



21 year old - Church shooting suspect Dylann Roof

A short note from Kevin H: When I was having a business dinner in Charleston, SC on Wed. evening, I did not know that I was going to be 2 miles away from a mass murder at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The same location where one of the congregation's founders (Denmark Vesey - a former slave) was executed in 1822 for attempting to organize a slave revolt - The same location where Rev. Clementa Pinckney gave an exceptional speech in 2013 introducing "Mother Emanuel Church" – a church that was forced to close by the state of SC in the 1800s – that was re-opened by Baltimore missionaries after the emancipation proclamation of 1863. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XP35_JVnP6g. Quote of the day by Pastor Pinckney in this video clip: "Sometimes we have to make noise, march, and even die in order to ensure that freedom and equality are to be realized in the sight of God." Along with eight others, Pastor Pinckney was killed this week at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church.

A Father's Day Message "It's In Your Hands" by Pastor Steven at Elevation Church.

Notes prepared by KH.

- Scripture: Math 7:7-15
- June 20, 2015 - After a tragic shooting in Charleston, SC where nine people died - including the lead pastor
- Pastor Steven: "For someone that grew up near Charleston, SC, This one hit home."
- Some worship is different. Giving weight to worship gives us relief.
- There is a lot of heaviness in my heart. However, we want to first declare praise for him.
- We know that bad news permeates our lives
- We know that God is in this place and Jesus is both life and resurrection.
- **God trades ashes for beauty.**
- **God: Thank you for your hope that anchors our soul.**
- God: Heal our wounded heart and anguish.
- God: We know that there is no sorrow that God cannot heal.
- **God: We ask that you exchange our heaviness for a garment of praise.**
- "It is well with my soul. All is well with my soul."
- Recall that Mother Emmanuel Church in Charleston, SC was created because blacks could not worship with whites.

- To say that this mass murder is not about race is the wrong approach.
- As fathers we hand out addictions, biases, good gifts and bad gifts. We are all flawed.
- **Many issues have roots and we have a part to play to remove systemic racism.**
- **What are we handing down? It is a good gift? Are we handing down a good fish or a rock?**
- Many times, Pastor Steven was the only white person in a welcoming and loving black church.
- Now we have a black church located in Charleston, SC welcoming a white person to a bible study group and they were all shot for it.
- Pastor Steven: I sang in all-black gospel choir at the request of Chris Dickson and Mrs. Dickson. During the 1998 "Voices of unity" Spring Concert, Pastor Steven was lead singer for "*No Weapon.*"
- The message is not "hey I always liked black people." In fact, I was so hopelessly out of rhythm, yet, they invited me.
- **The essence of the gospel is acceptance and good news. The operative word is come as you are.**
- The people that welcomed me first into their church were all black. This made me who I am today.
- **Are our hands stretched out? Or our arms folded and un-welcoming?**
- Pastor Steven's Dad was so steeped in hate and racism that he began to pass along his racism to me.
- What is remarkable is the way in which God transformed my heart in such a radical way. So much so that I attended an all-black church.
- **Great quote: What is not healed gets handed down.**
- **If we do not seize this as an opportunity for change, we are not a church; we are merely a pep rally.**
- **What you deny divides even more.**
- **Every deed from the devil left un-checked remains in our heart.**
- Rabi Jebel quoted the golden rule. What is hateful to you, do not do to anyone else. Everything else in the bible is commentary.
- We typically use this standard in treating others that are different than us.
- The important part is to understand what you will not do.
- Eventually, the heart of my Dad changed when he accepted Christ. It first started when he removed a racist comment from his barbershop. Then paradigms and prejudices started to end.
- **My Dad started to tear down what he was handed down.**
- Perhaps we need to just shut up and listen. Listen to the victims of Charleston, SC: You wrecked my life, however, I forgive you.
- We can light candles. However, the thing that needs to be on fire is in our hearts. It starts in our families and the moves to a larger conversation.
- **Check what is in your heart? What are you handing down?**
- Are you handing your children stones that they in turn throw at others?
- It is not about what you are handed. It is all about what you give back.
- June 19, 2007 on Father's Day: Pastor Steven asks his father: What do you want? His father says I want to go church and see the Bishop (a friend). When we got to the church, it was an all-black church. God is real because He put a real active love in his heart that replaced hate.
- Do we radiate life? Do we radiate acceptance?

- One human heart can destroy life.
- Sometimes, God uses our broken heart to heal a broken world.
- What if one heart can change? What if one less Dad can prevent handing down a bad thing?
- It starts in your heart.
- Perhaps this is defining moment where we start to come together.
- Please God, answer us in our time of trouble. Fill us with grace and love. Change us God.
- God: Help in our examination of ourselves this week.