

In 1867, John Stuart Mill said in his inaugural address at the University of St Andrews in London, “Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing.”

Twenty years ago this month, that happened in the country of Rwanda.

While the international community sat on their hands, the Hutu people of Rwanda systematically began exterminating the Tutsi people. I’ve read lots of reasons for why this happened, and frankly, it doesn’t really matter why it happened. What matters is that starting on April 6, 1994, for 100 days, about 800,000 people were shot, beaten to death with clubs, or cut to pieces with machetes by neighbors, coworkers, former friends, sometimes even relatives through marriage.

The country of Rwanda is physically beautiful, but the people are still trying to recover from their self-inflicted scars. Even after twenty years, the healing seems to be just beginning, and the pain continues. Survivors of the genocide, both Hutu and Tutsi, deal with physical and emotional scars. Our sister, Sandrine, is a genocide survivor. It’s not my place to tell her story. She’s shared her story with me, and my words can’t come close to describing it. Her story is similar to many people her age from Rwanda.

Please join me in praying for the people and the country of Rwanda.

Prayer for Rwanda

Father God, King of the Universe,

It’s hard for us to understand why things like the genocide in Rwanda happen. We know You are a loving and compassionate God. But it’s hard for us when we see the pain and death caused by evil. I can’t express the pain I feel hearing about the evil that was done to these innocent people, because of a perceived difference.

Father, we pray for the survivors of the genocide. We ask that you would heal their wounds, physical, mental, and spiritual. Guard them from bitterness, and help them to flourish, even in the midst of their pain. Father, we ask that instead of dwelling on the terror of those 100 days, that they can focus on your deliverance from the evil that was surrounding them. I ask that you would comfort those who lost loved ones, and that they would be blessed with peace.

Father, we pray for the perpetrators of the violence, many of whom may still be in prison. As they are once again reminded of the atrocities they committed, we ask that You would restore each one and soften their hearts. We pray that they would choose to embrace Your forgiveness and move forward in obedience to You, accepting your mercy and grace, with the full assurance of Your love and acceptance.

We pray for those left vulnerable by the genocide, even now, 20 years later. We pray for the women and children who lost husbands and parents in the violence. We pray also for the women who contracted HIV/AIDS through sexual violence in that period and for children who have been orphaned by the disease. We pray that they will experience Your provision and the healing power of Your love.

Father, we pray that Your Church would shine as a beacon of love, hope, and justice. We know that even now people are distrusting of churches, because some of them even participated in the atrocities of those days. We pray that in each of Rwanda's communities, Your Church would be known as an instrument of peace, a champion of truth, and a protector of the defenseless. We pray that Your hope can be felt among the people of Rwanda.

Father, we pray for political, economic, and social stability for Rwanda. We thank You for the rebuilding that has occurred to this point, and we pray that Rwanda's leaders would promote equality, harmony, and justice for all people. We pray that the next generation of Rwandans

would no longer see themselves in terms of ethnic differences, and that You would renew each community in powerful ways.

Father, we pray for the people of Rwanda, that You would bless them with peace and love, and also for those people You have called out to minister to them, where ever they are. Give them your strength and wisdom, Father, so they can share Your love with the people of Rwanda, that there may be healing.

Amen.