

Facing the Attack:  
Questions that must be answered

9/11: It's no longer just a call for emergency, now it is date of infamy. Let's look at what took place that day 10 years ago:

At 8:45 AM (EDT), Sept. 11, 2001, a hijacked American Airlines Flight 11 out of Boston, Mass. was flown as a missile of destruction into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York. The impact tore a gaping hole and started intense fires.

At 9:03 AM a second hijacked airliner, United Airlines Flight 175 from Boston, crashed into the south tower of the World Trade Center and exploded. Both buildings were blazing with unbelievable heat.

9:43 a.m.: a third hijacked plane, American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon.

At 10:05 AM the south tower of the World Trade Center collapsed, plummeting into the streets below burying rescue workers and people trying to escape the attack.

At 10:10 AM a fourth hijacked plane, United Airlines Flight 93, crashed in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, after being overtaken by passengers and crewman who gave their lives to prevent even further terrorist destruction.

At 10:28 AM, the World Trade Center's north tower collapsed, again raining concrete and steel upon those trying to escape.

And the face of a nation changed forever. As our courageous president so properly put it, "thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil." The fact of the matter is that most of us have little of any example, or frame of reference from which to even begin to understand what has happened to us. Unless you possibly served in the jungles of Viet Nam or you can remember the bombing of Pearl Harbor, you have no experiences to prepare you to even comprehend what had happened. Today, 10 years after, this violent attack continues to rock our nation and our lives. In most wars throughout the ages, the casualty rates have typically been 80% military and 20% civilian. In this act of war, the casualty rate is more like 95% civilian and 5% military.

The last time American soil was so savagely attacked was almost 70 years ago on December 7, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was ravaged by the Japanese. 2,390 lives were lost and our country was plunged into the darkness of World War II. Almost 70 years later, we find our nation once again ravaged by an act of terrorism, an act of war. Only this time, between those lost on the airplanes, and those killed in the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon, the loss of lives was 2,976. Those horrific pictures will forever be etched into our mind, and the heinous reality of terror will forever be engraved on our souls. In fact 10 years after this monstrous act was committed, there are still some questions that must be answered. They are questions that plague our soul, and they are questions that I must attempt to answer for you this morning.

1) 10 years later we as a nation are still asking the question: **why do these things happen?**

That's the place to start. We need to understand why things like this happen in our world. And this is far more than asking the logistics question of how that many terrorists could have hijacked that many planes at the same time. This is not a question of logistics, it's a question of life. Why do things like this happen in our world? It's not the first time, and I fear it will not be the last time, that murderous violence is thrust upon mass numbers of people. In our lifetime alone:

We have seen mass slaughter in Rwanda, Zaire, and Rhodesia.

We have seen Bosnia and the killing Fields of Cambodia.

And we must never forget the holocaust of Hitler.

When we step back for just a moment, we realize that these violent acts have happened more often in the history of mankind than we want to admit. And so the question must be answered: why do these things happen? That's a question our society has been asking for some time now.

If you were like me, you could not get away from the media coverage the weeks after 9/11. During that time people were trying to answer this simple question, why do these things happen? Can I tell you honestly that some of the answers that were given were scary. I noticed the inaccurate and improbable and inappropriate answers that were given. I remember hearing one of the major networks broadcast a report with a guy claiming that it is nature of religion for these things to happen. He said it was that nature of religion, no matter which religion, to carry out such acts. He was blaming religion as a whole for this. Our culture has continue to ask the question, "why do these things happen," and we need to be giving them the correct answer.

So, what is the correct answer? Why do these things happen? Well, the truth of the matter is that such inhumanity has two sources. There are really two reasons why these things happen:

1) The first is because of the sinfulness of man.

Listen to God's take on this subject, **"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight."** (James 4:1-2) There is a sinfulness bound up in the heart of men and women, and that sinfulness given free reign in life, will lead to untold acts of wickedness. The prophet Jeremiah says, **"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"** (Jer. 17:9) We have lulled ourselves into believing that's not the truth. We have deceived ourselves in our world today into believing that all people are good by nature and that this world is getting better and better. The attack of Tuesday September 11, 2001 should have forever convince you that there is a sinfulness and wickedness bound up in the heart of humanity, and that is exactly why things like this happen. Dr. Albert Einstein, in a lecture given in 1948, spoke of the nature of man in relation to the world: "The true problem lies in the hearts and thoughts of men. It is not a physical but an ethical one.... What terrifies us is not the explosive force of the atomic bomb, but the power of the wickedness of the human heart." These things continue to happen because there is a wickedness bound up in the human heart of sin that can strike with murderous results.

2) These things happen not only because of the sinfulness of man, they also happen because of the sinisterness of Satan.

These things happen because there is an evil one loose in this world and he is out to destroy anything and everything he can get his hands upon. Jesus told us that in John 10:10 when he described Satan as a thief. He simply said, **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."** (John 10:10) He also said that **"The devil was a murderer from the beginning."** (John 8:44) Scripture makes it very clear that the devil is waging war against God. He can't win, he can't hurt God. So, instead he hurts the people that God has created as a way to hurt God. Rev. 12 and Daniel 10 remind us that this world has become the staging ground for that battle, and so it should be no surprise to us that these things happen. It is a part of the sinisterness of Satan waging war on God and his people.

Oh, I realize that we are too educated and too sophisticated now to believe in the devil. It's frightening, but we have lulled ourselves into believing that evil only exists in the fiction books and the horror movies. We have lulled ourselves into believing that there is no devil lose in this world, but there is. And the signs of his handy work are the murderous and the heinous and the vile acts that continue to occur throughout this world. *Victor Frankl, the eminent Psychiatrist and former inmate at a Nazi concentration camp relates his story of the "first selection" that occurred upon disembarking from the prisoner transport at Auschwitz.*

*A tall SS officer stood in front of the prisoners as they slowly filed by. Frankl describes it in this way: "His right hand was lifted, and with the forefinger of that hand he pointed very leisurely to the right or to the left. None of us had the slightest idea of the sinister meaning behind that little movement of a man's finger, pointing now to the right and now to the left."*

*Very quickly they learned the meaning in the finger. When it pointed to the left, the victim proceeded straight through the gates into the gas chamber and crematorium. Those directed to the right earned a temporary reprieve in that they would be utilized as slave labor.*

*The people who were cremated alive had committed no crime other than being Jewish or Christian or old or crippled or diseased. Yet, with but the flick of a finger a man could determine LIFE OR DEATH! Life in a slave labor camp or death in a Nazi gas chamber or crematorium. As you well know, 6,000,000 people were killed in such a manner under the evil reign of Adolf Hitler!*

Why do these things happen? They happen because of the sinfulness of man and the sinisterness of Satan.

2) Not only must we answer the question why do these things happen, we must also answer the question: **what hope do we have?**

What hope do we have? That is a serious question. If the devil is loose in this world, and he is killing and destroying people, and the wickedness of the sinful nature of people lead them to unspeakable mayhem. Is that all of it? Do we just throw up our hands in frustration and say I give up? Isn't there any hope? I stand before you today to tell you with absolute certainty that there is hope, because of Jesus Christ, there is always hope. Listen to the words of Christ in John 16:33, **"In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world."** (John 16:33) In this world you will have trouble. That's not a statement of fatalism, that is a state of realism. Because of the sinfulness of man and the sinisterness of Satan, you will have trouble.

But that's not the end of it. Take heart, I have overcome the world. There is hope, because there is Jesus, there is always hope. That is what I want you to hear from me this morning, and hear it very clearly: **Because of Jesus Christ, there is always hope.** We are not alone, God has not left us or abandoned us. These things do not happen because God is unable or unwilling to do anything about them. They happen because he gave people the freedom to choose their own course of action in life. And because they have that freedom, sometimes they choose to do evil things. And sometimes they choose to cooperate with Satan in maiming and killing and destroying people by flying airplanes into the sides of buildings. That's why these things happen.

But we are not left alone to face them. We are not abandoned, and we are not helpless. God's presence and God's provision and God's protection are still very real. And because of that, not only must we realize that we are not alone, we must also realize that we will overcome! **"In this world you will have trouble, but take heart. I have overcome the world."** We may all be victims at times, but you and I can also be victorious. Christ has overcome and so can you. Evil will be punished and defeated, sometimes in this world, but always in the world to come. There is always hope because there is Jesus. *In 1958, a U.S. soldier wandered the streets of Berlin to see the sights. Despite the bustling new life in parts of the city, reminders remained of the destruction of World War II.*

*Walking through a residential area one evening, across the cobblestone street he saw an open space edged with flowers. In the center stood the stone front of what had been a church. The building was no longer there, but the rubble had been cleared away in an attempt to fill the empty space with a little park.*

*The former church's main door was shaped in a Gothic arch, and over it was carved into the stone in German: HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL PASS AWAY BUT MY WORDS WILL NOT PASS AWAY.*

What a tremendous testimony to hope. Havoc and heart ache, terror and torment, war and brutality. They will pass away, but God and his word will never pass away. There is always hope because there is Jesus.

3) Not only must we answer the questions why do these things happen and what hope do we have, but we must also answer the question: **what should we do?**

Our world changed on Sept 11 2001. How do we go on from here? I find that there are 2 steps to moving on in a world of chaos and confusion.

1) The first is this: **Secure** your faith in **Christ**.

Now, look at 1 Peter 3:14-15 and let me try to explain that, **“But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.**” (1 Pet 3:14-15) These words were addressed to a people who were suffering unbelievable mayhem. The persecutions had begun. Some of these Christians were tortured and flogged, some of them were fed to the lions, some of them were crucified, some of them were covered with tar and pitch and set on fire. These people were being maimed and killed. It was an attack of the evil one. And Peter who had known Jesus personally, wanted to give the people a word of direction. He wanted them to know what they should do. And so the first thing he told them to do was to secure their faith in Christ, **“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.”** (1 Peter 3:15) The first and most important thing you must do in order to face this radically changed future is to secure your faith in Christ.

Make sure that you have a personal relationship with Jesus. He is the only one who can carry you through this. He is the only one who can defeat the enemy. He is the only one who can give you hope and help. But you must make sure that you have secured your faith in Christ. This is not a time to be just playing around with Christianity. This is not a time to be wavering in your faith. This is not a time to be an uninterested spectator to the faith. This is a time to take the steps to make sure that you are a follower of Jesus Christ, and that you have secured your faith in him. No one who walked through the jet way and boarded those 4 planes on Tuesday Sept 11 2001 thought that it would be their last day on this earth, but it was. Right this moment, some of them are in heaven with Jesus. Those who had secured their faith in Christ and were ready are in heaven with him right now. The rest are not. This is no time to be wavering about the faith. Secure your faith in Christ.

And what is true for the individual is true for our nation right now. This is a wake - up call to our country to turn to God. God’s hand is upon those nations whose people have hearts turned to him. And God’s hand of protection is needed desperately right now. This is a wake - up call to repentance for our nation. We have strayed so far from God, we need to repent and return to God, because the only way to face this uncertain future is to secure your faith in Christ.

2) And then the second thing you must do is to **show** your faith to **others**.

1 Peter 3:15 says, **“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”** (1 Pet 3:15) We are to always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. Now is the time to show your faith to others. Our country is writhing in confusion and anger and uncertainty, even today, 10 years after Sept 11 2001. They need answers, and you are the one to be giving them. You are the one who must show them that the answer is Jesus Christ. You are the one who needs to have an answer to give to your classmate and your coworker. You are the one who needs to have an answer to give to your children and your relatives. You are the one who needs to have an answer to give to your neighbors and your friends. People need you to be Christ to them. They need you to tell them there is hope. They need you to tell them that they are not left alone in this world. They need you to show them your faith.

Now is the time for the church to give a witness as to the real God. Allegiance to a false god and a false religion caused the evil acts of Sept 11 2001. We must reveal to this world the real God. Our country needed to pull together then, and our country needs to pull together now. I believe that the church must be at the forefront of that as we show people our faith and how to pull together. *On Friday Sept 14, 2001, there was a memorial service in the Nation’s capital. Dr. Billy Graham spoke at that service.*

*He mentioned the fact that when the World Trade Center Towers collapsed, they imploded upon themselves into a heap of concrete and steel. But underneath all of that debris, there is a foundation that is still strong and firm.*

When we are faced with such attacks we have a choice to make. We can implode and collapse, or we can choose to rebuild on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ. My prayer is that we as believers will so show our faith to others in these days that they will choose to rebuild on that foundation of faith. *It is entitled, "Where was your God when the World Trade Center and Pentagon were attacked" and it reads like this:*

*"Where was your GOD when the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked?" Well I know where my GOD was the morning of September 11, 2001, and He was very busy!*

*He was trying to discourage anyone from taking these flights. Those four flights together held over 1000 passengers and there were only 266 aboard.*

*He was on 4 commercial flights giving terrified passengers the ability to stay calm. Not one of the family members who were called by a loved one on one of the hi-jacked planes said that passengers were screaming in the background. On one of the flights he was giving strength to passengers to try to overtake the hi-jackers.*

*He was busy trying to create obstacles for employees at the World Trade Center. After all, only around 20,000 were at the towers when the first jet hit. Since the buildings held over 50,000 workers, this was a Miracle in itself. How many of the people who were employed at the World Trade Center told the media that they were late for work or they had traffic delays.*

*He was holding up 2-110 story buildings so that [5/6] of the workers could get out. I was so amazed that the top of the towers didn't topple when the jets impacted. And when they did fall, they fell inward. GOD didn't allow them to topple over, as many more lives would have been lost. And when the buildings went down, my GOD picked up his children and carried them home with him. Reassuring his frightened children that the worst was over and the best was yet to come.*

*He sat down and cried that 19 of his children could have so much hate in their hearts; that they didn't choose him, but another God that doesn't exist, and now they are lost forever.*

*He sent his children that are best trained for this disaster and had them save the few that were still alive, but unable to help themselves. And then sent many others to help in anyway they were needed.*

*He still isn't finished though, He held the love ones that were left behind in His arms. He comforts them daily. His other children are given the strength to reach out to them and help them in any way they can. And I believe He will continue to help us in what is to come. He will give the people in charge of this great nation the strength and the wisdom to do the right thing. He would never leave us in our time of need.*

*So when anyone asks, "**Where was your GOD on September 11**", you can say "**everywhere**"! And yes, although this is without a doubt the worst thing I have seen in my life, I see God's miracles in every bit of it.*

There is a way forward in these days, my friends. But that will take securing your faith in Christ and showing your faith to others. If you are someone here today who has not yet taken the step of becoming a follower of Jesus Christ, I want to encourage you to take that step today. And those of you who belong to Christ, I want to encourage you to sink the roots of your faith down deep in the soil of God's promises and show your faith to a questioning world. The world is asking, "Do you have the answer?"

Facing the Attack:  
Questions that must be answered  
Sunday September 11, 2011 am

3 questions that still need answered 10 years later:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ do these things \_\_\_\_\_?

2 reasons why:

The \_\_\_\_\_ of man

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. (James 4:1-2)

The \_\_\_\_\_ of Satan

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."  
(John 10:10)

"The devil was a murderer from the beginning." (John 8:44)

2) What \_\_\_\_\_ do we \_\_\_\_\_?

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Because of \_\_\_\_\_, there is \_\_\_\_\_ hope.

3) What should \_\_\_\_\_ do?

a) \_\_\_\_\_ your faith in \_\_\_\_\_.

But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened."  
But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. (1 Pet 3:14-15)

b) \_\_\_\_\_ your faith to \_\_\_\_\_.

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. (1 Pet 3:15)

Where was your God on September 11, 2001 - \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have the answer?