

was buried and the third day He rose again. When we put our faith and trust in Him, He gives us eternal life. Praise His Holy Name!

The best thing that could come out of this disaster would be for you to repent of your sin and trust Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. By this simple act of faith you can know that should the brief vapor of our life end today you are on our way home to God's heaven to live forever with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you saved? Do you know the Savior in a personal way? The Bible says:

All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:16-17)

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (Romans 10:9)

Ladies and gentlemen, think with me for a moment. Religion has its place, but it cannot save the soul. Consider a man be trapped in the World Trade Center. There is no escape. How can any religion help him? He cannot receive the last rites. He cannot be baptized. He cannot join a church. He cannot meditate. He cannot make amends. Oh, my friend, this is where Bible Christianity rises above religion. Salvation is not a matter of good works, but of faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

In a doomed airliner or in the comfort of one's living room, the way to heaven is the same. It is free. It is available. It is a simple matter of total faith in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Long ago, in fear and terror, after a great earthquake, a workingman asked a preacher, *What must I do to be saved?* (Acts 16:30-31). The answer then is the answer now, **BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED.**

The above is an edited transcript of the sermon delivered by Pastor James W. Knox on Sunday, September 16, 2001 at THE BIBLE Baptist Church, 872 Glenwood Road, DeLand, FL 32720. Please contact us at this address for a catalog listing of this and other helpful materials.



On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, sinful men acting in accord with the lusts of their fallen nature, wantonly murdered an untold number of civilian and military personnel in an unprecedented attack upon the United States of America.

In the days following, much has been spoken of war, motives, sorrow, grief, revenge, security, and the like. I come to you today as a minister of the gospel. It is my purpose to point out a number of good things that have resulted, and may yet result, from this unspeakable tragedy.

The word of God says: *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).*

First, let me say that nothing that happened this week is the fulfillment of any Bible prophecy. There is not one verse in the Bible that talks about airplanes crashing into buildings in New York City. In fact, the United States is not mentioned in the word of God. All the kooks that were too embarrassed to show their faces after their false Y2K predictions are going to come back out of the woodwork and try to sell you another book about "now we know we are in the end times because Osama bin Laden attacked America." Please do not spend five cents on any of that nonsense. The events of September 11 were but another evidence of the corruption in the human heart. Nothing more.

Second, people will be asking, if they have not already, why did God let this happen? He did not tell me. Nor does He owe any of us an explanation. It could be pointed out that when you consider the moral and spiritual condition of this nation, in light of the precepts of the Bible (not in light of relative values) we are very bold to assume that God is going to provide us some special protection. God has been on His throne while the people of Sudan, Angola, Zaire, North Korea, mainland China, the Philip-

pires, and dozens of other nations have suffered similar nightmares. Nations ignore God until trouble comes, then they condemn Him for what men do to one another in violation of His commands.

Ladies and gentlemen, death and misery is life in the real world. Our nation has just missed it for while. Tuesday's attack does not mean that God is for us or that God is against us. The Lord is interested in the salvation of souls. He is not as interested in politics as men think He is. He is interested in spiritual matters. In the late 1970's preachers began to involve themselves in politics. They took their churches with them. Thirty years later people have bought into the peculiar notion that God is engaged in American party politics. He is not. His purposes are with the individual souls of men.

So where was God on September 11? He was hearing the prayers of those people who were calling on him for salvation. He was comforting the hearts of those who were leaning upon Him. That is where He was.

God is not the President of the United States, the King of England, or a Muslim dictator. This is not the day of His earthly kingdom; this is the day of spiritual rebirth.

Where was God on September 11? He was waiting to hear you call on His name. Where is God this morning? He is waiting to hear you call on His name. Kingdoms rise and fall, but the Bible stands like a rock undaunted mid the raging storms of time.

I am going to give you eight good things that I believe will come out of this trouble. I jotted these down on Tuesday afternoon and I am excited to see that many of them are already taking place.

1. *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. (James 4:13-15)*

On Tuesday morning thousands of people headed to airports and train stations to go to such and such a place. Some were going to visit friends and family, some to vacation, some for business, some for educational reasons. None of them expected that their life would end that day. Besides the tragedy in New York and Washington, all around the world on that evil day, mothers and daddies and grandmas and grandpas suffered heart attacks and strokes and automobile accidents and on-the-job accidents. Not only in one or two cities that were terrorized, but the world over, people stopped breathing. They stepped out into eternity. Whether bound for God's heaven or bound for a devil's hell, very few of them planned on leaving the world that day.

The next day people died in Argentina and Peru. On the following day Australians and New Zealanders left this world. On the next day men and women in Russia and

Mongolia and India gave up the ghost. Like a vapor, their life vanished away.

I am telling you, my friends, one good thing that will come out of the events of September 11 is that people will be reminded that their lives are temporal and pass quickly. We have no guarantee of tomorrow. The best life insurance policy in the world, the best medical coverage in the world, all the money in the bank, all the safety features on the automobile, all the security checks at the airports cannot keep us alive forever.

One of these days we must leave this world. We may die at 105 sleeping in our bed or we may die at 15 in a tragic accident. We may die at the age of 70 in the nursing home, or we may die in a terrorist attack at the age of 27, but we ARE going to leave this world.

America is so prosperous. America is so safe. America is so wealthy and so secure. America has every angle covered. She has almost forgotten that death comes unannounced and knocks on the door and does not take "no" for an answer.

We may see the stock market go up, we may see the stock market go down. We may see our youth go to war next week, or we may not see them go to war at all. But I am telling you we each need to understand that we will not wake up tomorrow unless God wills it. God WILLING, we shall do this and that and the other thing. America has forgotten that. I hope God has brought that reality back to her remembrance.

2. *Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:6-7)*

All across this nation last Tuesday and Wednesday night churches were filled with people praying to God. Liberal churches, conservative churches, social club churches, exclusive churches; the name on the sign did not matter. People were inside praying. Most churches have so few members interested in the things of God that they do not even attempt to have a mid-week service. They had them this week. Prayer meetings were held in elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and colleges. Suddenly no one cared about the complaints of a handful of atheists or a Supreme Court ruling. God was hearing voices He had not heard in a long, long time. People were in church who normally stop by only for Christmas and Easter.

I am not happy about the horrible events that brought about this outpouring of prayer, but I am glad that church doors were open this week and people were on their faces calling on the name of the true and living God. That is better than anything else that has happened in this country in a long, long time.

3. *Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD. (Psalms 33:12)*

The United States of America is not a Christian nation. It has never been a Christian nation. Several of our founders were God-fearing men and believed in Bible principles. However, very few of them were born-again Christians. But we do have a rich history of turning to the God of the Holy Bible in times of national calamity and distress. A common enemy brought unity among the people. That is a good thing. Racial and party debates came to a halt. Feuding over the size of handouts and tax cuts was put on hold. On the country and western stations we are hearing songs of patriotism in the place of songs about fornication and drinking. On the rock 'n' roll station we are hearing some band with electric guitars wailing and a fellow trying his best to sing the National Anthem. It is a good thing when people are concerned about the liberties and the freedoms that we enjoy in America; liberties that for so very long we have taken for granted.

For decades we have used our freedom as an occasion to wage war one against another because we are lazy and comfortable. But now, a cruel enemy has roused us. Thank the Lord that we are hearing songs like "God Bless America." God is getting airtime in places where He has been only a curse word or an oath. This has not happened in a long, long time. This is a good thing.

On Friday our President called the nation to prayer. You and I may not approve of the ecumenical spirit of that gathering. As Bible-believing Christians, we were understandably uncomfortable seeing those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ leading worship in our national cathedral. However, what the entire world witnessed on that day was the leaders of the United States of America bowing their heads in prayer to God, showing their humble dependence upon the grace of the Lord. Countless millions of people across the planet were tuned to newscasts and heard the singing of great hymns of the Christian faith. They heard that Christ Jesus died and was buried and the third day rose from the dead. That, my friends, is a good thing.

4. *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:* (Revelation 3:17)

Long, protracted periods of peace and prosperity bring about the moral ruin of nations. The gospel witness in America is largely ignored, not because people are anti-Christian, but because they are very secure. The church and the Bible are neglected by the vast majority in our country, not because people are the enemies of either, but because they are spending or increasing their wealth. You can take a bus to Mexico, stand on a busy street corner, and give out a million pieces of Christian literature in a week. People will stand in line to get one. Try that in America. People in our land do not want the Good News because they do not feel they need it. In the Bible, Job 22:17-18 records a day when men *said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them? Yet he filled their houses with good things.* We have allowed the

blessed prosperity of our land to turn our hearts away from the source of all blessings.

What the Lord allowed on Tuesday was the violent shaking of the comfort zone in which Americans have been nestled. How can that be good? On September 11, God heard people calling on His name who have not spoken to Him in a long, long time. We have always needed Him. God just permitted the events of the day to remind us of our great need. People all across our great land have been trusting in their stocks, their bonds, their bank accounts, their portfolios and their health care plans. Now they wonder if any of that will abide.

God is still there, unshaken, unmoved, strong and sure as ever. It is a good thing when that which America was trusting – not God – is shaken so that Americans will trust in God. It is time to take off the fig leaves of wealth with which we have tried to cover our nakedness. It is time to put our trust in the true riches of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

5. *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.* (1 John 5:21)

When commercial airliners slammed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, sports suddenly become meaningless. America's No. 1 substitute for church and true religion immediately lost its appeal. Thousands of professing Christians will stay out of church on Sunday to go to a car race. Hundreds of thousands of people who call themselves Christians will skip the Sunday service to stay home and watch a ball game or golf tournament on TV. None of that took place in the aftermath of this tragedy. In a moment of time, goals, runs, touchdowns, birdies and aces were put in their proper perspective. As we considered the sacrifice of life made by the firefighters, police officers, chaplains and rescue workers in New York City the Jordans, Earnhardts, and Tigers of the world no longer seemed so heroic.

Perhaps through this unthinkable act of terror, America can come to its senses and help its sons and its daughters discern between that which is important and that which is mere amusement. It would be a great thing if our boys and girls grew up giving honor to policemen, firemen, soldiers, doctors and nurses. If this dreadful deed results in our making heroes of men and women who live sacrificially for the good of others instead of making heroes of those who live for pride and self-glory then something very good has come of this tragedy.

6. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whore-mongers and adulterers God will judge,* (Hebrews 13:4)

Let us all be thankful that in this time of national emergency we have men and women in positions of leadership who are possessed of character and integrity. Let us pray for the leaders of our land. Thank God we have in the highest office of the land a man who mispronounces words rather than misuses interns. Thank the Lord we have a first

lady who loves her husband and can support him in his hours of need. It would be a terrible thing to be facing the possibility of war with a leadership structure that despises our military and aids our enemies.

I am not speaking about politics. I am speaking about spiritual matters, as a minister of the gospel. I want you to understand that. God is not going to bless a whore-monger or an adulterer. His word says He will judge them. I am glad that in a time when our nation is showing signs of turning to God, and praying to God, that our Commander-in-Chief is not a man upon whom the judgment of God abides.

7. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* (John 14:6)

This is a day of ecumenical unity. This is a day of tolerance. This is a day of open-armed acceptance. I will not violate that spirit. The greatest liberty and freedom enjoyed in these great United States is the freedom to practice one's religion without persecution or restraint. I thank God for that liberty. I would fight for the right of the Muslim, the Jew, the Hindu, the Wiccan, the Catholic and the Protestant to worship their own god in their own way. Yet, as a Christian, and a minister of the Good News, I am certain that the only way to enjoy eternal life in the glory of heaven is through faith and trust in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. If He is THE WAY then no other religion, no other prophet, no other god is the way. If He is THE TRUTH, then all other ways are false. If He is THE, then all other belief systems end in death.

I do not hold the slightest animosity toward any member of another faith or creed. However, I do not apologize for saying they are wrong. In the Sudan, in Nigeria, in the Philippines, in Bosnia, in Indonesia, in Turkey, in Iraq, yea, in much of our world, Muslim armies are waging war, killing civilians, burning churches and executing preachers. All the while their adherents claim, "This is not Islam." But it is! Do not misunderstand me. I want no one killed. I want no mosque harmed. I want no Muslim mistreated. I believe, now that Americans have seen *first-hand* the ways of those who bow to Allah, that thousands who may have converted to or embraced this false religion will decide to reject it. If Jesus Christ is THE WAY – and He is – then that is a good thing.

8. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.* (John 10:27-30)

On Tuesday afternoon September 11, I wrote down, "Somebody will get saved as a result of this tragedy." Wednesday morning I spoke to an assembly of middle and high school students. I said, "Boys and girls: every person that died in Washington, DC, every person that

died in New York City, every person that died when the plane went down in Pennsylvania that knew Jesus Christ as their personal Savior is rejoicing today in the presence of the Lord. And every person that died on Tuesday that did not know Jesus Christ as their personal savior went to place far worse than a burning building; went to a place far worse than a crashing airplane; went to a place far worse than being crushed in rubble. Those who died without Jesus Christ went to a place of weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth from which there is no escape. The issue is not how long you live. The issue is not how well you live. The issue is not how free you live. The issue is, do you have eternal life beyond this mortal one?" Only the Lord Jesus Christ can give eternal life.

When I finished speaking a teenage girl came with tears running down her face and said, "I want to know Jesus as my Savior. I want to be saved. I want to be born again." That young girl's heart was broken by the tragedy on Tuesday and made ready to reach out for the good news of the gospel when she heard it.

I called a minister yesterday afternoon. He told of a man who had pleaded with his sister, a wealthy stockbroker, to trust Jesus Christ as her savior. That conversation took place on Monday, September 10. She refused. He told her she had no promise of tomorrow and that only Jesus could meet the true longing of her heart. On Tuesday night she called her brother, and though tears said, "Tell me right now how to get saved. I need to know Jesus as my savior."

All across America men, women, boys and girls, their lives shaken by this tragedy, are realizing that America is not enough to trust in. Our wealth and prosperity is not enough to trust in. Our comfort and our strength is not enough to trust in. They see a need for something that cannot be shaken. They need something stronger than death. I tell you that the *something* is a Someone. It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins. I am not talking about a Muslim fanatic who says to his followers, "Die for me." I am talking about the Savior of the world who said, "I died for you." What a difference!

Jesus is not asking us to burn for Him; He is asking us to let Him save you from the burning. He is not asking us to be crushed for Him; He was crushed for us. He is not asking us to die in His name; He is asking us to trust the name of the one who died for us.

Who in New York thought such a disaster was going to happen? Who in Washington was prepared for these events? We do not get a special warning. Death does not give us a 24-hour notice. It just knocks on our door and hauls us off. But when death comes, the Bible says that those who have been born again are *absent from the body, and...present with the Lord* (2 Corinthians 5:8).

Should our mortal life end in a bombing, or in a war, or if it just wears out due to old age, our souls – the real us – are going to live forever. Jesus Christ died for our sins, He