

## **A LESSON FROM 9/11 FOR TODAY**

I watched quite a few telecasts this past weekend documenting the 20-year anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks in 2001. Even though it has been twenty years, and I have seen footage from that day so many times, it still shocked and saddened me at times watching it again. I am always amazed by the stories shared by people who experienced that tragic day in history. On previous anniversaries I would hear stories told by some of the firefighters at the World Trade Center, or from people who were in the building when the planes hit and were able to get out. Sometimes the stories that were told were from the widows of people who perished that day recalling their final conversations with their loved ones, and the impact that day had on them.

This year, for the first time, I began to hear the stories about some of the children whose parents died that day. Being twenty years later many of these children are now in their early to late twenties. Pictures were shown of these children twenty years earlier with their parents before they died on September 11th. They showed pictures of these children celebrating birthdays or Christmas with their parents. Other pictures were of them being thrown up in the air as youngsters by their parent and being caught in midair. Then they would show that child grown up today beside a picture of their parent who died. You almost always saw the resemblance. What stood out to me the most about each of these children was the lessons they were carrying forward with them from 9/11.

Every one of these adult children talked so proudly about their parents from that day. Two of the children became firefighters in order to follow in their father's footsteps. Their father actually made it out of the first building before it collapsed but went into the second tower to try and rescue others before it too collapsed. He knew the risk of going in, but his sons realized their father was willing to sacrifice his life for others who were in need of help. Some of the other children have established charities in their fathers' names to honour their memory and legacy. Still others said, they have learned to be resilient, strong, and more willing to show love and make sacrifices for others as a result of their parents' efforts that tragic day. I was so impressed by these

young men and women who lost parents on 9/11. They were determined to take the lessons they learned from their parent's actions that day and turn it into a positive in their lives.

Whether these children who lost parents on 9/11 realized it or not, they were following advice offered by God in the Bible by learning from these events. One place we see God encourage this is found in Joel 1: 2-3:

**Listen, all who live in the land.  
In all your history, has anything like this happened before?  
Tell your children about it in the years to come,  
and let your children tell their children.  
Pass the story down from generation to generation.**

As we read here, God encouraged parents to pass their history down to their children, telling them over and over again the important lessons they learned from difficult events. God wanted this to happen so that young people might repeat their parents' successes and not follow in their failures. Those parents who died on 9/11 taught their children lessons about courage, sacrifice, love, and care for others. Their children have committed to learning these lessons and are carrying them forward in life.

We too have gone through a tragic event over these past sixteen months living in a pandemic. I have had so many of my older church members say to me they have never experienced anything like this in the course of their lives. Even though this experience is very different from the events of 9/11, we still have had our share of loss, suffering, grief, and uncertainty through this. But we have also learned some very important lessons through this pandemic too. We have learned:

- our faith in God does sustain us
- hope in Him allows us to persevere through the difficult times
- trusting God takes away so much fear and worry about the unknown
- God is there to comfort us always
- God's grace is always sufficient
- and the love of God is on display even in the worst of times

These are just some of the many lessons about our faith and trust in God that have helped lead us through this pandemic. It has been these lessons about faith that have given us courage, strength, resilience, and confidence to keep going through this hard season in life. It is God's desire for us to pass these lessons along to our children and grandchildren. They have been watching us through this pandemic and continue to do so to see how we are handling this reality. May they be seeing in our words, actions, and living that we are persevering and remaining resilient thanks to the power and grace of All Mighty God. The children whose parents died on 9/11 learned powerful lessons from their examples of living in difficult circumstances. May we be passing the same powerful lessons onto our children, and grandchildren through this our difficult season.

**GOD BLESS AND KEEP SAFE**

**PASTOR DEAN**