

Thoughts on the Catastrophe Avoided

On Thursday morning we woke up to a new world. There was a plan discovered that could have taken as many lives as 9/11. How thankful we are that in God's mercy the United States and her allies have been spared this cataclysmic event. Many thoughts are working in my praying heart as I contemplate what is happening.

1. God is good.

Only the Lord knows the many different catastrophes that may have been averted by God's providence that only Heaven will reveal. Even in the midst of catastrophes that have come, we find that God gives His people strength to carry on. *"Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered"* (Psalm 40:5).

2. Let us repent.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" II Chronicles 7:14). As I have communicated and enjoyed the privilege of speaking with some of the most spiritually minded people in our country, I find a singular consensus of opinion. First of all, God has been merciful to us and after 9/11 many came to the Lord and rededicated their lives, but now our country as a whole has forgotten the goodness of God and now have begun to turn their back on His graciousness. A nation-wide and even local revival that would effect a change could be the way in which God would heal our land and provide us with further protection. Our revival theme for our Fall program could not come at a better time!

3. Pray for those in civil authority.

"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same" Romans 13:3. How thankful we should be that our country is not in the category of terrorists. More than ever we need to pray that our troops, the President and his staff, Homeland Security, the CIA, the FBI, the ATF, our local police and detective forces will be given Divine wisdom to execute their job in fullest capability. *"For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil"* (Romans 13:4). *"I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"* (II Timothy 2:1,2).

4. Shine!

Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* As the civil warriors do what they must do, let us all as Christians show forth the love of Christ and holiness of purpose to a world that needs our Lord. It may seem paradoxical, but we can do what we must do and be loving at the same time. May I remind you that America is the same country that dropped the A-bomb on Japan, but after World War II, America helped put them back together and actually caused an economic boom to that country that exists to this day. And if any would doubt it, try taking a trip across the country or across town and count the number of Japanese automobiles. Through the holocaust and devastation of Germany, America became equally involved in helping put the broken pieces of Germany back together and never gave up on her economically and even did her best to protect her from foreign problems. America stayed with Germany through the cold war so that today with the iron curtain torn down, America helped lead an entire nation into economic and civil freedom. And again, should you doubt the positive influence of America on her defeated enemies, take the same trip I mentioned earlier and count the German automobiles on American highways.

It has been estimated there was a greater percentage of practicing Christianity during and just after World War II than there is today. Let us allow the Christians of the greatest generation teach us the need to stand strong against wrong and shine forth as lights in a dark world! Let us shine by our love; *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13:35). Let us first and, most importantly, love the Lord with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves (Luke 10:27). Let us also love our enemies and pray for their salvation (Luke 6:27, 28). Let us shine by living a holy life. You remember in the Scriptures when David sinned by committing adultery he caused more problems than he premeditated, because Nathan said, *"Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme..."* (II Samuel 12:14). Punishment was meted out because of King David's sin. One of the punishments was the heathen were given occasion to blaspheme. Blaspheme means to condemn and spurn our faith. Therefore, live in such a way, *"...that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16).

5. Be constant.

Finally, in the matter of love and holiness, let us be consistent. May God help us not to wait for another wake-up call. May we be constant in our peacetime as well as the time of war, when there is no alert or red alert. There is a story of a man who was on his roof for roof repair and lost this balance and was tumbling off the roof, heading for a sure fall and injury. On the way down, he screamed, "Lord, help me!" At that moment his pants snagged an exposed nail, holding him fast. Then he calmly said, "Never mind, Lord." The truth is, we need the Lord when we are tumbling to a fall and we need Him when everything appears to be going well. Let us move away from the "foxhole mentality." There is never a time when we don't need to pray, love and be what God wants us to be in the matter of full dedication to Him.

- Pastor Pope -

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