

## **15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Falling Towers – Thailer Jimerson**

Today marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the worst attack ever on American soil. Today we remember the 2,752 lives were lost, fifteen years ago. Today we remember the wreckage fires that weren't fully extinguished for nearly 100 days, fifteen years ago. Today we remember the more than 1000 people who have since been diagnosed with cancer from the toxic fumes created near ground zero, who contracted this for simply being first responders to this tragedy.

For some, now, it's just history; this year's freshmen will be the first high school class that wasn't even alive in 2001. But for others, they can remember where they were. I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Westlake Elementary, Indianapolis. School stopped. We were on our way to recess when all the teachers left and were watching the televised events. We knew something was up – but it wasn't until I was home that my mom told me what was happening.

In remembrance of this event, what can we do today?

First, we can take time to actually remember. "Never forget September 11<sup>th</sup>." Take time to recall where you were. Take time to share your stories with your family. Take time to honor in your memory those who lost their lives, and those who selflessly through their lives down to help those in need.

Secondly, pray for the families, for the government and for our enemies. Today will you take time in your prayers to remember the families that are mourning the loss of their loved ones? Will you lift them up to God for comfort? Will you pray for our government – and its leaders - to have God's wisdom in upholding justice and showing his mercy and being, as best as they can, an accurate representation of His light in this world? Will you pray for those who have designated themselves as our national enemies, and even enemies of the Christian faith? Will you pray that God would grant repentance that leads to a knowledge of the truth, so that those lost would escape the snare of Satan and come to know the Lord who died for them?

Lastly, can we respond scripturally to moments of disaster and tragedy? So many have postulated or presumed that the towers falling was evidence of God's judgment against our nation. And, of course, those thoughts are not entirely without merit when considering the calamitous judgments of God according to the prophets. But I don't think that's appropriate here – at least not the appropriate response to tragedy. What does Jesus say in an eerily similar incident in **Lk.13.4-5**: "Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Notice this: Jesus could have reasoned an explanation for the fall of Siloam's tower – but he didn't. Instead, he shifted the focus off the tragedy and what it meant for those involved, to those questioning and what it ultimately meant for them. Jesus says "No one is worse because they experience such tragedies – but we will all stand before God in judgment, and so you are to take every opportunity to be reminded of the state of your soul against the backdrop of such horrors. Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." Jesus tells us in the face of tragedy to concern ourselves with ourselves, to shift our gaze inwardly and make sure we're ever penitent of our sin.