



Revealing Words Bible Study

“When Bad Things Happen to Good People”

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When Bad Things Happen to Good People

On the evening of June 17, a group of devout church members gathered for their weekly Bible study—a routine act of faith and fellowship. They welcomed a young visitor into their circle, showing the warmth and hospitality that reflected their Christian walk. Tragically, that visitor turned out to be a gunman who opened fire during the study, killing nine parishioners, including the senior pastor, Rev. Clementa Pinckney. The victims were faithful Christians—teachers, librarians, community leaders, and grandparents—who had dedicated their lives to service to their Lord Jesus Christ.

What makes this tragedy especially poignant is the contrast between the victims' goodness and the violence they endured. They were people who lived their faith by opening their doors to strangers (Hebrews 13:2), embodying forgiveness and compassion (1 Peter 3:8). In the aftermath, their families and fellow church members responded with extraordinary grace, publicly declaring forgiveness for the shooter even as they mourned (Ephesians 4:32). Their faith became a powerful testimony, inspiring people worldwide and reminding us of the strength that can emerge from unimaginable loss through faith in Jesus Christ.

In the midst of the Charleston church tragedy, the Bible offers a deep well of hope that speaks to both grief and resilience. The Bible reminds us that “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18), assuring the grieving families that God was near in their darkest hour. Jesus' promise, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die” (John 11:25), affirms that the faithful victims are not lost but live eternally with Him. The extraordinary forgiveness shown by the survivors echoes “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32), turning pain into a testimony of grace. And the vision of Revelation offers ultimate comfort: “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain” (Revelation 21:4), pointing to a future where suffering is no more. Together, these Bible verses transform tragedy into testimony, showing that even in loss, Christians can cling to God's presence, eternal life, forgiveness, and the promise of renewal. The greater hope is not that those that lost their lives were **good** people but that they were **forgiven** people, and though their lives were cut short, because of their acceptance of Jesus Christ and what He did for them on the cross, they will live with Him in eternity where there is no more death, mourning, crying, or pain.

Responding to Tragedy

1. Read Matthew 5:16, what does the Charleston event reveal to you about living out Christian values even when risks are unknown?
2. Psalm 34:18 says, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.” How can this verse bring comfort in times of grief?
3. In what ways have you personally experienced God’s closeness during seasons of loss or suffering?

Hope in Jesus

4. Jesus declares in John 11:25 that believers will live even though they die. How does this promise reshape your understanding of death?
5. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16–18, how does the assurance of eternal life help Christians face tragedies with hope rather than despair?

Power of Forgiveness

6. The families of the victims publicly forgave the shooter. How does this reflect Ephesians 4:32?

7. Read Romans 12:21, why is forgiveness such a powerful testimony of faith, especially in the face of violence?

8. What challenges are you currently facing in extending forgiveness, and how can Christ's example guide you?

Future Renewal

9. Revelation 21:4 promises that God will wipe away every tear. How does this vision of renewal encourage you today?

10. How can you hold onto this promise while still living in a world filled with pain and injustice? Use Galatians 6:9 as inspiration.

Living as Forgiven People

11. Read Ephesians 2:8–9, the Charleston story emphasizes that the victims' greatest hope was not in being "good people" but "forgiven people." How does this truth change the way you view salvation?

12. Read Micah 6:8, how can you ensure that your life reflects gratitude for Christ's forgiveness rather than reliance on your own goodness?