

## **Trauma** by Paul Randolph

Driving home from vacation, a couple's car is slammed by a drunk driver. They wake up in an intensive care unit.

A government car pulls up to the home of a soldier killed in battle. An army chaplain knocks at his parents' door.

A family is given thirty minutes to evacuate before a tornado strikes. When they return, their home is a total loss.

A firefighter pulls a child from a bedroom in flames, only to find out that he was a few moments too late.

A suicidal gunman takes over a small Amish schoolhouse and kills five young girls.

These are all events that cause great stress and may lead to debilitating responses that psychologists term "post-traumatic stress." Trauma and our response to it are as much God's concern as any other problem we face. Many of the ways we respond to stress are physical and mental in nature, yet they are no less spiritual than a person's crisis of faith. God created us as physical beings, and there is a strong connection between the heart (or spirit) and the body. God calls us to minister to a person's bodily reactions to problems. This honors the God who created us as physical beings.

Consider Jesus' response to the boy with epileptic seizures in Mark 9:14-29. Whenever I preached on this incident, I tended to focus on the boy's demon possession, and the fact that Jesus brought healing through the power of prayer. But notice how much attention Scripture pays to the physical symptoms this boy displayed: violent convulsions, foaming at the mouth, seizures, gnashing of his teeth, a rigid body. Imagine the stress experienced by this child and his parents. The Bible highlights the fact that Jesus not only addresses the spiritual issues in this boy's life, he also brings obvious physical healing. Notice also the undeniable spirit-body connection.

Christ's concern for the whole person is seen throughout the Gospels. In Mark 5:21-43 Jesus is asked to come to the home of a dying girl. He is followed by a large crowd, which includes a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. Imagine the physical, social, and emotional toll this disease has taken in her life. In desperation, she comes up behind Jesus to touch his clothes and is healed immediately. Jesus begins speaking with her and says, among other things, "Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." Jesus addresses her emotional and mental state by telling her to go in peace, and her physical condition by ending her suffering. All this on the way to raising a child from the dead!

In Matthew 9:35-39, Jesus is traveling from town to town, teaching and healing people of every disease. He also shows his deep concern for the people's emotional, mental, and spiritual condition. Matthew tells us that Jesus is moved with compassion, seeing the people as "distressed, downcast, like sheep without a shepherd." God is concerned with our entire being because he made us spiritual *and* physical beings. As believers, we must also address both if we are to minister to the whole person.

It has been estimated that over eighty percent of all Americans will be exposed to a traumatic event at some point in their lives. About ten percent will not only experience the stress that typically follows a traumatic event, but will also develop the more extreme distress reactions that have been labeled "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD). Among police officers, ten to

fifteen percent will experience PTSD; among firefighters, the rates are ten to thirty percent. The Veterans Administration has found that sixteen percent of Vietnam veterans experience PTSD. The U.S. Center for Mental Health Services estimated that 1.5 million New York City residents needed counseling as a result of 9/11. In a 2001 study by Wee and Myers, over fifty percent of disaster workers can expect to develop significant post-traumatic distress. Following the Sarin gas attack in Tokyo, far more Tokyo residents suffered psychological symptoms than those who were physically affected.

I have had the opportunity to work with police officers, firefighters, and their families in very difficult and stressful situations. In my twenty-plus years as a pastor, I have served as a chaplain for the Philadelphia police department and two volunteer fire companies, and as a member of a county critical incident response team. If my experiences riding in police cars and wearing turn-out gear on the fire ground have taught me anything, it is that God cares about people who are dealing with traumatic events and the personal fallout that can result.

As Christians, we don't always know what to do with traumatic stress. At first reading, the Bible doesn't seem to address it. Most theologians have never sat in an intensive care unit with the family of a mortally wounded police officer or assisted firefighters and EMTs with an auto extrication. Our inexperience leads us to defer to secular models about traumatic stress. Or we think that the chances of having to deal with it are so remote, there is no point in worrying about it. But if we have learned anything from Virginia Tech, Columbine, 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina, it is that traumatic events can happen anywhere, anytime. Are you prepared?

If you have faced a traumatic event yourself, this booklet will offer insight on how to deal with it. If a friend or loved one is dealing with a traumatic event and its aftermath, I hope that what you read here will help you to help your friend.

### **What Is Post-Traumatic Stress?**

The reaction labeled Post-Traumatic Stress is a normal survival response: a person is having *a normal response to a very abnormal situation*. It is a response triggered by a traumatic or tragic event, often likened to our “fight or flight” instinct. You might also think of it as the emotional aftershocks a person experiences after the first adrenaline rush, as he realizes the true impact of the situation. These aftershocks may appear immediately after the event, or a few hours or days later. In some cases, they come weeks or months later. This stress reaction may last a few days to a few months, depending on the severity of the event. Psychologists define it as an acute response to a trauma, disaster, or other serious incident. Your sense of personal and emotional balance is disrupted,<sup>1</sup> your usual means of coping don't work, and you show signs of significant distress, impairment, or dysfunction. (Impairment means you do something with greater difficulty; dysfunction means you cannot function at all in a particular area.)

In the field of trauma care, certain events are known as particularly difficult for people to handle and likely to produce a significant stress response. These are called the “Terrible Ten” (in no particular order):

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to express his indebtedness to Jeffrey Mitchell, Ph.D., and George Everly, Jr., Ph.D. for their groundbreaking work in the area of traumatic stress. For more information, consult their works, *Critical Incident Stress Management: Group Crisis Intervention, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Revised* (Ellicott City, MD: International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, 2003) and *Critical Incident Stress Management: Individual Crisis Intervention and Peer Support, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Ellicott City, MD: International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, 2003). You may also find information at [www.icisf.org](http://www.icisf.org).

Suicide of a family member, friend, or colleague  
Death at workplace (in military and emergency services, this is called a line of duty death)  
Serious workplace or line of duty injury  
Disaster or multi-casualty incident  
Police shooting, accidental killing or wounding of an innocent person, events with extreme threats to participants  
Significant events involving harm/potential harm to children  
Prolonged incidents, especially involving a loss  
Events in which the victims are related to you  
Events with excessive media interest  
Any event capable of causing emotional distress to those exposed to it.

You can count on having a stress reaction of some kind with “Terrible Ten” incidents.

### **Typical Reactions to Traumatic Events**

The typical reactions people experience can be divided into five categories:

- What you think
- How you feel emotionally
- What behaviors you exhibit
- How you feel physically
- How you respond spiritually

Tragic events will affect the way you think and look at the world. Reactions may include an inability to concentrate or increased difficulty in making decisions. You may experience guilt and a preoccupation with the traumatic event itself. Heightened or lowered awareness of your surroundings, forgetfulness, and poor abstract thinking may also be experienced. More severe reactions include paranoid thoughts, thoughts about killing yourself or someone else, recurring nightmares, hallucinations, and delusions. Unwarranted guilt can become all-consuming. You may experience “survivor’s guilt,” where you feel guilty that you survived or were not as seriously injured as others were. You may feel that you could have prevented the incident or done more to help (the “if only”).

Other emotions may also intensify. Depending on the severity of the trauma and the person involved, there can be an increased level of anxiety, including anxiety about things you never worried about before. Apprehension, agitation, denial, anger, and irritability are also common reactions. The person can feel fear and even develop a phobia about things that were never issues before. Grief is a very common and normal reaction, especially with the loss of someone close. More extreme forms of emotional distress may include panic attacks, infantile emotional reactions in adults, and feelings that just seem overwhelming. A person may also seem disconnected from his or her emotions, with a persistent “flat” affect. Depression may get to the point where it keeps you from doing simple daily tasks. Some severely depressed people find it difficult to get out of bed or dressed for the day.

A person’s response to trauma will often lead to changes in behavior. This may involve a change in your normal level of activity, withdrawal, inability to rest, pacing, erratic movements, and an intensified startle reflex. Alcohol consumption is one of the most common behavioral

responses and always impedes recovery. Behavioral changes may also include changes in appetite or sexual function, suspiciousness, anti-social acts, and a hyper-alertness to one's environment.

Physical responses to trauma can be intense. They can include fatigue, weakness, headaches, hyperventilation, muscle spasms, indigestion, nausea, and vomiting. You may also experience cold sweats, muscle spasms and an increase or decrease in your heart rate. More severe physical symptoms may include chest pain, recurrent dizziness, seizures, recurrent headaches, and blood in vomit, urine, stool, or sputum. Collapse or loss of consciousness can also occur.

You may experience a number of negative reactions in your spiritual life as well. You may undergo a crisis of faith in which you become angry at God, pull away from your church, or experience a sense of abandonment by God. You may lose your desire to pray, or find that it doesn't comfort you when you do. You may feel that life is meaningless, or at least that it isn't fair or just. You may also struggle to believe in God's grace and forgiveness. More severe spiritual reactions can include religious obsessions or compulsions, religious hallucinations or delusions, or a withdrawal from your religious faith altogether.

### **What About Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?**

Psychologists typically label more intense stress reactions as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. How is this response different from a more normal response to a traumatic event? The basic answer relates to the length of time a person experiences the stress response and its intensity. The label of PTSD is given when the normal techniques used to lessen the impact of the trauma do not work; your symptoms last more than thirty days, and/or your symptoms seem to get worse as your ability to function declines. Deepening depression, intrusive memories, and increasing stress can also point to PTSD. The highest level of PTSD reactions can include dissociation or multiple personality, amnesia, persistent sleep disturbance, exaggerated startle response and evidence of seizures. The key issues are the frequency and severity of these symptoms. If you see that a friend or a loved one is dealing with this level of distress, it is important to contact a counselor or physician as soon as possible. Remember, these are physical responses to a traumatic event. They do not automatically indicate sin or moral and spiritual failure. The person is in need of compassionate spiritual care.

Some factors can predispose a person to more extreme stress levels. The first is the "snowball effect." When a person experiences stress reactions she never experienced before the trauma (like sleeplessness or an exaggerated startle response), the reactions themselves can be so upsetting to the person that her reaction to her reactions increases the overall stress. A second factor is a personal identification with the event. Perhaps the traumatic event happened in your neighborhood or workplace with people you know and care about; perhaps it took place in your hometown. A third factor is the violation of one or more of your core beliefs by the trauma. Perhaps you always believed that life should be fair, that children shouldn't be hurt, and that the "good guys win and the bad guys lose." Now something has come along to challenge that.

During a trip to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, I found that many people's expectations of life were shattered. People lost their homes and possessions; they were separated from friends and neighbors, and often had no job to return to even when they could go home. One year after Katrina hit, many people were still waiting for insurance settlements and government assistance, with no guarantee that the infamous levees wouldn't break again if another serious storm hit. None of the people I met could have imagined that a year after the hurricane, they would still be waiting for help to get on with their lives. Deeply held beliefs –

your worldview – can include a belief in a just and fair world, the need to trust others, the need for a predictable and safe world, and belief in an orderly or God-ordained world. These are frequent casualties of traumatic events.

### **How Can I Lessen Trauma's Impact?**

There are several things you can do to lessen the impact of the trauma you have experienced. First, take care of yourself physically. Get plenty of rest. Give your body a chance to recover from the emotional and physical toll that trauma can take. Eat regular, healthy meals, even if you don't feel like eating, and avoid the use of alcohol or drugs. After a day or two, periods of strenuous exercise alternated with periods of relaxation may ease some of the physical reactions.

Structure your time and try to keep as busy as possible without missing your rest. Spend time with others; reach out to people who care. Use your support system. It is important to talk to people, since it is one of the most effective ways to cope with stress. Keep a journal and write about your feelings and thoughts. It is okay to do things you enjoy and that make you feel good. It is also okay to feel lousy! Keep two things in mind when it comes to decision making. It is helpful to make as many daily decisions as you can, since this will help you regain a sense of control over your life. But hold off on making any major life decisions or changes. Deciding on a new place to live, finding a new job or career, breaking up with a boyfriend/girlfriend, or quitting school is not advisable. Give yourself time to recover; get some perspective on what happened before you make such big decisions.

Most people who live through a traumatic event experience recurring thoughts, dreams, or flashbacks. These should diminish over time. Don't fight them when they occur; usually they become less painful. Seek out the support of loved ones for their comfort, reassurance, and prayer when they are more intense. For most people, these will disappear at a pace related to the intensity and severity of the traumatic incident.

For some people, however, an event is so traumatic that one or two triggers may linger for a lifetime. One survivor of the Titanic disaster eventually settled in Chicago near Wrigley Field, where the Chicago Cubs play baseball. As the Titanic was sinking, he had been able to get into a lifeboat, but he felt a lot of guilt about surviving when so many others had died. One of the most disturbing aspects of that night was the screams for help from hundreds of people floundering in the frigid water after the ship sank. The other passengers in this man's boat refused to row back to pick up any more people. Throughout his life, whenever the Cubs hit a home run and the crowd would roar, he would have a flashback to that night in the lifeboat. The crowd's cheers for the home run reminded him of the people's screams as they succumbed to the waters of the icy Atlantic. Similarly, soldiers often report flashbacks to combat experiences when they hear cars backfire or other noises that remind them of the battlefield.

Being aware that these flashbacks can occur is one way to reduce the stress of these reactions. Getting together with others who were victimized by the trauma can also be helpful. First responders to a trauma scene often find that talking about the incident with their colleagues is beneficial. Many police and fire departments mandate stress debriefings after difficult and traumatic incidents. Critical incident stress management teams are often sent to provide a confidential forum for those involved, so that they can talk through the incident and their response to it. Don't isolate yourself. Reach out to those who care about you and seek counseling if needed.

## How to Help Another Person

Maybe you are a family member or friend of someone struggling after a traumatic event. What can you do to help? First, be a good listener. Allow your loved one to share what happened and how he or she is feeling. Spend some extra time with him and let him know you are there for him. Don't offer platitudes and clichés ("It could have been worse; count your lucky stars"), or glibly quote Bible verses like Romans 8:28, Philippians 4:4 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16. As wonderful and true as those promises are, timing is important. The promises will have more impact when the person knows you have truly sought to understand the problem. I have found that what matters most is simply being there, not my words of advice. Spend ninety-five percent of your time listening and five percent talking. When you do speak, reassure the person that he is safe (if that is the case) and offer to pray for him. Keep the prayer short. Don't preach during your prayer or express criticism; simply call out to God, asking for his help and presence.

Offer your assistance even if the person doesn't ask for it, but don't force it if the person is not ready to talk. Don't tell the person you know how he feels if you haven't lived through the same kind of experience. It is much better to *ask* the person how he or she is feeling. I will often say something like, "I don't know what it's like to go through something like this. I can only imagine how difficult it must be. But I care about you and I want to know how you are doing." Listen, listen, listen.

When you offer your help, be careful that you don't overdo it. Allow the person some private time, and don't force someone to talk or do things he may not be ready to do. Don't smother the individual with attention or hover over him. Give the person some space, but stay within reach. Don't take anger or other emotions personally. Your friend or loved one may feel very conflicted or confused. He may have a shorter fuse and express more emotional intensity than you are used to seeing.

God gives us insight into how to help another person in 1 Thessalonians 5:14, where we read, "Admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men." This passage suggests that there are three types of heart conditions: unruly, fainthearted, and weak. While this verse is not intended to be a comprehensive view of the human heart, it does suggest that the wise person consider a person's heart condition. Ask yourself if your friend is unruly, fainthearted, or weak and consider the responses the verse offers.

The word for *unruly* conveys the sense of someone acting disorderly, out of step, and deviating from the prescribed order or rule. It was used in biblical times to describe a person who refused to show up for work or was slacking off. I have witnessed this response during crisis debriefings when a person refused to participate and when a person was abusive in his anger toward loved ones. The biblical response to this person is to admonish him or her. Certainly you should do so in a loving, sensitive fashion (Gal. 6:1-5). Leon Morris notes that the tone of the word *admonish* is brotherly, like a big brother expressing concern for his younger brother.<sup>2</sup> As believers we know that even though a person may be the victim of traumatic circumstances, he or she is still a sinner whose sinful heart will color how he responds.

The *fainthearted* person is discouraged and overwhelmed. He may be gripped by fear, anxiety, and worry. Here the response is to encourage. This is where you come alongside the person to comfort, console, and calm him. It never ceases to amaze me that the same firefighter who can charge into a burning building to do search and rescue can sometimes feel overwhelmed afterwards. This is the time to come alongside and provide a shoulder to lean on, a listening ear, or a word of encouragement. Many times I am told that my presence is all that was needed.

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<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), p. 166.

The *weak* person is someone who is infirm, feeble, and lacking physical strength, much as we feel after an exhausting physical activity. We are called to help this person. Assist her in doing what she cannot do for herself. Scripture uses this word to convey the idea that the weak person understands that she will not be left alone, but will be supported.<sup>3</sup>

If the person is having a difficult time functioning, help her with everyday tasks like cooking, cleaning, caring for the kids, and running errands. Don't do everything for her, because getting a person back into a routine is important after the initial shock. Encourage the individual to do things on her own, but offer to help when she feels overwhelmed.

### **What Help Does the Gospel Offer?**

Ultimately, the most significant way to help a person (beyond your simple presence) is to point them to Christ and his Word. Many of the Bible's themes hit home when we encounter trauma: fear, safety, suffering, pain, protection, and peace. We have seen that a person's worldview – the lens he or she uses to look at the world – can be shaken by a traumatic event. The person who lives without faith in God can only look at the event for what it is in itself: something horrible. But the Christian has a choice: Do I look at the event simply for what it is in itself, or do I look at it through the lens of faith in God?

If you have faith in the God of the Bible, you come to understand that God is sovereign. That is, he is in control of everything that takes place. Though God is not the source of evil, evil is not beyond his control. This means that horrible events are not meaningless and random. They can be used by God to accomplish his purpose in your life. Yes, the event was awful, perhaps unspeakably evil, but it is not the last word. This puts life in a new perspective and does not give the traumatic event more power than it deserves. During Jesus' ministry, he encountered a man who was blind from birth. The disciples asked Jesus who had sinned, the man or his parents. Jesus said neither; the man had been born blind so that God could reveal his glory (John 9:1-3). Jesus then gave him his sight. In James 1:2-18, we read that one of God's purposes in trials is to produce greater spiritual maturity in our lives.

This is a great source of hope. We are not "dust in the wind" or "random drops of water in an endless sea." Life's problems are not tragic events in a chaotic existence. God has a purpose in everything that happens, a purpose that overrules evil and despair. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for your welfare, and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope'" (NASB).

Traumatic events by their very nature take us by surprise. With all of our modern technology, people knew Hurricane Katrina was coming, yet thousands along the impact zone were caught up in its destructive power. The fact that God is sovereign means that he is never taken by surprise. He is never caught off guard. This is why the promises of God hold such power in the midst of chaos. Because God is God, nothing can thwart his power, so he is able to deliver on his promises.

Typical post-traumatic stress teaching also fails to understand the grace of God. It is by his grace and power that we can endure more than we thought we could handle. The grace of God provides the only true answer for the guilt a person may carry after a traumatic event. Even if the person bears some responsibility for what happened, he can experience God's forgiveness. God's grace also means that we are never truly alone in any trauma we may face. There is no place where we are apart from his presence. We can turn to him with our fears and anxiety,

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<sup>3</sup> See Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 where Paul speaks about how to help the weak person.

knowing that he cares and understands. Not only that, he promises to give us his peace, which surpasses all understanding.

- “Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Josh. 1:9)
- You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. (Isa. 26:3)
- Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7)

The gospel can make a tremendous difference as we respond to trauma. Though the New Testament was not written as a psychological guide to trauma and stress, it is far more – and far better. It reveals God’s plan to deal with the most significant trauma of all: our separation and alienation from God because of our sins, and all the fall-out that separation brought to our individual lives and our world. Every traumatic event has its roots in that separation from God because of our sin and rebellion. The Bible tells the story of redemption: how God sent his Son to take the punishment for our sins so that our relationship with him can be restored. What Jesus accomplished through his life, death, and resurrection gives us hope that there can be restoration after the traumas we experience.

This is the real power behind our hope for healing after trauma. **In addition, we can look** at Jesus and learn how well he understands the struggles we face. Christ was not a stranger to traumatic events. He is the ultimate example of the innocent sufferer. He can identify with our suffering in a way no therapist or group can begin to understand.

Consider the most traumatic event Jesus experienced: his betrayal, trial, and crucifixion. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to God as he awaited his betrayal, asking God if it were possible to avoid this death. His agony was so great that he actually sweat drops of blood. Yet his love for us led him to submit his will to God the Father. He allowed himself to be arrested, humiliated, tortured, and crucified, though he was not only innocent of the charges against him, he was truly sinless. None of us who face trauma today can say we are sinless.

Christ is not only the ultimate example of an innocent person facing suffering, he is also a source of help to us as sinful people who suffer. In John 16 Jesus says, “But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Jesus spoke these words to his disciples on the night he was betrayed. He was about to face the greatest trauma ever endured without the help of those he trusted most. Yet he was not alone. God the Father was with him. Because Jesus was able to overcome the world, we know we can overcome trouble as we turn to him.

In Hebrews 2:17-18, we see that suffering and temptation are linked for Jesus: “For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” Jesus was made like us *in every way*. He knows our human frailties. He was *tested and suffered*. He knows our struggles and can help those being tempted like no one else.

In Hebrews 4:15-16 we learn two additional facts: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Jesus can sympathize with us because he was tempted *in every way just as we are*. He understands and cares. For that reason, we can boldly ask God for help with the confidence that he will reach out to us with the mercy and grace we need.

Christ can enter into our suffering in a way no one else can. No one knows you like the One who made you, and he chose to experience human suffering firsthand. Many people who suffer with post-traumatic stress get angry when others assume they know how they feel. Only the person himself knows exactly how he feels! But it is different with Jesus. Christ knows intimately what it feels like to suffer, and he knows exactly how *you* feel since he is your Creator (Ps. 139). Compared to what Christ endured when he took on the sin of the world and experienced God’s wrath for that sin, any suffering we endure is only a taste of what he experienced. Turn to Christ in your suffering by believing in his ability not only to understand your suffering, but to help lift the burden you carry – the burden not only of the suffering we are talking about here, but of our sin as well.

Christ also promises rest to those who are weary and burdened. Matthew 11:28-30 reads, “Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” The biblical theme of rest is especially helpful for those experiencing traumatic stress. Christ tells us to turn to him, learn from him, and experience rest. We cannot exist in a state of heightened tension indefinitely. Christ knows this and calls us to himself to find rest. Rest in the fact that your Creator cares for you. Rest in the fact that he is in control; that he has a purpose for your life and is able to redeem even the most horrific event. Rest in the fact that he will carry you through. Rest in all God says about himself, and in all of his promises.

The book of Hebrews talks about Sabbath rest (chapter 4). Our faith in Christ and his work will lead to our experience of the ultimate Sabbath rest. This is far more than a break from work. It is the relief and renewal that comes from knowing Christ, experiencing the forgiveness of our sins, and enjoying life in his presence for eternity. Complete fulfillment lies in the future, but we can begin to taste this rest today. As you turn to God in prayer, casting your burdens and anxiety on him, as you read the promises of his Word, as the Holy Spirit lives in your heart, as you are surrounded by other believers, and as you continue in your faith, God’s peace and rest will be yours in the midst of trauma and its stressful aftermath. As Jesus promised in John 16:33: “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”