

Hope After Tragedy

How a Community
Can Heal After Loss

by Dean Sikes

Have you ever considered
how the words tragedy
and hope are defined?

Tragedy means an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress.

Hope is defined as a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.

So as people, as communities, how do we navigate from a tragic event that's caused great suffering, destruction, and distress to a more hopeful place of expectation for better days ahead?

In other words, how do we heal?

One thing is for sure: none of us can heal ourselves. So who or what do we turn to? As a Christian, it's my belief that God, the One greater than the sum total of all His creation, is the only One to whom we can turn to experience the true, genuine healing of what I call, the centerpiece of humanity – the human heart.

The best selling book of all times clearly instructs us to guard our heart. Why guard it? Because out of our hearts flow the issues of life.

Think about it: that same best selling book tells us that, as a man thinks in his heart, so is he. In other words, the heart becomes the incubator that produces action. It was out of the heart that caused someone to do something tragic. And it is out of the heart that will cause someone else to experience the power of hope.

You see my friend, at the intersection of tragedy and hope, there is the power of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is defined as the action or process of forgiving.

And forgiveness is the key to us moving forward on the healing journey from tragedy to hope – even when forgiveness is the most unlikely choice our minds could choose to make in the wake of great suffering, destruction, and distress. But forgiveness that originates in the heart, that is a spiritual power to be reckoned with.

Consider this: over two thousand years ago, while hanging on a cross, suspended between heaven and hell, the Son of God looked at those who had wreaked unimaginable tragedy in His own life; He looked at those who had brought such pain to His mom, a pain no parent should ever experience (the loss of a child); and as He did, He turned His head toward heaven and said, “Father, FORGIVE them; for they do not know what they do.”

May I make this personal? I’ve been through some tragedies in life and to be honest, my forgiving those who hurt me at the deepest level of my heart was not my first choice. I got bitter and that bitterness took me into seasons that I never, ever want to revisit. It was when I chose to forgive those who had hurt me, those people whom society would most probably say did not deserve my forgiveness, then and only then did the pain in my heart subside and the flicker of hope that was so deeply buried in my heart began to light the way for tragedies to give way to hope.

It's true that we live in a world where sadly, hurting people oftentimes hurt people. And sometimes, those who are hurt are really good people who unexpectedly and unwittingly became the victims of what pain can produce. This sure doesn't seem fair, does it? And I believe we can all agree that it's not fair. But past the injustice, when we choose to forgive, our doing so takes all of the power away from the enemy of our soul, the enemy who devised the evil that produced the tragedy in the first place, and allows each of us the opportunity to move forward in individual and collective emotional, spiritual and yes, even physical healing.

Don't get bitter; get better. Choose to forgive.

About Dean Sikes

Since January of 1993, Dean Sikes has been on the road, ministering words of hope in high schools across America and in nations of the world. To date, he's spoken at over 3,500 schools, sharing the message of hope with millions of teenagers. The connection he has with teens and young people continues to ignite a conversation encompassing this truth: **You Matter.**

Dean Sikes was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee and is the oldest of two children. Raised in a Christian family, he came to know Jesus at the young age of 7 years old. Not long after his 15th birthday, however, he was sexually abused. And throughout the remainder of his teenage years, Dean lived a very fake, painful, and oftentimes, unauthentic life. By the time he turned 21, his life was spiraling out of control. Lie after lie and bad choice after bad choice catapulted Dean into a defining moment where he had a very personal encounter with the Holy Spirit.

This defining moment was used by the Lord to help navigate him into fulltime ministry where he served Grammy-award winning Christian Artist Phil Driscoll. During his time with Phil's ministry, he coordinated and road-managed over 600 ministry events around the globe. In December of 1992, at the direction of the Lord, Dean resigned from Phil's ministry and the next month, launched his ministry where today, he continues to travel across America and into nations of the world, freely ministering words of hope to teenagers in high schools and Teen Challenge Centers.



A wide-angle photograph of a large audience seated in a dark hall, facing a stage. A man in a light blue shirt and jeans stands on the stage, gesturing with his hands. Several spotlights from the ceiling illuminate the stage and the audience. The background wall is dark with a grid of rectangular panels. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

Invite Dean to Speak.

To book Dean to speak to your community
please send an email to dean@deansikes.net.

YouMatter

The logo consists of the text "YouMatter" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below the text is a horizontal light blue bar that is split into two segments by a thin vertical white line, aligning with the space between "You" and "Matter".

youmatter.us