

No, if my faith is in God, the way to handle this is to appeal to God. I don't believe for a second that the officer or officers that were involved in this should get a paid-leave vacation, or demotion, or transfer to another prison.

They need to lose their jobs... unless of course they



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can bring Clinton back to life...

...no? They can't do that? Didn't think so.

It's no secret the killer will be charged and punished accordingly. But he warned the officer(s) what he'd do; he was clear in his communication. The officer or officers clearly ignored, the facilitated the murder.

There is a place for people like that, because it's clear that the love of God isn't in them.

We've got to find hope, we've got to get to the point where as inmates we are treated as human beings, and given the opportunity to rehabilitate, and then help those around us without godless men and women who call themselves officers, who take judgment into their own hands, and feel that they're doing society a favor by taking inmates's lives.

Didn't the shooters in Houston believe the same?

Where does it end? DOES it end? Situations in prison mirror those in society; people are being killed by officers who don't know God or Christ. Society seems to be losing hope in each other.

All the more reason to pray for peace, so that there will be peace.



A good man died... was murdered under the so-called protection of the Bureau of Prisons... a man that wanted to be an Evangelist, and spread the HOPE of Christ. Yet scriptures clearly tell us that some of us will be persecuted.

Does that make it right? Of course not. It shows how the world is getting more cold, and devoid of God's love.

The solution... it appears, is to run to God and pray for His peace... and justice against those who persecute the innocent.

Ok, it's 7:49am, gotten get ready to go...

(Note: Shortly after, at 8:05am we went on lockdown, and I wasn't able to type this up after all.)