September 11, 2011

Proverbs 4:10-15,20-27

 Good Morning, my Sisters and Brothers in Christ. I greet you this morning in the name of One who has promised to direct our paths - if we let Him; One who has promised to provide for our every need - if we trust Him; One who has promised to never leave us or forsake us - if we obey Him. The psalmist, the modern day songwriter said:

Trust and Obey

For there is no other way

To be happy in Jesus

But to Trust and Obey

If you are working to trust and obey Him this morning then I invite you to stand on your feet and praise Him. Praise Him for directing you. Praise Him for keeping you. Praise Him for providing for you.

 It has been an exciting week since we last gathered. We began a new Adult Bible Study and 24 people attended one of the two Wednesday classes. The Kingdom Seekers are also starting a new curriculum and they have been blessed with new Bibles for their classrooms. For all of this we are thankful, but we need to also remember to give God all the glory.

 This is also a day of remembrance. As I looked and read many of the stories of courage from 9/11; as I looked with horror at the photos of the events and the aftermath; as I considered all the events planned to honor 2,977 innocent victims from more than 70 countries who lost their lives at the hands of 19 hijackers that day, and an additional 411 emergency workers who died in their efforts to help save lives I asked God to show me, tell me what do you preach on the 10th Anniversary of 9/11.

 One of the websites I consulted had a list of dos and don't for this day - do say something - don't ignore it! One site suggested letting a few folks tell their story - for we each have a story. A memory of where we were; what we were doing; who called to tell us to turn on the TV; and whom we called to tell. If we were too young to remember Pearl Harbor, then this was a day we could not believe. Our country was under attack!

 But the questions remained. How do the people of God react? How do the people of God respond? How do the people of God remember?

 I invite you to stay with me for just a few minutes and while I speak as God gives wisdom on REACTING, RESPONDING AND REMEMBERING.

SHALL WE PRAY! God, there are people this morning that are still grieving and reliving in detail the horrors of 9/11. God, there are people this morning that cannot hear the good news of the gospel. God, there are people this morning that do not know you for themselves - for all of them and each of them we pray.

Now Father, I ask you to help us not to be one of those people, but instead to be a light to those people. Give us a Word this morning that will help us to provide light and show the world the peace and love that comes from knowing you. In the name of Jesus we pray. AMEN

**REACTING, RESPONDING AND REMEMBERING**

**REACTING**

 Many of us react to life with conversation.

 children - talk about their good and their bad

 significant others -

 church folk

 In our conversation we say what we feel; we voice our woulda, coulda, shoulda and we even make mental plans of how we will react next time. Depending on the severity of the situation we might use language that is not Christ like; we might look for someone to blame; we might even take out our anger and frustration on the wrong person.

Solomon in his wisdom - in the wisdom granted him by God says:

**23** Above all else, guard your heart,

for it is the wellspring of life.

**24** Put away perversity from your mouth;

keep corrupt talk far from your lips.

If we are able to follow this advice we will be able to move beyond our hatred for the people and the country of the 19 hijackers and move toward a place of forgiveness and prayer.

**RESPONDING**

 Again let us think about how we respond to the unthinkable, the unimaginable, and the almost unbelievable. Well, if you are like many of us you call on the name of God. Our country, collectively and individually was no different. The country, which removed public prayer from schools in 1962, was now asking "God to Bless America". There was for a period of time a rebirth of God language and thought in the collective conscious of the American people. But by 2004 - just three years after 9/11 symbols of Christianity were removed from public places. No crosses for Easter, no stars for Christmas, no mention of the One we asked to **bless** us in any of the buildings where we make laws, carry out judgment and teach our children.

 Our responding to crisis was for just a moment. But what does Solomon say:

 **13** Hold on to instruction, do not let it go;

guard it well, for it is your life.

Does not the Bible - our instruction book tell us to pray continually, pray unceasing, to constantly be in the mind of prayer. Is it not the prayers of the faithful and the righteous that availeth much?

**REMEMBERING**

It is important to remember. Remembering helps us to avoid mistakes. Remembering helps us to learn new things. Remembering helps us stay focused. But it is impossible to remember what we do not know.

 We cannot remember God's Word, if we do not know it. We cannot remember to follow instructions we have not been taught. We cannot remember to forgive if we do not understand the importance of forgiveness.

 For me the most important thing to remember about this day is to remember to forgive.

 Forgive those who planned the attacks

 Forgive those who carried out the attacks

 Forgive those who taught and continue to teach that

 war solves problems

 Forgive those that believe revenge will bring about peace

 Forgive those who want peace without God

 Forgive those who use the events of terrorism to instill fear

 Forgive us when we don't do anything to help your Kingdom to come.

 Forgive us we act like the problems of this world belong to them and not us

 Forgive us when we forget the instructions of your Son:

**37** Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

**38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

**40** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”