



Dear Neighbour,

The 21st September 2013 is a day the whole world will remember with great sadness. Terrorists converged on the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya with the cold-blooded intention of murdering innocent people and spreading fear to onlookers. Families, young couples planning on marriage, and children taking part in a cooking competition, became their victims. The world watched in horror as the four-day siege progressed, knowing that it could be happening to them at their local shopping mall. It was a reminder of the 9/11 attack on Americans and how it impacted the world. At times like this, the world becomes a global village and those suffering become our brothers and sisters, fellow human beings, people just like us. However, in the midst of this tragedy God revealed the hope of mankind to me...

With a heavy heart I followed all the news reports, when suddenly I heard a woman testifying on Sky News. She was 28 year-old radio presenter, Sneha Kothari Mashru, who had miraculously survived the attack. I will paraphrase her story: "I lay on the floor next to a teenager. I realised that he was shot, because he was bleeding and breathing heavily. His phone was full of blood and I tried to switch it off in case it alerted the attackers. Suddenly his breathing stopped and I knew that he had died. I smeared myself with his blood, all over my arms, to fool the terrorists

into thinking that I was dead and I pulled my hair over my face.” At the end of the interview she said something that touched my heart, “I would still love to know who he is, because his blood saved me”.

In that moment, I knew that Jesus had been at the Westgate Shopping Mall. Every Christian who heard her testimony would have connected the dots and understood that Jesus was revealing Himself to the world through this young woman’s testimony. If the blood of Jesus Christ is applied “by faith” to the life of any human being, their lives are saved. Sneha understood that the teenager who shed his blood and died, was the reason she was alive and she was testifying to the world of her miraculous experience. I pray that she does learn who the young man was, as it will bring comfort to his grieving family. However, of much greater significance, I pray that she is given the opportunity to hear the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, so that she can understand the spiritual significance of what happened to her that day.

When tragedies occur, it is common to hear people ask, “Where is God in all of this?” I hope that I have answered your question. Jesus is to be found in the *centre* of every tragedy. Amongst the mangled mess of the steel girders of 9/11 a photographer showed the world the image of the cross rising out of the ashes. There is no hope for the world outside of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not come to this world to condemn people, but to save them by shedding his blood on the cross of Calvary. Have you put your hope in Jesus? Have you “by faith” recognised that His blood was shed so that your sins could be forgiven?’ Like Sneha, allow Christ’s blood to save your life.

Because of God's wonderful kindness, Jesus died for everyone. And now that Jesus has suffered and died, he is crowned with glory and honour! Everything belongs to God, and all things were created by his power. So God did the right thing when he made Jesus perfect by suffering, as Jesus

led many of God's children to be saved and to share in his glory. Jesus and the people he makes holy all belong to the same family. That is why he isn't ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters... We are people of flesh and blood.

That is why Jesus became one of us. He died to destroy the devil, who had power over death. But he also died to rescue all of us who live each day in fear of dying. Jesus clearly did not come to help angels, but he did come to help Abraham's descendants. He had to be one of us, so that he could serve God as our merciful and faithful high priest and sacrifice himself for the forgiveness of our sins.

(Hebrews 2:10-17 Contemporary English Version)

x Libby