

Where was God that day.....

This is what the Lord says, "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel is weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more." (Jeremiah 31:15)

It has been eight years since pathetic, twisted, self-centered madmen hijacked planes and launched an assault on our soil, drawing us vividly into the type of turmoil and unrest that up to that point we had been blessed or fortunate enough to avoid, and which some nations have lived under for decades. It was a day that cast a shadow over our nation that still robs us of some of our light and peace as a people, and a day that revealed to how vulnerable and fragile we all are. But it was also a day that revealed our strength, our faith, and our will to work for justice and support one another. Those who attacked us sought to break our spirits, but in the end they have done the opposite. Like a muscle that is broken down in order to mend and be stronger than before, our spirits as a people were emboldened by that day and so much that has happened since.

Most people still remember and can vividly speak to where they were at when those towers fell, and how that day played out for them. But more important than where any of us were at on that day is to remember where God was on that day. The small and broken men that took control of those planes did so under a delusion that their God wanted them to do it, a God that in their minds was off in some netherworld, completely detached from all that was happening here. But we know differently. We know that our God was very much present and aware and available in those first hours, and in the months and years since. We know that on that day our God was present with the police officers and firefighters who entered into those buildings knowing that there was little hope of their return. We know that God was with present to offer the promise of life and comfort for those whose lives ended in those buildings and their families, including and perhaps especially those who, in desperation and with not much left as an option to them, leapt from upper windows. We know that God was with those on the planes, including those on the flight that rose up and fought back the hijackers so that their plane crashed in a vacant field instead of a highly populated area. God was with the first responders, people like Jay Scott of rural Bucyrus, Ohio, who saw what happened and immediately began preparing to go to New York with the Red Cross and help for as long as he was needed, and the many who were there on the scene in lower Manhattan. God was weeping alongside millions of us on that day, weeping for the thousands of his children whose lives were ended that day, and weeping for the millions of others who would have to bear up under this shadow. But in the midst of that weeping, God spoke a word into our hearts, similar to the word spoken to the Israelites weeping in a time of exile. "There is hope for your future." (Jeremiah 31:17a)

And so, every day since, God has guided us to respond with that living hope and firm belief in the life that we have in Jesus Christ. God has moved in us to open ourselves to others in trust and confidence instead of withdrawing in fear and skepticism. God has sustained us. God abides. When the dust finally cleared, we were found to be standing together as a people. Not because we knew all of the answers, or because we understood the why and the what for of those vicious and dark days, and not even because we entirely knew what needed to happen next. We were found to be standing

together because of the life that holds all of us together. And that one, the one who is “I AM,” continues to be present today where God was present then. Binding the broken, reconciling the lost, granting strength and resolve for all to serve and do their part, speaking words of hope and truth into our ears., reminding us that we are a part of something so much bigger, something that no assault, offense, attack, or tragedy could ever diminish. God is here. Peace be with you on this day as you remember the unspeakable horror of September 11, 2001, and also the indescribable response that was made possible through faith, hope, and love, because God was present.

Prayer – God of our every breath, you bring calm to the troubled and stir our hardened hearts to surrender for the sake of your mission and purpose. Grant you grace to meet us in times of mourning and brokenness to find your renewal, your light, and your amazing grace as ours to claim and live under. Help us to honor this day and the lives and memory of those who were lost to it 8 years ago by sacrificing in service to others. Amen.