

First Responders 2 – Awareness: Bystander effect

Welcome back to Redemption Church. Hello online peeps. Hello in the room peeps. My name is Chris Fluitt and we are in the 2nd week of our First Responders Message Series.

First Responder Title

In the 1st week we told you that a First Responder is someone designated or trained to respond to an emergency. God is a first responder and He has called us all to be first responders. And we live in a world that is overcome with emergencies. It is time for the people of God to respond.

And last week our Care Pastor, Marshal Blessing told us to be prepared for an emergency by the power of the Spirit.

Last week we had a powerful time of talking to God at the end of service. Let's purpose in our hearts to have another powerful time at the close of this message today.

Today I want to talk about Awareness.

Awareness

In Moscow, Russia a waterpark named Transvaal had a terrible accident. The roof of the main building collapsed killing 28 people in 2004.

In 1984 a six flags amusement park had a haunted castle attraction. A cigarette lighter ignited the flammable foam rubber walls and 8 people lost their life.

In Karun Australia, in the year 2000 a train scaling a mountain caught fire. 12 people survived and 155 people perished.

In Orkney, South Africa, a train crashed through a safety barrier. Only a few were injured on the train. There were no deaths on the train, but the train crashed into a nearby elevator that was carrying 104 gold miners. All the miners lost their lives in 1995.

In 1626 something happened, no one is sure, that caused the Wanggongchang Explosion in Beijing, China. The Wanggongchang Gunpowder Factory exploded and destroyed part of the city and killed 20,000 people.

In 1947, in Texas City, Texas many people died in the Texas City Disaster. It was the deadliest industrial accident in U.S. history, and one of history's largest non-nuclear explosions. A mid-morning fire started on board the French-registered vessel SS Grandcamp (docked in the port), and detonated

her cargo of approximately 2,200 tons of ammonium nitrate. This started a chain-reaction of additional fires and explosions in other ships and nearby oil-storage facilities. The events killed a total of at least 581 people, including all but one member of the Texas City fire department.

You probably know of the Titanic sinking in 1912. 1,514 people lost their life in that tragedy. But did you know that the Titanic is only the 7th deadliest non-military maritime accidents. There are 6 more deadly accidents. The most horrific being the 1987 sinking of the Dona Paz in 1987. 4,400 passengers lost their lives when the Philippine liner collided with an oil tanker.

In 1986 the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded upon take off. 7 people lost their life. In 2003 the Space shuttle Columbia exploded upon reentry and 7 people were lost.

These are just a few of the tragic events in human history that could have been avoided if only someone had been aware of the problem beforehand.

Awareness can make us aware of the problem before it is a problem.

Everyone knows it is a problem after the explosion and loss of life. What we need is an awareness that calls attention to the problem so that it can be solved or at least minimized before the tragic event.

Problems that go un-noticed become tragedies.

For this reason you have probably heard this phrase.

See something say something

You have probably heard this slogan or seen it in a commercial or signage. It is posted at schools, government buildings, the bus stop or subway..

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has designated September 25th as “see something say something” national awareness day.

See something say something is an open invitation to be a first responder.

You may not be trained to take down someone who has malicious intent to hurt people... but if you noticed them you could call someone who is trained to take them down. You would save lives by simply being aware.

You may not be trained to fight a fire, but if you were aware enough to spot a potential fire hazard you could actually stop a fire before it started.

You may not be trained to use the paddles of a defibrillator, but with awareness your phone call can get an EMT on the scene to save a life.

With awareness you are actually a PRE-Responder... PRE-SPONDER... not a real word but I am going to go for it.

Presponder

The World doesn't just need first responders who show up after the tragedy has started. The World needs people to respond before the tragedy starts.

God has called you to act before the tragedy occurs.

In Acts 11 a group of Christians in a city called Antioch received a word from God. God spoke to that group of believers through prophecy. God told them that Jerusalem was going to experience a famine and Antioch became PRESONDERS. They took up an offering and sent their gift to Jerusalem BEFORE the famine occurred.

God let us be aware like Antioch. Lord make us aware of the tragedy before it occurs. Church let us be willing to act! See something say something. See something DO SOMETHING.

If we aren't aware then the best we can ever do is try to respond after the tragedy. Let's be aware.

Awareness

The Word of God calls for us to be aware.

1 Peter 5:8 (NIV2011) Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Be alert! Be sober minded! Do not be distracted. Be focused. Why... because there is an enemy looking to devour someone. If you are alert you could be a PRESONDER and save someone from the enemy before the tragedy occurs.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14 (NIV2011) Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.

Be on your guard! This means you are looking and expecting an adversary.

Stand firm in the faith. When the opportunity to be a 1st responder occurs you need to already be standing in faith. When your loved one gets the bad report from the doctor is not the time to figure out if you believe in healing... you will never be ready to respond. STAND FIRM IN FAITH before the problem arrives. Then you will be able to be courageous and strong in response.

Watchman

In your Old Testament there is a theme of awareness and readiness called the Watchman. The “watchman on the wall.” Someone was designated to sit upon the high walls of a city and watch for enemies... watch for problems. The watchman was to be alert and then alert others of a problem.

Isaiah 62:6 (NIV2011) I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the Lord, give yourselves no rest,

We are to be watchmen watching over our families, neighborhood, community, city... “You who call on the name of the Lord...” that is you and me Church... Give yourself no rest! Our awareness needs to be continual.

Ezekiel 33:2 (NIV2011) “Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman,

Ezekiel 33:7 (NIV2011) “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me.

Not only are we supposed to watch... we are supposed to speak! See Something Say Something!

We must watch and be aware... and then we must hear the word of God and then speak out that warning. God says give them warning from me. This gets real serious!

Ezekiel 33:8 (NIV2011) When I say to the wicked, ‘You wicked person, you will surely die,’ and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood.

Ezekiel 33:9 (NIV2011) But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved.

It is not enough to see something... You must say something. Redemption Church, God will hold us accountable if we do not speak up. It says if we do not speak, the wicked person dies and are accountable for their blood.

This is serious. Come on PRESONDERS. Come one Watchman on the wall. We must see something and say something.

See something Say Something

On August 3, 2019, a young man entered a Walmart in El Paso Tx. The young man opened fire on innocent people with a motive that was evil and hateful. 22 were killed and 24 more were injured. I am not here to talk about guns or immigration... I am here today to talk about something you may find more personal.

Shortly after this young man entered the El Paso Walmart, first responders were called and on their way. I am thankful for the first responders, but we needed someone to respond sooner.

We need presponders... We need someone to respond BEFORE the tragedy.

The young 21 year old man was from Allen, Tx. A few miles from here. Redemption Church, this man was living in our back yard...

I take this personally. Believers in Jesus Christ we were called to pre-respond.

- Before he ever drove from the Metroplex to West Texas...
- Before he ever gassed up his car...
- Before he ever bought the weapon...
- Before he ever started down the dark road of hate...
- Before he started to feel isolated and alone...

Someone needed to reach him before...

If only someone would have reached him...

if only there was a church that would have reached him and brought him into a beautiful community...

if only there was a young person who would have reached him with their personal testimony while they walked the hallways of school...

if only there was a neighbor who felt the drawing of God to share the gospel...

if only a coworker would have reached him with the truth that God loves him...

if only there was a family member that would have prayed with him...

Redemption Church it was our job to reach that young man.

Redemption Church it is our job to reach your friends and family... your coworkers and fellow students... your neighbors... to reach all of this area...

Have we forgotten? Are we aware? Is there a watchman on the wall?

The Church of Jesus Christ can stop the emergency before it is an emergency!

Christian, you can heal depression before it becomes suicide.

Christian, you can bring reconciliation before the divorce.

Christian, you can cloth and feed the homeless girl before so that she never has to become a prostitute.

Christian, you are able to impact the war torn towns in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Columbia before the refugees make the dangerous trek to our border.

Christian, you can befriend someone who is struggling with faith before they lose their faith.

Christian, we are called to save people from tragedy and bring them into the testimony of God's amazing Grace!

Christian, people are on their way to a place called hell. A soul in hell is the worst tragedy ever. You could save someone before they step into eternity.s

Are we aware?

See something Say Something

Sometimes we are aware but remain silent. When we remain silent we become accountable for their blood.

Kitty Genovese

This is Kitty Genovese. She died a very terrible death. In the early hours of March 13, 1964, 28-year-old Kitty Genovese was stabbed outside her apartment in the Queens borough of New York City. Right in the heart of the most populated American city, Kitty was attacked. She cried out for help. She screamed that she had been stabbed. The attacker ran away briefly out of fear that her cry would bring help... She crawled over to a locked apartment building door and banged and screamed for someone to let her in. When Kitty's attacker noticed that help was not coming, he returned and stabbed Kitty 7 more times, raped her, and stole \$49 out of her purse. For 30 minutes Kitty screamed for help and fought for her life.

There were 38 witnesses. No one called the police. All 38 witnesses thought that someone else would call the police. There was one attacker, but that attacker is not the only one responsible for the death of Kitty Genovese. All 38 witnesses are accountable.

38 witnesses, but zero first responders.

Redemption Church, I want us to shift our focus away from how many people attend our church and shift our focus toward how many first responders do we have.

The truth is that we could have mega church numbers but have micro numbers of first responders.

It is not enough to see something... we must also say something... do something.

38 witnesses to the attack on Kitty Genovese , but zero first responders. This is what psychology calls the bystander syndrome (bystander apathy).

Bystander syndrome

Bystander syndrome is a social psychological claim that individuals are less likely to offer help to a victim when other people are present; the greater the number of bystanders, the less likely it is that one of them will help.

Instead of responding to the emergency, the group of bystanders looks around to see if someone else will do something... or they walk off assuming that someone else will respond to the emergency.

Someone else will do it... We do this all the time..

- We hear stats and figures about an emergency. We are even moved in our heart, but we remain a bystander and not a responder.
- We drive past people who are need of help, because surely someone else will help.
- We see someone on social media ask for help but we keep scrolling because someone else will likely help.
- We hear about an urgent need in our community or on the other side of the world... we understand the need... we see the importance... we feel the goose bumps... there are a lot of witnesses to the need but few responders.
- We, your church, have stood here and asked for help... please help us minister to children, help us host a small group meeting, we need greeters, people to work in the tech booth, we need people to pray, we need people to give, we need your help, we need you to invite your friends... but the bystander syndrome says that the more people witness the need means that there will be few responders.

Are you a bystander or a responder?

Musician

You are called to do great things.

You are called to bring hope to the hopeless.

You are called pray for people and see them recover.

You are called to open up your Bible and share what it says and see the people you share it with come into a relationship with Jesus.

You are called to serve.

You are called to be a friend.

There is no end to the great things God is calling you into...

Are you aware of your calling? Yes... Then you ought to come pray about it today... No... then you ought to come pray...

Are you aware of the emergency? Yes... then you ought to come pray.... No... Then you really need to pray for God to open your eyes and heart...

Have you been a bystander? Yes? Then you ought to come repent!