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## **REFLECTION ON 9/11**

(On the anniversary of 9/11 I had the opportunity to speak to a few people who gathered in our chapel for prayer. I have expanded it a little to share with you.)

Where were you when the towers fell on 9/11/01? If you were alive and old enough to understand, I'm sure you remember clearly. I was walking through our living room with a cup of coffee and Doris said, "Look! An airplane crashed into a building!" I sat down with her and hardly left the television for the next three days. In a while an airliner crashed into the second tower, then we heard that the Pentagon had been attacked, then the towers fell, and all airliners everywhere were grounded, and our world changed.

We who are Christians started asking, "What is God saying to our nation?" Of course, we knew that God didn't do it, it was evil men. We thought maybe this terrible experience would lead to a big revival. On the first Sunday a lot of folks filled the churches, on the second Sunday not as many came, and on the third everything went back to normal. We decided that their ears were closed and their hearts were hard. But maybe when they came to church they didn't hear anything that spoke to their hearts? And the bigger question is, Did 9/11 make any difference to the church in America, and to you and me? I don't think anything changed.

In my July, 2015, monthly message (Which you can access on my Website), I reported on the four prophetic dreams I had in 1998, 1999, and 2004. The message is titled, "God's Judgment on America." In that message, I also said why I believe those dreams were from God.

It is my belief that God is going to allow our country to be torn to pieces by its enemies. We have recently watched the terrible scenes of refugees fleeing from Syria across Turkey and Greece, trying to get to Germany or some other safe haven. I believe that scenes like that will be common in our beloved country. We have already seen them in New Orleans as a result of Hurricane Katrina.

So when the opportunity came to me to speak tonight, I started asking, "Lord, what are you saying to us?" I was led to search through the Old and New Testaments to see what God said to His people through the prophets and through Jesus when times of judgment were imminent. The three things God said at such times were: Repent, Fear Not, and Pray.

### **1. REPENT**

We must repent for our nation, our church, and ourselves. The definition from Strong's concordance is: "Repent, *metanoeo*. From *meta*, 'after,' and *noeo*, 'to think.' Repentance is a decision that results in a change of mind, which in turn leads to a change of purpose and action." So, to repent is not just feelings, "I'm sorry," but includes a deep decision of the mind will, and heart. It is a decision to change direction away from sin: Self-rule, independence, selfishness, self-glory, I am the center of all – and toward God, toward Jesus as Lord and King. It is a decision of believe: That God loves me, forgives me, is for me, and has designed a meaningful plan for my life. It is a decision to trust the Lord, to obey Him, and to love Him.

Repentance is not just a decision we make at the beginning of the Christian life, it is a lifestyle. In Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus addresses the seven churches (that I believe represent all the churches throughout history), pinpoints their sins, and says, "Repent, repent, repent!"

Every morning, the first thing I do, after going to the bathroom, is to get down on my knees by my chair and say, "Lord, I give you my life today. I give you my life. Please help me to live as a Christian today." (That may not seem like much to you, but for a guy 88 years old, that's a big deal. Especially when I try to get up.)

Read what God says to His chosen people in the first chapter of Isaiah, (paraphrase): *Your church meetings and sacrifices are an abomination to me! I can't endure them any more! I will hide my eyes when you spread out your hands, hands that are full of blood. Wash yourselves! Make yourselves clean, cease to do evil and learn to do good .... Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow. But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword.*

From Isaiah 5 (paraphrase): *Woe to those who add vacation houses and fields and businesses one upon another, but who start drinking early in the morning and live for pleasure and entertainment but do not regard the work of the Lord. Therefore my people have gone into captivity (to their addictions, vices, and debts).*

From Jeremiah 3: *As a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you treacherously dealt with me, O house of Israel. They have perverted their way, they have forgotten the Lord. Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.*

Note that God's desire is to bless His children, and His pleas and warnings are to motivate them to turn back to Him. God has given us free will. He will never force anyone to come to Him. He will only plead with us and warn us from a heart of love.

In the New Testament, our church has been studying the book of Colossians for the past month. The Apostle Paul commonly starts his letters by laying the foundation of our faith in Jesus Christ: Who He was, what He said, how He died on the cross for our salvation, was raised from the grave and goes to prepare a place for us, and how He is with us to enable us to live for Him by His grace. Paul lays this foundation in the first two chapters. In the third chapter, he says, *If then you were raised with Christ, set your minds on things above.* The battlefield is in the mind. He says, *You, set your mind.* This must be a decision, an action, and God will not do it for us. Put away your TV, put away your Smart phones, which, in my opinion, are not making us that smart, and set your mind on the Lord and His plans.

Verse 5: *Put to death* (your sinful passions and desires). About 40 years ago I drove with a friend from Loveland down to the airport in Denver to meet an old Bible teacher who traveled around the country. About a dozen pastors met with him in a little conference room at his motel, and he taught on this chapter. He said that "Put to death," or "mortify" in the King James, is from a Greek word and the closest way to translate it would be to use the word "Tourniquet." If a rattlesnake bit your foot, you would put a tourniquet on your leg and restrict the blood and poison until you could get to a doctor. We must do it. We must crucify the self, our evil passions and desires, and not participate in the cesspool of corruption that is all around us. *Put to death fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.*

Well, we might say, this warning is obviously addressed to unbelievers because God's wrath can't fall on believers. But the warning is written to a church. Most of the folks at the country club, or the bar, or the casino are never going to read it or hear it.

Then Paul writes, *You yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another.* "Put off" is a different Greek word and is like taking off a dirty coat. We are to put a tourniquet on the first list of sins, we are to crucify the flesh; but for the second list we by our own choice can remove them like taking off a dirty coat.

Friends, just because you are faithful church members and have a testimony of salvation, I don't assume that you don't struggle with any of these sins or possibly with selfish ambition, spouse abuse, or various destructive addictions. I was a Christian and a pastor, and I was backslidden terribly. I have been ministering to church people for over 40 years, and I know how many good people struggle with these insidious sins. It's time for us to repent. If we need help, ministry, advice, direction, prayer, we need to get it. It is time.

Vs. 12 – *Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering, love.* When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit lives inside, but these Christ-like qualities do not automatically bubble to the surface without our will being involved. We must choose to put them on. The gifts of the spirit, *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control,* are listed in Galatians 5, and for each gift we are told somewhere in the New Testament to do them. *Husbands, love your wives; love one another, love your enemies. Be kind to one another. Be patient. Add to your faith self-control, etc.* Joyce Meyer says that when we get up in the morning, we don't go stand in front of our closet and the clothes jump out of the closet and dress us. We have to put them on. The same applies to love, joy, peace, patience, and self-control.

## **2. FEAR NOT**

The purpose of terrorists is to instill terror. Fear paralyzes, makes you weak and unable to resist. Who is behind all of that? The evil one, of course.

On a trip to Israel, we went to Caesaria Philippi, which is north of the Sea of Galilee near the foothills of Mt. Hermon. It is the place where Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" There are beautiful pools there, and a white cliff with niches. The guide told us that this was a place of idol worship, and she pointed to a large niche and said that Pan was once there. Pan is that goat-idol, half man and half goat, that represents a demon. The word panic is derived from Pan. Panic, terror, and fear are inspired by demons, and God tells us, *Resist the devil and he will flee from you, draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*

God tells His people time and again in His Word to "*Fear not!*" Again, living without fear is not an automatic response for Christians but something we must choose. We are instructed, *Trust God with all your heart...* We have to choose to do that, and when we do, God will help us.

In the Upper Room (John 14), in the prelude to the cross, Jesus told His gathered disciples, *Let not your hearts be troubled...* "Let not!" The decision is ours. And He said, *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you....let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* Jesus is saying the determination is not up to God, it is up to us. But He says in the next chapter, "*I am going to send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, to help you.*"

But, you might say, if some of the horrible prophecies we have heard actually come to pass, the food distribution system may be disrupted. How will we get food for our families?

In the book of Mark, in Chapter 1, Jesus Healed all who came to him; in Chap. 2, He healed a paralytic; in Chap. 3, He cast out demons; in Chap. 4, He stilled a storm; in Chap. 5, He raised a girl from the dead; in Chap. 6 He walked on water, and He fed 5,000; in Chap. 7 He healed a deaf-mute; in Chap. 8, He fed 4,000. Then, the Pharisees demanded of Him, *Show us a sign from heaven!* What! They would not believe, no matter what He did.

Immediately after this experience, as Jesus and the disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee (Chap. 8), Jesus said to them, *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod.* The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, and they reasoned that Jesus was talking about that. Jesus, at that point, became frustrated with the men who had been witnesses to all of His miraculous deeds. He said (paraphrase): "What is the matter with you guys? Why are you arguing about bread? Don't you have eyes? Are your hearts so hard it has made you blind? Just a few hours ago I took a sack-lunch and fed a crowd of 4,000 people. You dunderheads!" Well, He didn't say that exactly, but read what He said for yourself. He was clearly upset and frustrated by their lack of discernment and faith.

What is the point? **When you're traveling with Jesus, you don't have to worry about bread!** Got it? He can take one stale piece of bread and turn it into a banquet; He can make bread fall out of the sky for 40 years and feed a great multitude; He can make so many quail fly up from Moab, Utah, that they would cover our valley; He can tell you to take a tub down to Corn Lake and make fish jump into it.

In Psalm 91, we have these promises: *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty...He is my refuge and fortress...He shall deliver you from pestilence, from terror by night and arrows that fly by day, from destruction and plague, He shall give His angels charge over you...* He is saying, "**Trust Me, and do not fear!**"

So am I saying that no matter what comes we who are Christians will be safe and secure? No, Jesus warns His followers in the Upper Room that "*My enemies will also be your enemies. If they have hated Me, they will also hate you. The time is coming when whoever kills you will think they are serving God.*" And, of course, that is what happened.

The point is that God is in absolute control. As we trust Him, He will shield and protect us and our loved ones. Or He may allow us to suffer and even be martyred for Him. But for believers, the sting of death, the fear of death is gone. We need to set our hearts right now and say: **LORD, I TRUST YOU, AND I WILL NOT FEAR!** Please say it aloud right now: **LORD, I TRUST YOU, AND I WILL NOT FEAR!**

Friends, according to many prophecies, both from believers and from secular sources, a time of tribulation and sorrow is near. But even if none of those prophecies come to pass, a time of tribulation and sorrow is coming to each of us. That time is named: Cancer, Diabetes, Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's, Multiple Sclerosis, Fatal injury or accident, Heart disease, etc. These tribulations are headed toward each of us and to our loved ones. But the sting of death and the fear of death is gone for believers. This present life is fleeting and we shall soon depart, but He has gone to prepare a place for us, so we need not fear.

### **3. PRAY**

Prayer is the most irrational practice I can imagine. God doesn't need our instructions, and He knows our needs before we tell Him. But John Wesley said, "**God does nothing on earth except as the result of prayer.**" Wow! What a great statement. God did not put those exact words in the Bible, but their truth and reality is found everywhere in the Bible.

In Genesis, God created man and gave Him dominion over the earth. God chose to limit Himself to work in partnership with men and women. In Ezekiel 22, God says, *I sought for a man to stand in the gap, but because I could not find such a man* (I am forced to bring judgment.) What an amazing declaration! The sin of a nation required retribution from a just God, but the loving heart of that God desired to show mercy - - - - but His hands were tied because He could not find an intercessor that had the same merciful heart as He who would cry out in intercession. We need to reflect on that revelation, and reflect, and reflect.

The resurrected Christ gave the Great Commandment: *Go into all the world and make disciples....* Oh, my, couldn't God do it better Himself? We make such a mess of it. Have you been in church for awhile and seen what God has to work with? Really. People like you and me. 10,000 denominations. Arguing and fighting. Jealousy for preeminence. Fear to step out and trust the Lord. Fallen leaders. Warring congregations. Pharisees in the church. Couldn't God do better than that? Couldn't He send out angels to preach and teach?

No, He could not. God has limited Himself to work in partnership with men and women. He will not do it Himself. He will do it with you and me. "But how about all those Muslims who are being converted because of dreams and visions of Jesus?" Somebody, somewhere was praying. I have read the testimonies of people who, on rare occasions, were shown by the Lord in visions the specific individuals that were touched, saved, or healed because of their prayers. God does nothing on earth except as the result of prayer. It's true.

Prayer is hard work. It's so hard to be faithful in prayer. When our prayers have not been answered for months, years, decades, it is so hard to continue to come before God and believe that our prayers really make a difference. When things are not going well, when there is pain and suffering in our family, when loved ones continue to close their hearts and follow a course of destruction, it is so hard to be faithful in prayer. But God encourages us over and over: Keep watch! Be ready! Be faithful! Keep oil in your lamps! Don't be discouraged! I am hearing and using your prayers! I know what I am doing! Trust Me! Obey Me! Pray!

Let us stir ourselves up to pray.

REPENT. Repent for your sins, for the sins of your loved ones, for the church, for the nation.

FEAR NOT. *Let not your hearts be troubled.* Lord, I trust you, and I will not fear.

PRAY. Don't give up. Press on.

Early in the last century, in the city of New York, in the season leading up to Easter there was a display of art about the life of Christ in a downtown hotel. The featured drawing was a large mural of Christ on the cross. At the bottom of the picture, the artist had written the words, "All this I have done for thee, what will you do for Me?"

On the last day of the display, a workman from a nearby construction project came in during the noon hour, and when he came to this picture he stood transfixed. Those who noticed him saw tears running down his face. As he finally turned to leave, someone nearby heard him say, "You can depend on me, Lord Jesus. You can depend on me."

Can He depend on you?

## God Bless

## Glenn

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