



Islam in America | A Special Edition from thESource for Youth Ministry

thESource exists to provide Jesus-centered resources for those at work with youth in the Lutheran congregation and beyond ...

THE DIRECTORY

talk sheets

THE TRUE ROOT OF TERROR

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

RIGHTEOUS WRATH & ANGER MANAGEMENT

BUT IS THAT REALLY FAIR?

bible studies

HOLY WAR IN THE BIBLE

WHOSE LAND IS IT?

BROKEN TEETH, BLOODY BATHS, & BABY BASHING: IS THERE ANY PLACE IN THE CHURCH FOR IMPRECATORY PSALMS?

The True Root of Terror | by Dr. Russ Moulds

Core Text

Gen 6:5 (in the 5-8 context plus the entire Gen 1 - 11 context of sin-judgment-grace)

Core Visual/Illustrations:

A personal story of genuine fear such as stage fright, an outdoors mishap, being present at a crime, accident or harm to a loved one, etc.

An appreciative description of a local member of the armed forces who has been in Iraq or Afghanistan.

A brief overview of what we know from recent neuroscience about post-traumatic stress syndrome (See WebMD, the APA site, etc.).

A recent local, national, or international news story involving terror and evil (such as a school shooting, kidnapping, etc.).

Major Teaching /Talking Points

1. Perhaps the first incident of overt terror is found in Gen 3:24, a condition rightly created and managed by God due to sin. This event is immediately followed and contrasted by the Cain and Abel story where man wrongly uses power and force for evil. (Now might be a good place to discuss different definitions of terror.)
2. By Gen 6:5, God's very good creation (cf. Gen 1:31) is in a state of abject corruption. The problem is not this or that behavior or idea. The source of this and all corruption is that "every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil all the time." Not much wiggle room in this description!
3. Our evil, our wrong use of power and force, and the terror it generates is not limited to any group or person or, for that matter, religion, including Islam. For a sad example among God's Old Testament people, see Judges 19 - 21. No one and no group has a monopoly on terror, and through Gen 6:5, we're all implicated.
4. Yet in ways we do not understand (see Dt 29:29), God still manages all our temporal evil for his own good purposes, just as he did with Adam and Eve's sin and the flaming sword at the Garden of Eden. See such texts as Isa 45:5-7 (in the context of God's words to Cyrus), Isa 55:8-11, and Rom 8:28.
5. What, then, do we understand? The cross was used by the Romans as a deliberate instrument of terror to maintain their power and control as an empire. We now display that cross as the instrument by which God has conquered sin—the source of all terror—and created a new peace for all, terrorist and terrorized alike. (See the words of Saul the persecutor who became Paul the apostle in Gal 6:17.)



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Questions / Discussion Starters for Youth

1. Consider some different ways to define terror and terrorism. Consider the experience of terror and use of terror at different scales: personal, local, and international.
2. Identify some different groups today and in the past who have used terror to achieve their aims.
3. Christian martyrs, past and present, have been the targets of state terrorism, radical terrorism, and local / individual terrorism. Since they are “martyrs,” did they overcome terrorism or did terrorism overcome them? In what way(s) do these Christian martyrs help us.
4. We typically identify three sources for sin. Name them and discuss whether each of the three is a source for terror and terrorism.
5. Moslem suicide bombers are obviously sincere and committed. Why don’t we hear anything about Christian suicide bombers?
6. Reflect a bit about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. What was his attitude about the terror before him and those who would inflict it?