

*Holy God, Holy and Mighty,
Holy and merciful Savior,
deliver us not into the bitterness of eternal death.
(BCP Pg. 492)*

September 11, 2001 Remembering 10 Years Ago

Several of you have asked me over the past few weeks, if I was going to address 9-11 this Sunday and my honest answer at that time, was "I don't know." I didn't really decide about it - and HOW I was going to do it until Tuesday - hence this special message:

September 11th is a date with great significance to many. It marks the beginning of a new world in some respects, and like many seminal events, sometimes we pause and remember what we were doing that day in 2001 --- and those we lost.

Lots of times it IS helpful to look back. And as one who records his thoughts, I just wanted to share some of the comments I made to my congregation for that particular Sunday in 2001. You might pick up some parallels in today's current events; you might not. This may relate to today's lessons and sermon; it may not. *But for what it's worth...*

"Many have asked themselves and some (more naive) have asked me. "Where is God in all this?" And in my mixed feelings, parts of me were tempted to say, "Nowhere." "God's nowhere in this." "He's certainly not in the pain of the victims, or the tears of the survivors or in my feelings (or in your feelings) that no revenge is too terrible to exact for this act: God is nowhere."

But of course that's not true. God is everywhere, in this. With us, softening the rage into something a little more productive. Consoling those who those who have lost loved ones. Shielding the dying. Pitying the afflicted. Weeping, for his creation; weeping for what has happened, what is happening and what will continue to happen. Weeping.

As a child of the cold war, I remember the air raid drills in grade school, where the teachers would make us get under our desks, supposedly to be safe from a nuclear attack. I used to joke about the futility of that. But what will the future hold for OUR children? It's all different, now: For a generation, - kids - at least kids in this country have not had to lie in their beds knowing that at any day - while they're riding to school - while they're eating lunch - while they're throwing a frisbee - that their destruction might come in the form of an attack so impersonal and yet so bloody that no sane person could possibly will it. I don't think that's the case any more. A golden calf is dead.

The golden calf we have seen pass into history, this week, is the illusion that we are invincible or safe from harm on our own territory. And instead we're looking at the

*stark reality that the mayhem we dream up in Hollywood to entertain ourselves: That very mayhem - we or our children - might now get to experience, up-close and personal. But please remember, we have not lost our safety – but simply the illusion of our safety. **You see, we never HAD our safety.***

And where is God in all this? The same place he was yesterday and the day before. God is the one we depend upon for safety, because in the final analysis we cannot protect ourselves. And if anything needs to be clear it needs to be that.

You probably thought that I'd be able to say something that would make this week better, that would put it all into perspective, And I'm sure that in time, perspective will come. I'm sure that reason will replace rage as we look at our options and make the decision to not simply emulate those who perpetrate atrocities. But not yet - not yet.

So the question remains, what do we do? And the answer is that we pray. That we acknowledge before God where we are, share the pain and bewilderment and yes, even the rage – and perhaps even our grief at the loss of some cherished illusions that we now have to give up in the face of the reality – that something else can replace God as our ultimate protection.”

September 11th 2001. Remember the tragedy, the courage and the sacrifice -- and pray for peace, this day.

In Christ

Bob Chrisman +