



Do Not Forget!

Sermon: Sunday 10:15 am – September 11, 2011 – At Living Hope Lutheran Church

Gospel Reading:

Psalm 103 – Of David New International Version 1984 (NIV1984) –

Psalm 103 - Of David

- ¹ Praise the LORD, O my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- ² Praise the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
- ³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
- ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- ⁶ The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.
- ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
- ⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
- ⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
- ¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Sunday Worship Service: 10:15 A.M. (Sunday School/Adult Bible Class 9am)

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Sermon: Do Not Forget!

Pentecost-13 Sunday – 10:15 am - September 11th, 2011 – Pastor Todd Goldschmidt

My dear fellow citizens of these United States and, far more importantly, fellow citizens of God's kingdom of righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ:

It's 102 minutes that the world will never—and should never—forget. That's how much time elapsed between the first plane crashing into the World Trade Center and the collapse of the second tower on September 11, 2001—ten years ago today. Most of us remember exactly where we were when we heard or saw the tragic events of that day unfold. I was driving our son, Adam, to Inglemoor High School when Suze called. I'd already heard the radio mention it, but I was having a hard time wrapping my head around what they were saying. Then Suze confirmed it. I arrived back home in time to watch the video replay of the first plane striking tower one, only to witness the second plane striking tower two. Like you, I feel shock and pain as I think back to that horrific morning—from my initial bewilderment that planes could slam into these iconic skyscrapers on such a clear, sunny day, to the sudden, awful realization that America was under attack. Our world was forever changed from that moment forward—from that sad morning ten years ago when 2,603 lives were lost and countless other lives were sorely affected. 102 minutes.

As our nation commemorates the 10th anniversary of “911” we, too, pause to reflect on the evil that is so prevalent in today's world. But more than that, we focus our hearts of faith on the never-changing truth that:

OUR GOD WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS & JUSTICE FOR ALL WHO ARE OPPRESSED!

Just as we cannot, and should not, forget the significance of this day to the world around us, so also we “forget not” the benefits and blessings of a God who has always been in the business of freeing His people from the terror of sin in a fallen world. He did that for the children of Israel under the leadership of Moses. Moses had a fairly miraculous start to life that most of us are probably somewhat familiar with—even if we've only seen Disney's “Prince of Egypt.” Hidden from pharaoh, king of Egypt's murderous henchmen who had orders to kill Hebrew baby boys the moment they were born; set adrift among the reeds on the banks of the Nile River in a pitch-covered “ark”; discovered by pharaoh's daughter at her bathing site; returned to his own mother at his sister, Miriam's suggestion, to be nursed and trained in the ways of Jehovah; raised as if he were pharaoh's own son in the royal palace, only to flee in fear of his adoptive father once it was discovered that he'd killed an Egyptian slave master for beating one of his own countrymen.



Moses was 40 years old when he fled Egypt. He lived for the next 40 years in the desert of Sinai, serving as a shepherd until the angel of the LORD—God Himself—commissioned him from a burning bush to return to the land of his birth and deliver His people, Israel, out of their captivity and lead them back to Canaan, the land He had promised on oath to their forefathers. Ten plagues later, pharaoh let God’s people go, with Moses at the helm of thousands. At Mount Sinai—Moses’ old stomping grounds—the LORD revealed Himself to Moses unlike He had to any other human being since Adam. While on the mountain, Moses asked God, “Now show me your glory.” God replied, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live” (Ex. 33:18-20). While on Sinai, the LORD inscribed His “ten words” on stone tablets so that every generation could be certain of His moral standard for them. Down from the mountain came Moses, only to find that God’s people—who’d grown impatient at the amount of time he’d been gone—had Aaron forge a golden calf from the jewelry they’d been given by the Egyptians. They were indulging in pagan revelry around their idol when Moses returned. We read, “his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces . . . And he took the calf . . . and burned it in the fire; then he ground it into powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it” (Ex. 32:19-20). What an apt punishment for their flagrant idolatry! At that time, the Levites showed their zeal for God’s commands by going throughout the camp and putting to the sword 3,000 Israelite idolaters. Nevertheless, despite their sinful rebellion, the LORD had compassion on them. We’re told, “The next day Moses said to the people, ‘You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin’” (v. 30). Moses pleaded with the LORD, “please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (v. 32). True to form, the LORD had compassion on those who repented of their sins but reserved punishment for those who refused to do so. As He told Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy.”

And so it is today! That truth enables us to rejoice with King David in the words of our text: “Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name . . . [for] The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.” God has freed us from the greatest terror of all—the horrors of dying eternally in the fires of hell. Jesus passed through those flames for us, bearing the full weight of our sin and guilt before God while on the cross, and coming out the other side as our true, triumphant Savior. He took upon His sinless self all of our idolatrous thoughts, words and actions—every single one of the many times you and I have put other things, relationships, or substances above Him in our hearts and lives. We might look down on the Israelites for bowing down to a god of gold, but we have no reason whatsoever to boast before the LORD when it comes to how we’ve lived our lives in the light of His “ten words.” As Martin Luther put it: “we daily sin much and indeed deserve nothing but punishment” at the hands of an angry God. But in our place, He punished His Son!



So where does that leave us on this 10th anniversary of “911”? Well, it most certainly finds us lamenting the evil that is so apparent in our society; fearful of further terrorist attacks; and just plain sad and hurting for those families and friends not only of the victims of those tragic events of a decade ago, but also for the many other citizens of the world that have suffered and died as a result of the international war on terrorism. 102 minutes: 102 minutes that forever changed our world that fateful Tuesday morning. One dark Friday: one dark Friday, some 2,000 years ago on a hill known as “The Place of the Skull” outside the walls of Jerusalem, events occurred that forever changed the eternal fate of all mankind. The Son of God, and Son of Man, cried out in victory over sin, death and the devil but one word in NT Greek: tetelestai! “It is finished!” Your sins, my sins, and the sins of all mankind had been paid for in full! And because God’s Spirit has brought us to believe that saving truth, we magnify the Triune God with David today and every day: “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

How do we respond to the evil in our world, to the diabolical deeds the devil still perpetrates in the hearts and minds of the souls that still belong to him by unbelief? We respond the way Christ did; the way He would want us to: with a sincere desire for peace on His terms. When Jesus approached Jerusalem during Holy Week, he wept over its unbelieving inhabitants, lamenting: “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes” (Lk. 19:42). What makes for peace? The world thinks its political agreements, diplomacy, military threats, law enforcement, good psychology, cultural exchanges, education and economic prosperity. And all of these things can be beneficial. At the very least, they create a superficial absence of conflict. But that lull in the action can be disrupted by one suicide bomber, one lone gunman, one contentious lawsuit, one harsh word or one bitter spirit. Even if the entire world were to agree that conflict, at any level, is undesirable, one dissenter could set off waves of violence with one small act of resistance. Witness Muammar Gaddafi.

Friends, the key to peace is not political, economic, social or psychological. It is spiritual. And Jesus, the Prince of Peace, is the One who holds that key. Because, you see, real peace involves a change of heart. Contracts can’t do that. Neither can treaties, nor armies, judges or security forces. The only thing that can change a human heart—*really change it*—is the gospel of Jesus. It’s the only thing that reconciles a heart to God, and it’s the only thing that fundamentally alters the fallen nature we’re born with. What can we do to create peace on this violent planet? We can try to encourage it, enforce it, legislate it, financially support it & socially or psychologically orchestrate it. But all, alas, to know lasting avail. For unless our efforts reach the human heart, we’ll only create an artificial absence of conflict for a brief segment of time, at best. To be a true peacemaker, we must introduce people to the only power on the planet that can change a heart from within—Jesus. His Spirit reconciles a person to God and transforms human relationships. Let His Spirit work through you in this post-9/11 world we live in! Be a peacemaker. And you—and your world—will be blessed: not only for time, but above all, for eternity. Amen.