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Viewpoints

Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.

When Life Floors Us ~ December 21, 2016

Christmas lifts up the lowly, including those depressed by grief or guilt.

[Online Version & Archive](#)

On the day when their 29-year-old son and his fiancé were to be flying into town to celebrate Christmas with them, a Mom and Dad received the news no parent wants to hear.

Perhaps it was delivered in the predawn darkness at their front door. After confirming that he was speaking to the appropriate parents, the officer performed his solemn duty: “Ma’am... Sir... I’m so sorry for your loss...”

Twenty-nine-year-old Enrico Rojo and his fiancé were driving to the airport when Rojo—a Marine who had survived an IED explosion while serving in Afghanistan—pulled onto the shoulder of the freeway to render aid to another driver who had hit a semi truck and rolled over. This happened at 1:30 am as Rojo and his fiancé were driving to LAX to catch their flight. Another vehicle approaching the accident scene took evasive action to avoid hitting one of the disabled vehicles and struck Rojo. “Officers performed CPR on Rojo, who later died at the scene.” The driver “involved in the initial rollover crash, was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol.”

Even if the court convicts the arrested driver and slams her with the maximum punishment allowed, it won’t undo the horrible injustice of Rojo’s death... a combat veteran who was continuing to serve our country... who was bringing his fiancé home for the holidays to meet his parents... who selflessly rushed to the aid of someone who shouldn’t have been driving in the first place.

Perhaps we can partially feel the pain that certainly had to floor Rojo’s parents. But can we begin to grasp how his fiancé was laid low? “Firefighters arrived and found Enrico Rojo being held by his fiancé. He was pronounced dead at scene...”

“Why, O God, do you allow such injustice to floor us?” could be the painful cry of Rojo’s parents and his fiancé. For this was the painful cry of God’s Old Testament people.*

Although God does not explain his mysterious ways to us, he is not distant from us when injustice lays us low. Nor does he leave us defenseless and hopeless when we’re floored. In fact, he is our Savior who rescues and restores us, as the Virgin Mary proclaims. She was floored by the angel’s news that her life’s plans would be abruptly changed. Her life turned on a dime when she suddenly found out that she would be the human vessel that the Lord

would use for his eternal son's birth into our world as the God-man, Jesus.

That Mary was floored by God's using her in such an extraordinary way is evidenced by how she speaks about herself: "God my Savior has been mindful of the humble state of his servant" (Luke 1:47-48). Humble state is one way to translate the Greek word *tapein* that has a root meaning of "lowness." It can include people laid low... floored by tragedy, cut down by injustice, or flattened under the weight of mourning. *Tapein's* lowness can also include those beaten down by depression and guilt. How often our sinking under the waters of distress can be compounded by pounding waves of drowning guilt (see [Psalm 42:5-7](#)).

Receiving the right help for such "lowness" was an important truth that the Holy Spirit impressed upon Mary, because she uses *tapein* again, just four verses later, when she describes how God "has lifted up the humble." And how has God lifted up those who are lowly, floored, depressed or pounded down by guilt? By the sending of his eternal Son into our world. Even though Jesus is a newly conceived baby in Mary's womb, and still some thirty-plus years away from the cross of forgiveness, Mary speaks in a past tense, as if Christ has already died and risen to defeat sin's reign, and has already lifted us up to heaven. Why a past tense? Because Christ's uplifting help for the *tapein* is so certain!

Since this is how God lifted up Mary, then certainly the celebration of Christ's miraculous birth can lift up the parents and fiancé of Enrico Rojo. In fact, could there be any better time for Enrico Rojo to have died, than at this time when the Christmas season feeds our faith from the truths fed to us from Mary's Song of Praise? I humbly ask this, not knowing the mind of the Lord, but knowing his heart of love and mercy laid bare in the sending of his Son.

So if at this Christmas time, a *tapein* is laying you low, praise the Lord for his mysterious but well-timed control of your life. It's God's gift to refocus you on his virgin-delivered Christmas gift "who has lifted up the *tapein*" – so certain is his rescuing peace and power.

Learn more about God's use of the incarnation within Mary to uplift when life distresses and depresses. [Visit our Sermon Page](#) for the sermon about Mary's lowly state: **Preview of Christmas, December 18, 2016.**

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)

* God's Old Testament people were sometimes floored by the perception of injustice as that the godless seem to prosper while believers suffer. See [Psalm 73:3,9-12](#) & [Malachi 3:14-15](#).

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Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz

