

Why don't you come?

Isaiah 64:1-9

November 30, 2008

Lord? Are you there? If you are there, if you are anywhere, will you please just look? Just look at us! Look at what's become of us!

Last Friday, on Black Friday, a crowd of shoppers, gathered at 6:00 am outside a Walmart store in a New York suburb, tore the doors off their hinges and poured into the store, trampling a young employee to death and injuring several others, including a pregnant woman. For what? For what?

A forty-nine year old woman posed online as a teenage boy and told an emotionally disturbed thirteen year old girl that "the world would be a better place without you." What was she thinking? The little girl hung herself! And the woman? She got off with a conviction for unauthorized use of a computer, nothing more. What are we thinking?

Just last week, in Oakland, California, three men beat up an eighty year old woman. Such a manly thing to do! They kicked her and punched her and beat her with a stick. And who knows why! Robbery wasn't the motive.

And Lord, dear Lord, look at Mumbai. Almost two hundred people killed and more than that injured, in a deliberate and carefully planned attack, specifically targeting Westerners, designed to instill fear and create terror and make a public spectacle of hatred.

And all that happened just this week!

We are caught in a epidemic of violence: violence done in the name of hatred; and if not for hatred, then for greed; and if not greed, then revenge; and if not revenge, then ... boredom?

We are locked in a spiral of violence that we cannot escape. We are stuck in cycles of hatred and violence and mistrust that have lasted for generations, even for centuries, that we cannot break.

Why don't you come? Why don't you come and do something? If you are there, if you are God, then be God! Tear the sky open and come down! Come down and show us your power and make things right! Show yourself in all your glory and power to your enemies, to our enemies, and make them melt in fear! Why don't you come?

Why don't you come? The world doesn't seem to pay you much attention. The world doesn't seem to care much about you. We all do whatever we want. We all do whatever we have to do to get ahead or to protect ourselves or just to have a good time. There aren't any rules. Anything goes. We do whatever feels good. We do whatever feels right to us.

Your kind of love just doesn't seem to work. Oh, there are people who try to be nice -- to some people, sometimes, in certain situations -- but it doesn't change anything. Love doesn't make you money or win you battles or keep you alive, or even make you friends.

And holiness? You must be kidding! Who tries to be holy anymore? Holy is so old-fashioned, so passé, so uncool, so not with it. Nobody really takes your way very seriously anymore.

So why don't you come? Come and show us who you are! Come and show us how to live! Come and show us how your way works!

There are people around who claim to speak for you, but they're just as full of hate and bitterness and fear as everybody else. They make you seem like a cruel and unforgiving monster that wants to gobble up and destroy anybody who doesn't do what you say is right or what they say you say is right.

Why don't you come and clear up the confusion? Why don't you come and speak for yourself? Show us what you want! Show us what is right! Give us some light! Don't leave us here in the dark! It's hard here in the dark, alone, on our own.

Lord, you don't know what it's like! You don't know how hard it is! You don't know how hard it is to be human! So why don't you come? Why don't you come and see for yourself?

We do our best, but sometimes even our best isn't enough. We still fail. We still disappoint the ones we love. We still do harm. Even those of us who want to please you don't always know what to do. We can't see you. We don't hear you. Everybody tells us a different story and points us in a different direction. Life is complicated. It isn't all black and white.

How do we know what to do? How do we know you are there? How do we know you are good? How do we know you care?

We don't see much evidence. Evil plans succeed. Selfish people are rewarded for their selfishness. Bullies get what they want and humble people are pushed out of the way. People get hurt who don't deserve it. Terrible things happen to people for no good reason and for no fault of their own. There seems to be no justice, there seems to be no fairness, in this world. Good people suffer and bad people prosper. It doesn't matter what you do.

You don't know what it's like. You can't know what it's like. So why don't you come? Why don't you come and see what it's like to be one of us? Why don't you come?

In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. From the very beginning the Word was with God. Through the Word God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without the Word. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to humanity. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

The Word became a human being and lived among us, full of grace and truth. We saw his glory ...

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come. You have come to us ...