

School Principal Tackles Gunman, Credits "God's Hand"

The Wired Word for the Week of May 17, 2026

In the News

On April 7, an Oklahoma high school principal tackled a gunman in the lobby of his school, protecting students and staff from deadly violence. Kirk Moore, an educator for 35 years, raced into the hallway after the suspect opened fire at Pauls Valley High School. He pushed the gunman onto a bench and held him down until another staffer helped to kick the weapon away.

Principal Moore was shot in the leg and then airlifted to a nearby hospital. No one else was injured in the shooting. Pauls Valley Police Chief Don May said to CBS News, "We're about a population of 6,200 people. Good kids, good community. Certainly don't expect these type of situations to happen in your town."

Lindel Fields, the Oklahoma superintendent of public instruction, said that Moore "got up like the rest of us to go to work and who dreamed this was going to happen? So I just want to say thank you."

Moore gave credit to his "instincts and training, as well as God's hand" for helping him subdue the threat. He

said he was looking forward to returning to work so that he could continue his "life's work educating the next generation of Oklahoma leaders."

The suspect, Victor Lee Hawkins, 20, is a former student of Pauls Valley High School. He is facing multiple charges, including shooting with intent to kill. After pleading "not guilty," he remains in custody on a \$1 million bond.

According to The Independent, investigators allege that Hawkins was armed with two semi-automatic pistols when he entered the school, weapons that he had obtained from his father's closet. Investigators say that Hawkins "wanted to conduct his own school shooting like the Columbine shooters did," with a plan to kill students, Moore, other faculty members and himself.

After entering the building, Hawkins tried to shoot a student but found that one of his weapons had malfunctioned. After fixing the malfunction, Hawkins spotted another student and discharged his weapon, missing his target. The second student put his hands up and pleaded with Hawkins to not shoot him. The gunman then allowed the two students to leave.

At that point, Moore charged at the shooter and tackled him. The weapon was removed from the shooter's hand, after the principal was shot in the leg. Moore and the school's assistant principal lay on top of Hawkins until authorities

arrived.

Later, Moore said, "I don't know what I was thinking." In an interview on "CBS Mornings," he recounted, "I was just running to get to whatever was going on." Officials said that his heroism was the reason that no one else at the school was injured, and that the suspect was arrested.

"I think it was just instinct," Moore said of his actions. "You know, in 37 years, you go through trainings and drills and what you should do. That all goes out the window." Glad that it worked out the way it did, Moore added, "I think God's hand was on all of us, but I can't explain why it happened the way it did."

Moore was later crowned prom king and dubbed "our king" at a school dance. In a video obtained by NBC News, students can be seen cheering and high-fiving the principal. "It doesn't surprise me the actions that he took, but it is amazing," said Police Chief May. "There's not a doubt in my mind that he saved kids' lives."

In his own statement, Moore expressed his "gratitude for the outpouring of love and support" that he had received. "This support is the reason I am healthy and recovering today."

More on this story can be found at these links:

[Newly Released Surveillance Video Shows Oklahoma High School Principal Tackling Gunman. CBS News](#)

[Heroic Principal Says Tackling Gunman Was 'Just Instinct' And 'God's Hand Was on All of Us.' CBS News](#)

[Heroic Principal Speaks For The First Time After Tackling School Shooter: 'God's Hand Was on All of Us.' The Independent](#)

[High School Principal Crowned Prom King After Stopping Gunman. YouTube](#)

Applying the News Story

While Principal Kirk Moore felt that "God's hand was on all of us" when a gunman entered Pauls Valley High School, the survivor of last year's Air India crash might feel differently (see "Air India Jet Crash Has Sole Survivor," *The Wired Word*, June 22, 2025). In that case, did God permit the person in one airline seat to live, but allow the person in the next seat to die? Use this story of Moore's heroism as an opportunity to discuss how God is involved -- or not involved -- in any kind of catastrophe.

The Big Questions

1. When, if ever, have you faced a crisis and felt God's hand? Describe the experience.
2. How is God present in the courage of Principal Moore, and in the response of the people of his school and community? Would this still be true if a number of students and staff had lost their lives? Why or why not?
3. Where do you see God's choices in matters of life and death, if anywhere? How is God involved in

who lives and who dies, if at all?

4. How does your church community respond to catastrophe? When have church members acted as the hands and feet of Jesus in the world?

5. What signs of God's presence and power do you expect to see in a time of crisis? How is your faith impacted when your expectations are not met?

Confronting the News With Scripture and Hope

Here are some Bible verses to guide your discussion:

1 Samuel 1:10-11

[Hannah] was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. She made this vow: "O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head." (For context, read [1 Samuel 1:1-28](#).)

In the first book of Samuel, Hannah and her husband Elkanah discovered that pregnancy does not always come easily. Like so many couples, they struggled with infertility. It is easy to understand why Hannah, presenting herself before God in the temple at Shiloh, "was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly."

Wanting a baby very badly, Hannah made a promise to God: if only [you] "give to your servant a male child,

then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death." She made a deal with God, promising to show gratitude by giving the child to God. Hannah had a son, whom she named Samuel, which means "I have asked him of the LORD" (v. 20). She turned him over to Eli the priest, and Samuel grew up to become one of the most influential leaders of the people of Israel.

But what about the deal that Hannah made with God? She had grown tired of waiting, so she asked God to give her a boy so that she could offer him to God. It was a classic quid pro quo, a favor for a favor. Dealing with God is not a transaction, however, like swiping a credit card in a vending machine. The gift of a child does not magically appear when a desperate mother promises to give the baby to God.

The power of prayer is that it changes the people who pray, making them more peaceful and accepting and connected to God. Not everyone is able to have a child, but childlessness is not a barrier to living a full and faithful life, with deep connections to God and other people. In the end, our prayers are answered when God's will is done, not when our dreams come true.

When we are dealing with God, the greatest answer to prayer is that we will be aligned with God's will, linked to God and to each other in harmonious relationships. People who ask for such connections will always be heard by God and

answered.

Questions: When, if ever, have you made a deal with God in a time of crisis? What was the result, and how were you changed by it? In your experience, how does God answer prayer and align you with his will?

Isaiah 45:7

I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe; I the LORD do all these things. (For context, read [Isaiah 45:1-7](#).)

In chapter 45 of the book of the prophet Isaiah, God spoke through the prophet to Cyrus, the pagan king of Persia. He called Cyrus "his anointed," which is literally "his messiah," a term used for kings in the house and lineage of David. God was using Cyrus "to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their robes" (v. 1).

God wanted Cyrus to conquer Babylon, release the Jewish captives, and enable the rebuilding of Jerusalem. In a time of crisis, God acted in a surprising way to bring his people home from exile, ending the greatest catastrophe in Israelite history. This divine action was for "the sake of my servant Jacob and Israel my chosen" (v. 4).

Verse 7 is often cited in support of the claim that God causes evil: "I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe." The word translated as "evil" or "woe," however, can also mean "calamity" or "disaster." Isaiah wants to assert that nothing is as powerful as God, and

that God can "do all these things."

"I get the point that nothing that God does is wrong," says TWW Team Member Mark Rouleau. "He is the definition and full measure of truth, love, etc.; and yet what we deem as humans as 'evil' still exists." The relationship between God and evil-calamity-disaster is very difficult to define.

Questions: How would you describe the connection between God and evil, woe, calamity and disaster? When have you seen a perfect God working through imperfect people, such as King Cyrus? When have you had an experience of God bringing good out of evil? Be specific.

Luke 13:4-5

Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them -- do you think that they were worse offenders than all the other people living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish just as they did. (For context, read [Luke 13:1-5](#).)

When we see other people in distress, we can be tempted to focus on what they did -- if anything -- to cause their problems. But Jesus makes clear that the eighteen who died in the collapse of the tower of Siloam were not "worse offenders than all the other people living in Jerusalem." Nor were the Galileans killed by Pilate "worse sinners than all other Galileans" (v. 2).

Jesus wants us to see that catastrophes are not always

punishment for sins or offenses. Sometimes they are reminders that life is fragile, and that we need to take a look at ourselves and make some changes. "Jesus' words here serve as a reminder to us," says TWW Consultant James Gruetzner. "We are not better than those we have compassion or pity for, and we are equally in need of God's forgiveness and grace."

The book of Job makes the point that suffering is no sign that the sufferer has sinned. It was a countercultural point then and is today, too.

Questions: Why is it important for us to resist making a link between calamities and human sinfulness? What are some ways that God can use catastrophes to remind us of our own need for grace and forgiveness?

Revelation 6:9-11

When he broke the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given; they cried out with a loud voice, "Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed. (No context needed.)

The sixth chapter of the book of Revelation tells of the opening of seals on a scroll held by Jesus, the

Lamb of God. When the first four seals are opened, riders on horses appear -- the so-called "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." These riders represent the reality of destruction in the world, the logical consequence of conquest, warfare and famine. Their appearance raises the question of why a merciful God would allow suffering and affliction.

The very same question is raised by the souls of the martyrs buried under the altar, as the fifth seal is opened: "how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" Since no one likes justice to be delayed, this question continues to resonate with us today. But Revelation reports that the faithful martyrs are told to rest and wait a little longer, until their fellow servants and brothers and sisters -- who were about to be killed as they were -- "had been killed." The martyrs are forced to wait for justice, while additional believers die.

Perhaps God is saying that conquest, warfare and famine will continue to cause destruction until we learn the ways of peace and generosity. Innocent people will die in the streets until we begin to see every person as a precious child of God. Even the deaths of martyrs have positive consequences, in that their sacrifices can inspire others to change their hearts and lives. God allows time for people to make the right choice, even if a delay in justice causes hardship for righteous people of faith.

Questions: Why do you think God

allows suffering and affliction in the world? What positive things can happen while people are experiencing hardship? What actions should your church be taking while it waits for divine justice?

For Further Discussion

1. "My wife and I were catching up on episodes of 'George and Mandy's First Marriage,'" writes TWW Team Member Frank Ramirez. "At one point the local pastor crows that God has answered their prayers, and Mandy skeptically wonders why God would answer their prayer rather than the innumerable prayers God receives." People offer prayers in many catastrophes, and not all such situations have happy endings. How do you define an answered prayer? Can prayers be answered, even when the outcome is injury or loss of life? If not all prayers are answered, how does God decide what prayers to answer?

2. In his first letter, John writes that "God is light and in him there is no darkness at all" (1:5). Light speaks to God's purity, truth and love, and it is the opposite of the darkness connected to impurity, falsehood and hatred. If God is light, where can he be seen in the darkness of catastrophe? Where have you seen signs of God's light when you have been in a dark personal situation?

3. TWW Team Member Bill Tammeus offers this painful personal reflection: "When I think about God saving this or that person versus saving someone we want saved, I inevitably

go to the murder of my brilliant nephew on 9/11, almost 25 years ago. Why did KSM, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind of those terrorist attacks, survive even until today? Why was the fabulous Karleton D.B. Fyfe snuffed out in a flash and a crash? To attribute such injustice (my term) to God is both ridiculous and blasphemy. The reality is that the old theodicy question of why there is evil in the world if God is good still has no answer that satisfies everyone. Simplistic answers are, in my view, a rejection of the inscrutability and mystery of God, about whom all we really need to know for eternal reasons is that God loves us and will not let us go." Discuss.

4. After the shooter was subdued in Pauls Valley High School, Police Chief Don May said, "We're a population of 6,200 people. Good kids, good community. Certainly don't expect these type of situations to happen in your town." What would you do if such violence erupted in your town? What would you want your congregation to do? How can you intervene in the lives of young people and their families in order to reduce the likelihood of such violence?

Responding to the News

Look for signs of the hand of God in every situation you face in the week to come. Pray that you will be aligned with God's will, in times of joy and times of crisis. Trust that God can be active in surprising ways, even in

times of pain and hardship, always working to bring people closer to him.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you for being with us, even as we face crises and catastrophes. As our crucified and risen Savior, you have experienced the depths of human pain and you are now leading us to the heights of eternal life. Help us to trust that nothing in all creation can separate us from your power and your love.

Amen.