

# *Reaping the Whirlwind*

Joe Slater

We scarcely have time to digest the news of one shooting at a school until there is another, or so it seems. Naturally, people wonder why this is happening, and what can we do about it. Unfortunately, the advice from the secular progressives in positions of influence is little better than "Take two aspirin and call me in the morning." They treat the symptoms instead of the cause.

Over 2700 years ago, a prophet in the Northern Kingdom (Israel) lamented, "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7). Israel had forsaken the true God and true religion in exchange for idolatry with all of its corruption. They had, indeed, sown the wind. Now they would reap the whirlwind. God would allow their enemy, Assyria, to conquer them and take away the survivors as captives. While the symptom was a menacing foreign army, the real problem was sin.

I submit to you that the ongoing plague of school shootings is but one of many ways in which we are reaping the whirlwind. Mass media, public education, civil government, and other highly influential institutions (including much of religion) are dominated by people whose philosophy is strongly secular and anti-God. Christians who work in these areas fight valiantly in an uphill battle.

The secularists have enshrined situation ethics as an unquestionable dogma; anyone daring to challenge it is caricatured as a dangerous nut-job. Situation ethics means that there are no absolute standards of right and wrong; the only thing that is absolute is that there are no absolutes! Indeed, they have sown the wind.

Since there are (supposedly) no absolutes, how can anyone logically say it is wrong to shoot somebody

else? After all, we've legally killed over fifty million people who were inconvenient or unwanted over the last 40+ years. Few care to discuss whether abortion is right or wrong; the politically correct question is, "How do you feel about it?"

To the children, the unspoken message is: "The only reason you're here is because we wanted you. We killed fifty million of your brothers and sisters, and we could have killed you just as easily, and there would have been nothing wrong with it." Given that bankrupt philosophy, why are we surprised when some children have no respect for each other's lives or for adults' lives?

He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow" (Proverbs 22:8). School shootings are but one of a host of serious issues we face. We treat the symptoms in vain; the problems will be solved only by a return to God and His word.

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## **Help Yourself to Happiness**

Everybody everywhere seeks happiness, it's true,

But finding it and keeping it seems difficult to do.

Difficult because we think that happiness is found

Only in the places where wealth and fame abound.

And so we go on searching in places of pleasure

Seeking recognition and monetary treasure,

Unaware that happiness is just a state of mind

Within the reach of everyone who takes time to be kind.

For in making others happy we will be happy too,

For the happiness you give away returns to shine on you.

--Helen Steiner Rice

# Providentially Hindered?

*"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1).*

"Lord, I pray for all those who aren't at worship because they were providentially hindered." When I was a young teen and a new Christian, one of the elders in my home congregation always included this in his prayer. I wondered what it meant. Did God make the person sick so he couldn't come? Or did God send trouble to someone to prevent him from attending?

That sounds funny, but I'm still not sure what "providentially hindered" means. Perhaps we were providentially hindered this last Wednesday. Bible study was canceled because of the snow and bitter cold. However, I don't believe God sends bad weather, illness, or trouble to Christians to keep them from attending worship and Bible study.

I have heard other supposedly good reasons for skipping worship services. Some of my favorites are "I had company." "We were out of town." "We had to make it to the ball game (or fishing, camping, traveling, or whatever)." How sad that such things come out of the mouths of Christians.

Yes, there are times when things happen that we can't attend church services. We get sick, but I don't think God makes us sick. Our car might break down. Sometimes we do have to travel. But God knows our hearts. He knows when circumstances prevent us from worshiping. He also knows when we're too lazy to make the effort to go and when we just don't care.

Perhaps it all comes down to our love for God. Jesus said we are to *"love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"* (Matthew 22:37). When we do this, we won't find many occasions to be "providentially hindered."

--Donna Richmod Wittlif (Denver, CO)