

WHEN DARKNESS MEETS THE LIGHT

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“Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.” — John 3:20–21

Yesterday, Kentucky was reminded in a heartbreaking way that we live in a world where darkness is real. Kentucky State Trooper Hayden Phillips was killed in the line of duty while serving on I-65 in Warren County. He was only 30 years old—a husband, a father of three, a son, a friend, and a trooper who had chosen to put on a uniform and stand between others and danger.

Today, there is an empty place at a family table. There are children trying to understand why Dad isn't coming home. There is a wife facing a future she never imagined. There are parents, brothers, sisters, friends, fellow troopers, and an entire law-enforcement family trying to process a loss that came without warning. And there is a Commonwealth of Kentucky grieving with them. This is not simply a news story. These are real people carrying real grief.

John 3 reminds us that darkness and light are not the same. Evil hides in darkness, but God calls us into the light. And today, perhaps more than ever, we need to remember where the Light is. Jesus.

Our family feels this loss in a particularly personal way because we love our very own Kentucky State Trooper. We know the pride that comes with seeing someone we love put on that uniform, answer the call, and willingly serve others. We know that across our community, across communities, across our state and across America family's awaits at home, praying for their safe return. That makes yesterday's tragedy hit differently. It reminds us that behind every badge is a person. Behind every uniform is a family. And behind every Kentucky State Trooper is someone who has chosen a difficult path of service and sacrifice. Jesus never promised us a world without suffering. He never told us that evil would disappear before He returns. But He did promise that darkness would never have the final word.

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” — John 1:5

There are moments when grief feels so heavy that we don't have adequate words. We don't need them. God understands the tears we cannot explain.

“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” — Psalm 34:18

So today we pray for the Phillips family—not with shallow words or easy answers, but with hearts bowed before a God who knows their pain completely. We pray for Hayden's wife and children. We pray for his parents and extended family. We pray for the Kentucky State Police troopers who served beside him and now must return to the road carrying an empty place among them. We pray for every officer who puts on a badge today knowing that his or her family may one day receive a knock on the

door that no family ever wants. And we pray for Kentucky! May this tragedy remind us not only of the darkness that exists in our world, but of our responsibility to walk in the Light.

Jesus said:

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." — John 8:12

We cannot undo yesterday. We cannot answer every question. We cannot take away the pain from a wife who lost her husband or children who lost their father. But we can bring our grief to Jesus. We can bring our questions to Jesus. We can bring our broken hearts to Jesus. And we can trust that the same Savior who walked toward the suffering of others still walks with those who are suffering today.

"Come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." — Hebrews 4:16

That verse means something different when the heart is broken. We don't have to clean ourselves up before coming to God. We don't have to understand everything before coming to Him. We simply come. And perhaps today, that is what Kentucky needs to do. Come to Jesus. Come with our grief. Come with our anger. Come with our questions. Come with our tears. Come with our prayers for the Phillips family. And come remembering that evil may take a life, but evil cannot take the Light of Christ.

"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts..." — 2 Corinthians 4:6

Trooper Phillips gave his life serving others. Today, may we honor his memory by doing something darkness cannot understand: Love one another. Pray for one another. Stand together. Serve one another. And most of all, point one another to Jesus Christ. Because when the world grows dark, we don't need more darkness. We need the Light. And His name is Jesus.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." — John 1:5

Lord Jesus, surround the Phillips family with Your presence. Hold his wife and children close. Strengthen his parents and loved ones. Comfort his brothers and sisters in the Kentucky State Police. Protect every trooper who continues to serve. And in the midst of our grief, help us lift our eyes toward You—the Light that darkness cannot overcome. Amen.

I think that personal sentence adds something important: this isn't distant grief for your family—you have someone you love wearing that badge. It gives the prayer for Kentucky's troopers a very genuine, personal weight.

With a heavy heart, yet with a heart filled by God's grace, the hope of a Resurrected Savior, a soon, very soon place of forever rest...

With humble respect