

A WORD WITH YOU - By Ron Hutchcraft

8443 / 6296 - "Fighting For Lives When the Shots Rang Out"

1 John 5:11, 12

May 22, 2019

It's happened too often. I've seen it a lot but I guess I remember this one in particular. Flags flying at half-staff, national leaders pausing for a moment of silence at the White House, on the Capitol steps, and even seasoned news reporters that day struggled with the pain and anguish of these devastating moments when a mall parking lot suddenly became a killing field.

The heart rending toll of a lone gunman's rampage. It was in Tucson, Arizona. Six people dead, fourteen others wounded. And then in that Tucson hospital, Representative Gabrielle Giffords, apparently the intended target, battled for her life with a critical head wound.

As horrific as the losses were, thank God she recovered to some extent, we now know that there could have been many more. When the shots began, as often happens, the everyday heroes stepped up.

I'm Ron Hutchcraft and I want to have **A WORD WITH YOU** today about **"Fighting For Lives When the Shots Rang Out"**.

Gabby Giffords' 20-year old intern, Daniel Hernandez, ignored the bullets to reach the side of the wounded. And when he saw the Congresswoman contorted on the ground, he sat her upright to keep her from asphyxiating. Then, with his bare hands, he applied the pressure to her head wound that may have saved her life. As he ran by her gurney to a waiting ambulance, he was covered with her blood.

Patricia Maisch, described as looking like a "storybook grandmother," first hit the ground, and then dove for the second ammunition magazine the shooter was about to load - with 31 more shots. That act of selfless bravery allowed two survivors to tackle and subdue that assailant. We will never know how many lives they saved.

And then the doctor in the crowd pitched in. Followed by a flood of first responders. Whatever each person's plans had been for that destiny Saturday morning, suddenly only one thing mattered. Saving the people whose lives hung in the balance. I mean, does anything else really matter when people are dying? You drop everything to do what you can to save them. It's that life-saving instinct that could be the difference between life or death for people all around me, all around you. Eternal life or death, that is.

The need for life-saving action is so blatantly obvious when the danger is physical. But the Bible leaves no doubt that there are so many people in a mortal danger that is

not visible, but still horrifically real. It's a life-threat that can cost a person much more than another thirty or forty more years on earth. This threat can cost you heaven forever.

God's Word tells us that "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11, 12). Since only Jesus died to pay for the sin that keeps us from God and from heaven, only those who "have the Son" are ready for eternity when it comes.

God uses some sobering and unmistakable language to open our eyes to the condition of the people around us. They are "lost" the Bible says (Luke 19:10). They are "perishing" (2 Corinthians 2:15) the Bible says, "without hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). Those who will, in the Bible's words, "be shut out from the presence of the Lord" (2 Thessalonians 1:9). The Bible reveals the mortal danger of people around us who don't belong to Jesus - and, in so doing, it summons us who know Him to do whatever we can to save them.

That's why the Bible commands us to "snatch others from the fire and save them" (Jude 23) and to "rescue those being led away to death" (Proverbs 24:11). Each Jesus-follower - you- each one is a divinely positioned person to be the life-saving difference for the people they know.

My prayer needs to be, "Jesus, help me see the people around me through Your eyes." He sees so much more than neighbors or coworkers or teammates or friends. He sees them as the future inhabitants of eternity. In heaven or in hell.

There is a life-saving emergency right in front of each of us who knows Jesus. We can't wait for a "rescue professional" to get there. If you're with a person in danger of dying, you're responsible.

If anything stops us, you know what it's going to be, it's going to be fear. As Daniel Hernandez reflected on taking action while the bullets were still flying, he said, "Of course, you're afraid. But you have to do what you can."

Yes, you do. Especially when someone's eternity is in the balance.

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