FBC's Duty at this Time of Crisis in NYC

(Selected Scriptures)
9/23/01



Introduction:

*** At this time of crisis, we, believers have some spiritual obligations to fulfill**

I. **<u>Repent of Sin</u> and seek the Lord who may be beginning to chasten our Nation due to it's sin & rebellion against Him**
(Habakkuk 1:5-11; 2:2-4; II Chronicles 7:14)

II. **<u>Redeem the Time</u> by taking advantage of this opportunity and responsibility to minister to lost & hurting souls** (Col. 4:5)

III. **<u>Pray for Revival</u> for yourself personally and for the believers of our country**
(Psalm 85:6)

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Introduction:
The biggest terrorist attack in US History, the destruction of the Pentagon and the Fall of the Twin Towers in NYC teaches us…

1. *A Lesson on the* Depravity of Man
2. *A Lesson on the* Vulnerability of any work of man in the physical world
3. *A Lesson on the* Brevity & Uncertainty of Life on Earth
4. *A Lesson on the* Urgency for America to Wake Up and to Respond to God's Chastening
5. *A Lesson on the* Importance of People
6. *A Lesson revealing that* the Secret to Unity is working together for a Common Cause
7. *A Lesson to* Pray for and Support those in Governmental Authority
8. *A Lesson on the* Deep Rooted Arab-Israeli Conflict and America's Role in that Conflict
9. *A Lesson on* Bible Prophecy and the events to occur in the Last Days
10. *A Lesson on* Sacrifice to save others

*** At this time of crisis, we, believers have some spiritual obligations to fulfill**

I. Repent of Sin and seek the Lord who may be beginning to chasten our Nation due to it's sin & rebellion against Him

(Habakkuk 1:5-11; 2:2-4; II Chronicles 7:14)

The context of II Chronicles 7 involves the dedication of the newly-built Temple by Solomon.

This wonder of the ancient world--decked with gold, silver, and precious stones--was magnificent to behold. It was a place of sacrifice. A place of vicarious offerings for sin. Animals would be brought and sacrificed here in anticipation of the great and complete propitiatory sacrifice Christ would one day make on this same holy mount.

READ: 5:1 - The Temple is finished

5:13, 14 - God's glory fills the Temple

6:18-21 - Solomon's praise and prayer

6:24-30, 33,35,39 - Solomon's continual plea for God to hear the requests made in or toward this Temple (which was a temporary place of propitiation - Our place of pardon is Calvary)

7:1-5 - The Temple is dedicated

READ 7:12, 13 - God is sovereign over all events, even drought, plague, and pestilence. [The reason for such catastrophes on Israel would be because of disobedience to His Law; such disobedience would place them under a curse (Dt. 28).]

Misfortune and misery are directly linked to a people's abandonment of God and His Word.

V. 14

"My people" - In context, a reference to the Israelites, who were to be called "people of Yahweh."

The one reason why God would send trouble upon the land and lives of His people is because of their backslidings. God's law of sowing and reaping is avoided by no one, not even God's people.

Although originally given specifically to the nation of Israel, the principles found in this verse are applicable to the Church today. The responsibilities of humility, prayer, seeing God's face, and repentance are repeated in both the New Testament Gospels and Epistles.

If there was ever a time you <u>loved</u> God more, you are backslidden.
If there was ever a time you <u>served</u> God more, you are backslidden.
If there was ever a time you <u>enjoyed</u> God's company more, you are backslidden.
If there was every a time you found more <u>fulfillment</u> in God's <u>work</u>, you are backslidden.

Everyone who backslides does so for four reasons. Satan sidetracks people four ways:

--<u>Pride</u>
--<u>Prayerlessness</u>
--<u>Preoccupation</u> (other things become more important)
--<u>Pollution</u> from the <u>pleasures</u> of sin

True believers often <u>temporarily drift</u> from an intimate fellowship with their heavenly Father. (Permanent apostasy is indicative of the fact that the were never saved to begin with.)

***God will <u>respond</u> to the heart that returns to Him.**

How must you return? You must return to God with:

A. A <u>HUMBLE</u> Heart

It was pride which always led to Israel's abandonment of God. In the Old Testament, when she abandoned God, judgment (chastisement) always followed.

"Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18).

God *"will destroy the house of the proud"* (Prov. 15:25).

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility." (Prov. 18:12)

"Humble themselves" - No one can humble you. They might humiliate you, but only you can humble yourself.

Humility is simply seeing yourself for who you <u>really</u> are. It is having an <u>accurate</u> view of yourself. The ancient Greeks said, "Humility is <u>truth</u>." Truth about yourself.

People have an <u>over-inflated</u> view of themselves because they have an <u>under-inflated</u> (inadequate, low) view of God.

Your view of God will determine your view of yourself.

No one saw the sovereign omnipotent holiness of God without immediately attaining a humble view of themselves (EX: Isaiah, Job, Peter, John, Israel [II Chron. 7:3]).

The psalmist said, *"When I consider the works of Thy hands. . . What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"*

We are like *"grasshoppers"* (Is. 40:22).

Why does humility head the list in verse 14? Answer:

1) No one sincerely ***"prays"*** who is not humble

   In pride the have puffed up feelings of <u>self-sufficiency</u>.

   "I don't need anything from God."

2) No one ***"seeks God's face"*** if the are not humble.

   In pride the flaunt their <u>independence</u>.

   "I can make it without seeking His face."

3) No one ***"turns from their wicked ways"*** if the are not humble.

   In pride they think the will escape <u>accountability</u> for their sin.

   "He caught and convicted others; I'm different, I'll get off the hook."

B. A <u>PRAYERFUL</u> Heart

The troubles of life are often God's way of getting us to pray.

We <u>should</u> pray always; we <u>must</u> pray when a crisis strikes.

"You have not because you ask not." (James 4:2)

"If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." (Jn. 14:14).

"Call unto me and I will answer thee. . ." (Jer. 33:3)

"The prayer of the upright is His delight" (Prov. 15:8)

"Could ye not watch with me <u>one hour</u>?" One hour of prayer should be a minimum, according to Jesus.

Prayer has become a "lost art" in American fundamentalism today. It is the most important exercise we can be engaged in, and yet it is the most neglected spiritual duty.

No day should begin without a <u>prayer time</u>. It is more important than showering, shaving, brushing your teeth, or eating breakfast.

The most vital occupation you can engage in is prayer.

A Pattern for Prayer:

A doration
C onfession
T hanksgiving
S upplication

--for your needs
--for others' needs
family, friends, church members, neighbors, co-workers

There has never been a revival (a mighty movement of God's Spirit) without prayer.

C. A SEEKING (devoted) Heart

Sometimes God allows affliction to come our way so we will seek Him.

"I will go [and] return to My place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek My face in their affliction the will seek Me early." (Hos. 5:15)

"Seek My face" -

--Not the face of idols or false gods (money, materialism)

--Not the face of man (*"Vain is the help of man"*)

It's amazing how quick people are to seek the face of:

--a psycho-therapist (secular shrink, worldly counsellor)

--Uncle Sam (welfare system)

--A guru; charismatic leader

. . . Rather than the God of the Universe!

How do we seek God's face?

Answer: Not by seeking signs and wonders, visions and dreams.

"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Mt. 12:39).

We seek Him by going to the place where His face is revealed. --The Word of God.

To seek God's face is to seek His help.

(Cp. how God would hide His face [i.e. help] from the wicked - Dt. 31:17, 18; 32:20)

Psalm 27:8-9 - *"When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation."*

Psalm 105:3, 4, 5 - *"Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth."*

Is. 55:6-7 - *"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."*
Jer. 29:13 - *"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."*

D. A REPENTANT Heart

God's requirement for you to recover from backsliding is to ***"turn"***
--Not cover-up your sin, but turn from it.
--Not justify your sin, but turn from it.
--Not shift the blame for our sin, but turn from it.
"Turn" - Not simply to change direction, but to return (turn back, go back) to a previous place of departure. God wants the backslider to return to the place of departure and get back on the right path; to mend the wrongs committed and reconcile with the ones wronged.

"Wicked" (ra) - Badness in general. A broad term which usually refers not only to the moral evil but to the hurtful, distressing, miserable calamities which result from the evil.

"The way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13:15).
If America does not turn from its evil, God's judgment will fall upon it (like ancient Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome).
Jer. 18:8 - *"If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."*

"Ways" (derek; akin to direction) **-** the wicked road, path, journey, or course of life must be turned from.

Why would anyone stay on a road that leads to miser, lostness, destruction?

"Then" - Then and only then.
No short cuts; no alternative routes. Only when God's four-fold path to blessing is followed can we expect to receive the promises.

"I will hear" - I will listen to your heart's request with interest and responsiveness.

"I will forgive" - I will pardon your sin and not hold it against you (from a practical standpoint) (positionally we have already been forgiven).

"I will heal" (rapha) - Like a physician, Jehovah Rapha will make healthy a society to the degree that His people influence that society.

Is God faithful to this promise? Yes. Those who seek God are blessed; those who rebel are under a curse.

Rehoboam	(II Chron. 12:1-2, 6-7, 12)
Asa	(II Chron. 14:9-12; 15:1-2; 16:7-10, 12)
Jehoshaphat	(II Chron. 18:1-3; 19:2; 20:2-4)
Uzziah	(II Chron. 26:5-7, 16)
Hezekiah	(II Chron. 32:24-26)
Josiah	(II Chron. 34:1-3, 26-28)

New Testament examples: John Mark
Simon Peter
The Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:17-24)

II. <u>Redeem the Time</u> by taking advantage of this opportunity and responsibility to minister to lost & hurting souls (Col. 4:5)

What did Moses, the Apostle Paul, John Wesley, Martin Luther, Charles Hadden Spurgeon, D.L. Moody, Jonathon Edwards, and David Livingston all have in common?

Answer: They all made a <u>tremendous impact</u> on the world

(SEE: TAN, Ill. #7668 - John Wesley)

As we look around, we see tremendous need, enormous problems, multitudes in spiritual blindness, scores of people living wasted lives of misery and lostness -- no purpose, no direction, etc. . . . When we see this, we cry out, "Oh, what can I do to change things? Even to make a dent in the world's crises."

Within many of us there is a desire to do great things! To make a change! To leave our mark! To make an impression! To have a positive effect!

It was said of Paul and Silas that they "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6)

*You can make a powerful, positive, and permanent <u>impact</u> on this world!

Verses 2 - 6 emphasize the needs of the unsaved and our appropriate response to their needs. We need to think about <u>others</u>! Each of the following phrases refers to the unsaved:

"A door of utterance" (v. 3)
"Them that are without" (v. 5)
"To answer every man" (v. 6)

2 Keys to influencing others for Heaven:

I. YOUR <u>WALK</u> (v. 5)

Cp. Eph. 5:15-16 - "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

"To walk in wisdom" - means to live wisely, to conduct our life in such a manner that our lives do not offend or become a stumbling block to any unsaved (by our inconsistency, poor testimony, etc.)

"Wisdom" is truth put into action (in life; into "shoe leather" etc.)

Hence, God is commanding us to have a walk that is not mere religious talk, but genuine Godliness.

James 3:17 - "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

I Jn. 3:18 - "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."

To walk in wisdom would certainly include:

1) Walking in "newness of life" (Ro. 6:4)

2) Walking in "the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16)

3) Walking "worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1)

4) Walking "in love" (Eph. 5:2)

5) Walking circumspectly (carefully) (Eph. 5:15)

6) Walking in the light (I Jn. 1:7)

7) Walking like Jesus walked (I Jn. 2:6)

A. Wise living is concerned about:
What Others Think (v. 5a)

"Them that are without" - those who are on the outside; those who are excluded from the fellowship of Christ, those shut out from Christianity.

"Without" - refers to the unsaved

Mark 4:11 - "And He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables."

I Cor. 5:12 - "For what have I to do to judge them that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?"

I Th. 4:12 - "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."

I Tim. 3:7 - "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without: lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

What awful predicament it is to be "without" - How terrible it is to be:

Without Christ
Without forgiveness
Without the Holy Spirit
Without Heaven
Without peace, joy
Without spiritual understanding
Without hope
Without direction
Without personal holiness
Without genuine relationships in a loving assembly

One reason why many are "without" is because as they look at some Christians who are "within" they see nothing attractive or desirable.

If we bear the name "Christian" we must rightly represent Christ (ILLUS: TAN #4999 - Alexander's namesake)

ILLUS: a preacher was followed - Dr. Will H. Houghton (SEE: Wiersbe, p. 141)

B. Wise living is concerned about:
Taking Advantage of Golden Opportunities (v. 5b)

NOTE how a life of wisdom is linked with time.

It is only as we realize the brevity of life and the importance of every moment that we live truly wise lives.

Ps. 90:12 - "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

The phrase "redeeming the time" in the context of verse 5 means:

*Make the most of every opportunity to show your unsaved friends, neighbors, and relatives the light that is in you (Mt. 5:16 - "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven")

"Redeeming the time" - this participial phrase describes the walk of the believer toward the unbelievers.

"Redeem" = to buy out; used of the market place (EX: To take advantage of a tremendous sale). **This word points to the value of time.

"The time" - 3 Greek Words for time in the N.T. -

1) "Aeon" - a long span of time; an age

2) "Kronos" - a chronological period of time

* 3) "Kairos" - a brief season of time; a moment; or brief opportunity

**This word points to the brevity (shortness) of time.

Love them; help them; tell them! You may never see them again!

Neglected opportunities often never return.

II. YOUR TALK (v. 6)

"Your speech" = lit. your word (logos); your message (same as "utterance" - v. 3)

A. Always with grace

"Alway" = no matter who you are speaking to or no matter what your are saying, at all times our speech should be gracious.

"That ye may know" - ("Oida" - an intuitive knowledge) - when put on the spot, you will not have the right words nor say them in the right way if you are not accustomed to doing so all of the time ("alway") (at home, at work, etc.)

The way you speak to your wife will affect the manner in which you share the Gospel with the lost!

"With grace" - words that give; speech that edifies because of its content and tone (how you say something is every bit as important as what you say)

Eph. 4:29 - "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

B. Seasoned with salt

"Seasoned (flavored) with salt" -

Salt has 3 key features:

1) It has a distinct savor (Mt. 5:13)
2) It has a preserving effect (Mk. 9:49-50)
3) It creates a thirst

Correspondingly, our speech to the unsaved:

1) Must be distinct from the way the world speaks (speak like a Christian should; curse words, immoral slang, obscene or corrupt words, etc. are unbecoming). Our speech should be distinctly wholesome and holy!

2) Must preserve. Your speech will either help or hurt; tear down or build up.

3) Should create a spiritual thirst

"We are to flavor and turn the conversation to tasteful and enjoyable subjects and away from corruptible and tasteless subjects" (Preacher's Outline Bible)

"Answer" - to respond to a question. In context, the question is no doubt directed toward someone who has a distinctive walk, a walk of "wisdom" (v. 5).

EX: "What is it that makes you different?"

I Peter 3:15 - "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

"Every man" - each individual one [referring to those "that are without" (v. 5) - the unsaved]

Not everyone should be answered in the same manner. The content of our message must never change, but the manner in which we deliver it, the choice of words, our tone of voice, etc. must suit the person we are dealing with. [EX: How Jesus spoke differently to the woman at the well (Jn. 4) than He did to the Pharisees (mt. 23)]

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25:11)

"A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!" (Prov. 15:23)

III. Pray for Revival for yourself personally and for the believers of our country

(Psalm 85:6)

A. The POWER of Revival is through PRAYER

("Wilt Thou. . .?)

Ex. Revival in NYC which sparked the "Great Awakening"
Ex. The Welsh Revivals

All were a result of prayer

II Chron. 7:14
Jer. 33:3
James 5:16

B. The PRODUCER of Revival is GOD

("Thou")

Revivals don't come out of the brief case of a pastor; They don't come merely because advertisement is made (flyers are mailed etc.); They don't come merely because a special speaker comes to preach. Rather, they are God-sent at His sovereign time of choosing.

C. The PURPOSE of Revival is RENEWED LIFE

("Revive . . . again")

To "re-vive" means to impart life again. Note the scene of vv.4-5. When God revives a person he is spiritually refreshed. The windows of heaven seem to open. Showers of blessing are poured out. The darkness & gloom of one's soul turns not light. The lethargy & luke-warmness of one's life turns into zeal & fire for God. Ones life becomes filled with a new burden to pray; A fresh interest in the word; A deeper love for fellow believers; A deep concern for lost souls; A genuine conviction of sin.

D. The PEOPLE of Revival are BELIEVERS

("Us . . . Thy people")

Unbelievers cannot be revived since they have never been "vived" in the first place.

E. The PRODUCT of Revival is REJOICING

("That thy people may rejoice in Thee")