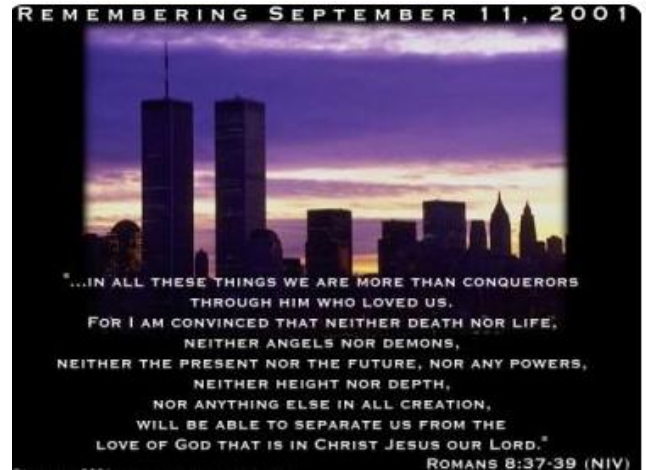


## 9/11 – Lessons Learned

I had just returned to work after an early morning meeting. As I walked through the door, everyone was huddled around a TV screen, with tears in their eyes and a look of fear on their faces. Just a few minutes later, the second plane hit the South tower of the World Trade Center. It was the beginning of a horrible day in our nation's history.



Our country temporarily came together that day. The divisions that put us at odds with each other no longer mattered. For the next few weeks, we acted like we were “one nation under God.” People turned to God for comfort and strength. *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1).*

In a powerful address at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC (September 14, 2001), the Rev. Billy Graham encouraged us and spoke of lessons learned. Billy Graham said (paraphrased):

- (1) God is a God of love, mercy, and compassion in the midst of suffering. (Read Exodus 3:7-8).
- (2) In an attack designed to tear us apart as a nation, the opposite happened. Even members of Congress stood shoulder-to-shoulder as they sang “God Bless America.” We celebrated the courageous first responders and the long lines of people waiting to donate blood.
- (3) There is hope for the present and the future. This tragic event ignited spiritual renewal. The Bible tells us that if we repent of our sins and return to Him, He will bless us – now, and in the future. (Read 2 Corinthians 7:14).

Billy Graham reminded us that the longevity of our lives on earth is uncertain. At the beginning of that day, no one in the path of those 9/11 airplanes knew they were in their final day here on earth. We, too, don't know when our final moments will be. We need to commit ourselves to God as we seek a heavenly destination in the next life.

The majestic towers in NYC were built on solid manmade foundations, made with human ingenuity and engineering. Yet, they crumbled and imploded under the impact of evil. The foundation of faith for many people was strengthened that day as more people came to Christ. Evil doesn't destroy what God builds – only our indifference over time can implode it. As a nation, we have drifted away again. Instead of being people who use God as a temporary crutch, let us build the foundation of an indestructible relationship with Jesus Christ. He carries us through the struggles of life as we seek an eternal home in Heaven. The Bible says, *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Unfortunately, evil will strike again. It is human nature. Let us put our faith in God and seek to be like Him. Then, we will rise above the perils of this world and live in peace. *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27).* Live your life as if today were your last day, not allowing your mind to drift into indifference. Stay strong in your faith, through good times and bad, and your future is assured. Live your life in peace.

**Closing Prayer:** Loving Heavenly Father. We seek your peace as we live in this world and look forward to the next. Amen.