

A Glimmer of Hope

Our country seems overcome by chaos and division. It is easy to get down on the state of our country, as we seem to be spinning out of control.

And then, when we least expected it, something happened. I was watching the Monday Night football game when Damar Hamlin made the tackle on a Cincinnati Bengals player. Damar got up and, seconds later, collapsed on the field in cardiac arrest. Even the TV commentators said, "All we can do is pray and keep praying." Typically, a mention of God is not encouraged on national TV, so that revealed how severe the situation was. For the rest of the night, there was no game analysis, just concern for Damar's health. The game no longer mattered. Opposing quarterbacks and coaches embraced and consoled each other. Teams openly knelt in prayer on the field. Bengals players visited the Bills' locker room to show their concern. Social media posts from fans included a plea for prayers for Damar. A charitable project of Damar's to raise funds to purchase toys for needy children saw contributions jump from several thousand dollars to over 9 million in a few days. For more than a week, every sports report and news broadcast included an update on the remarkable progress of a player who twice had his heart restarted. The outpouring of love and concern was unbelievable. Everyone realized that it was all in God's hands now. Bill's quarterback Josh Allen later said that this caused a "spiritual awakening" in himself as the events unfolded – reviving Damar, his recovery, and the response of all the players and nationwide fans. Then God added an exclamation point. On the Bills' very next play a week later, the Bills ran the opening kickoff back for a touchdown. The Bills hadn't run back a kickoff for a touchdown for – three years. "3" was Damar's uniform number. God was trying to tell them something.



In our everyday life, we lose sight of what is really important. Instead, we live through the chaos of our world. It takes a life-and-death crisis to put things in the proper perspective.

The overwhelming nationwide support for Damar Hamlin shows us that the goodness of mankind is still there. It is hidden until there is a crisis that only God can handle. After waking up from the medically-induced coma, Damar commented on how the nation came together because of his near-death situation. There *is* hope for mankind.

God's hope is bigger than any football game. It's bigger than the miracle of overcoming a near-death experience. Our hope is for what happens after the final whistle of life. It is the hope that our belief in Jesus Christ will bring us to everlasting life. *May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you (Psalm 33:22).*

God sent His son to live among us and to redeem a broken world. Jesus wanted a different life for us, and He is the perfect example of how to do that. It took a life-or-death situation for people to pause and show compassion. We *can* do it. The chaos in our world is the result of the choices of our culture, but we can amend our lives and put things in God's hands. We just proved it. Damar Hamlin's condition was a life-or-death situation, and people responded. Following Jesus is a life-or-death decision too. It is one we all will face. What do you choose – life or death? There is hope.

Here is the Point: Following Jesus is a life-or-death choice. Don't wait until your heart stops beating to take action. The world needed Jesus during the crisis. Our hope is that the world will learn to seek Jesus first rather than as a last resort. Everything would be much different then.

The Bible Says: *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).*