

IN MEMORY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

September 11, 2001

Remembering. Understanding. Hoping.

A family look at the day America was attacked, through the
lens of Scripture

ALWAYS READY · 1 PETER 3:15

Why do we remember?

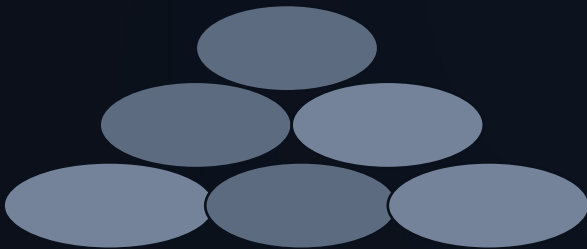
After God brought Israel across the Jordan River, He told them to pile up twelve stones.

Why? So that one day their children would ask, “What do those stones mean?” and their parents would tell them what God had done.

Tonight is a “stones” night. We remember so we can tell the truth, honor the people who were lost, and see God’s faithfulness.

“When your children ask in time to come, ‘What do those stones mean to you?’ then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD.”

JOSHUA 4:6–7 (ESV)



Before we begin: three promises



It's okay to feel sad.

Even Jesus cried when His friend Lazarus died.

“Jesus wept.” John 11:35



Ask anything.

No question is silly. You can ask tonight, tomorrow, or any time — even at bedtime.



You are safe.

This happened a long time ago, and God is with us now.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1

Where were you?

Every grown-up who was alive that day remembers where they were when they heard the news.

1 Where were you when you heard?

2 Who told you?

3 What did you feel?

4 What did our family do that night?

YOUR PHOTO OR MEMENTO

A newspaper, a photo from that year, or a picture of where you were

Three big questions

1

What happened?

The story of the day, and the helpers

2

Why did it happen?

Who did it, what they believed, and the deeper reason

3

How should we think about it?

Seeing 9/11 through God's Word, and being ready to answer

Always ready: *"always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you." 1 Peter 3:15*

PART 1

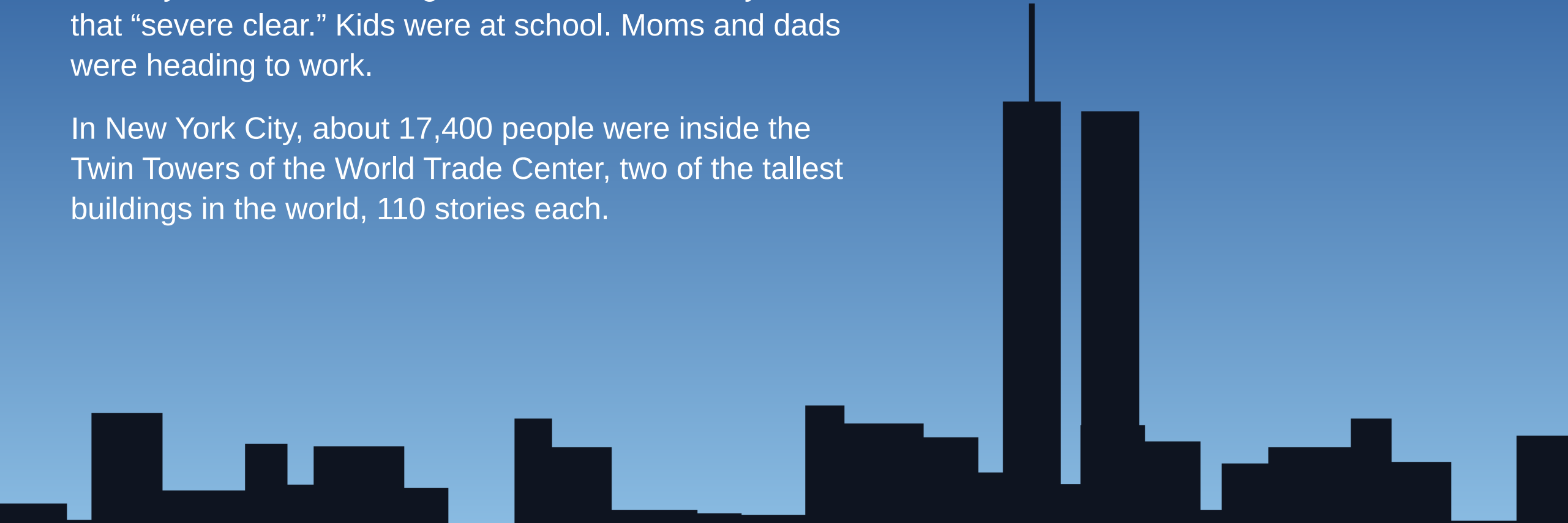
What happened?

Tuesday, September 11, 2001

A beautiful Tuesday morning

The sky was clear and bright blue. Pilots call a sky like that “severe clear.” Kids were at school. Moms and dads were heading to work.

In New York City, about 17,400 people were inside the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, two of the tallest buildings in the world, 110 stories each.



19 men. 4 planes.

That morning, 19 men took control of four passenger airplanes.

They belonged to a terrorist group called al-Qaeda. They planned to crash the planes into buildings that stand for America.

terrorist (noun)

someone who hurts innocent people on purpose to make others afraid



● where the planes took off ⊙ where they crashed



It started here in Maine

The night before, two of the hijackers, including their leader, Mohamed Atta, stayed at a hotel in South Portland.

At 6:00 a.m., they flew from the Portland Jetport to Boston, where they boarded American Flight 11.

No one knows for sure why they came to Maine.

Maine remembers. Six people with Maine ties died that day. And tanker planes from the Maine Air National Guard in Bangor refueled the fighter jets guarding New York.

8:46 a.m.

The North Tower

American Flight 11 hit the North Tower.

At first, most people, even the TV news, thought it might be a terrible accident.



CLIP 1A

NBC News, TODAY · Sept. 11, 2001 · about 8:51 a.m.
Insert video over this frame · in/out points in presenter notes

9:03 a.m.

The South Tower

Seventeen minutes later, United Flight 175 hit the South Tower, while millions of people watched on live TV.

Now everyone knew: this was no accident. America was under attack.



CLIP 2B

NBC News, TODAY · Sept. 11, 2001 · 9:03 a.m.

Insert video over this frame · in/out points in presenter notes

9:37 a.m.

The Pentagon

American Flight 77 hit the Pentagon, near Washington, D.C.

The Pentagon is the headquarters of America's military, where leaders work to protect our country.



CLIP 3A

NBC News · Jim Miklaszewski at the Pentagon · about 9:39 a.m.

Insert video over this frame · in/out points in presenter notes

10:03 a.m.

United Flight 93

The passengers learned by phone what had happened to the other planes. They talked, they voted, and they decided to fight back.

The plane crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, before it could reach Washington.



CLIP 4A

NBC News · first reports from Somerset County, Pa. · about 10:40 a.m.

Insert video over this frame · in/out points in presenter notes

9:59 · 10:28

The towers fall

The fires made the steel inside the towers weak. The South Tower fell at 9:59. The North Tower fell at 10:28.

But nearly 9 out of 10 people in the towers got out, because helpers guided them down the stairs.



CLIP 5A

NBC News · South Tower, seen from far away · 9:59 a.m.

Insert video over this frame · in/out points in presenter notes

102 minutes



In 102 minutes, our country changed.

Every number is a name

2,977

people died

90

countries they came from

343

firefighters

60

police officers

Each one had a name. Each one was someone's mom or dad, son or daughter, brother, sister, or friend.

"The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

PSALM 34:18 (ESV)

Look for the helpers

On the worst day, thousands of people ran toward danger to help others — firefighters, police officers, soldiers, boat captains, co-workers, and total strangers.

agapē ah-GAH-pay self-giving love

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

JOHN 15:13 (ESV)

Helpers in New York



Firefighters ran up

While everyone else hurried down the stairs, firefighters climbed up to rescue people. 343 of them never came home.



The man in the red bandana

Welles Crowther, 24, a volunteer firefighter who worked in the South Tower, led people through the smoke to the stairs, then went back up for more. He saved as many as 18 people.



The man who sang

Rick Rescorla, the security chief for a company in the South Tower, led about 2,700 people out, singing to keep them calm. He went back in to look for others.



The boatlift

Ferries, tugboats, and fishing boats carried hundreds of thousands of people, maybe half a million, away from Manhattan in under nine hours.

Helpers everywhere



At the Pentagon

Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Braman heard a woman clapping her hands for help in the thick smoke. He followed the sound and brought her out.



In Gander, Canada

When every plane had to land, 38 planes came down in Gander, Newfoundland. A town of about 9,600 people cared for about 6,600 stranded strangers for days.

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers.” Hebrews 13:2



The firefighters' pastor

Father Mychal Judge was the chaplain (pastor) for the New York Fire Department. He went to the towers with the firefighters and died in the North Tower lobby while praying for them.

“Let’s roll.”

Todd Beamer, 32, a dad with two little boys, was on Flight 93. On an airplane phone, he told an operator named Lisa Jefferson what was happening.

She said he asked her to pray with him: the Lord’s Prayer and Psalm 23. Then she heard him say to the others: “Are you guys ready? Okay. Let’s roll.”

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

PSALM 23:4 (ESV)



Today the Flight 93 memorial has a Tower of Voices with 40 wind chimes, one for each passenger and crew member.

That night, the country prayed

At 8:30 p.m., President George W. Bush spoke to the whole country from the Oval Office. He asked Americans to pray, and he quoted the Bible.

“I pray they will be comforted by a power greater than any of us, spoken through the ages in Psalm 23.”

President George W. Bush · Sept. 11, 2001



CLIP 7A

George W. Bush Presidential Library · Address to the Nation · 8:30 p.m.

Insert video over this frame · in/out points in presenter notes

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me.”

Standing together

That same evening, members of Congress from both political parties stood together on the steps of the U.S. Capitol and sang “God Bless America.”

Three days later, the nation’s leaders gathered at the National Cathedral to pray. Churches all over America filled up.



CLIP 8A

C-SPAN · Congress sings “God Bless America” · evening of Sept. 11, 2001
Insert video over this frame · in/out points in presenter notes

Optional: Clip 10A, the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, Sept. 14 (see notes)

Signs of hope at Ground Zero



The Ground Zero Cross

Two days later, a worker named Frank Silecchia found a cross made of steel beams in the rubble. Rescue workers gathered there to pray. Today it is in the 9/11 Museum.



The Survivor Tree

A small pear tree was found burned and broken in the ruins. People nursed it back to health. Today it blooms again at the 9/11 Memorial.



CLIP 6A

George W. Bush Presidential Library · rescue workers at Ground Zero · Sept. 14, 2001

Insert video over this frame · in/out points in presenter notes

For weeks, firefighters, police, and construction workers searched the pile, day and night.

PART 2

Why did it happen?

Who did this, what they believed, and the deeper reason

Who did this?

The attack was planned by al-Qaeda, a terrorist group led by a man named Osama bin Laden.

They were angry about American soldiers in the Middle East and our friendship with Israel, and they saw America as the enemy of God.

In 1998 they announced that killing Americans, anywhere in the world, was a religious “duty.”

“To them America is the font of all evil, the ‘head of the snake,’ and it must be converted or destroyed.”

The 9/11 Commission Report, ch. 12, describing bin Laden and his followers

What did they believe?

They believed that if they died while killing their enemies, God would be pleased with them and reward them with paradise.

They called it “martyrdom.” They were taught “that the highest honor was to die during the jihad” (holy war).

They were sincere. They were also sincerely wrong.

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”

PROVERBS 14:12 (ESV)

Quote: The 9/11 Commission Report, ch. 5

Are all Muslims like this?

No.

The attackers claimed to follow Islam, but most Muslims around the world reject killing innocent people. Many Muslim leaders condemned the attacks, and dozens of Muslims died in the towers that day.

Two things are true at once. Christians believe Islam is wrong about who Jesus is. And Jesus calls us to love our neighbors, including our Muslim neighbors.

Bin Laden drew on “a long tradition of extreme intolerance within one stream of Islam (a minority tradition).”

The 9/11 Commission Report, ch. 12

“...what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

MICAH 6:8 (ESV)

The deepest “why”: the human heart

The Bible says the problem isn’t only “bad guys out there.” The problem is sin, and it lives in every human heart.

The very first murder happened in the very first family, when Cain killed his brother Abel.

That’s why everyone, including us, needs a Savior.

“And the LORD said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.’”

GENESIS 4:10 (ESV)

“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

ROMANS 3:23 (ESV)

When a tower fell in Jesus' day

“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.”

LUKE 13:4-5 (ESV)

1

The people who died were not worse than anyone else.

Suffering doesn't prove someone was a worse sinner.

2

None of us knows how long we have.

So everyone needs to turn to God (repent) now, not later.

pyrgos POOR-gos tower (Luke 13:4)

PART 3

How should we think about it?

“...always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

1 PETER 3:15 (ESV)

apologia ah-poh-loh-GEE-ah defense

elpis el-PEES confident hope

Two very different kinds of “martyr”

The 9/11 hijackers

- Killed thousands of innocent people
- Hoped to earn paradise by what they did
- Hated their enemies

Christian martyrs

- Were killed for telling the truth about Jesus, and never killed anyone
- Trusted Jesus, who had already won heaven for them
- Prayed for their enemies: “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” (Acts 7:60)

martys **MAR-toos** “witness” — the word behind “martyr”

“better to be slain than to slay” Tertullian, AD 197

Earn it, or receive it?

They took lives
to try to earn paradise.

Jesus gave His life
to give us heaven as a free gift.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

EPHESIANS 2:8–9 (ESV)

“...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

ROMANS 5:8 (ESV)

charis KHAH-rees grace: a gift we don't deserve

Where was God on September 11?

God hated what happened.

“There are six things that the LORD hates... hands that shed innocent blood.”

PROVERBS 6:16–17

God was near the hurting.

“The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”

PSALM 34:18

God was at work through the helpers.

Every helper who risked their life was a small picture of Jesus, who laid down His life for us.

JOHN 15:13

God can bring good even out of evil.

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.”

GENESIS 50:20

“But why didn’t God stop it?”

We don’t know all of God’s reasons. But we know what He has told us:

- 1 People are responsible for their choices.**
God held Cain responsible, and He holds every evil person responsible. Evil comes from sinful hearts, not from God.
- 2 God has already done the most important thing about evil.**
At the cross, Jesus took the punishment for sin and broke the power of death.
- 3 One day God will end all evil forever.**
No more tears, no more death, no more towers falling.

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever...”

DEUTERONOMY 29:29 (ESV)

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 (ESV)

Is it wrong to want justice?

No. God gave governments the job of stopping and punishing people who do evil.

America went after al-Qaeda. In 2011, Osama bin Laden was found and killed.

But we don't take revenge ourselves. We leave that to God.

ekdikēsis ek-DIK-ay-sis vengeance (Rom 12:19)

"...he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer."

ROMANS 13:4 (ESV)

"Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"

ROMANS 12:19 (ESV)

Love your enemies?!

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.”

MATTHEW 5:44–45 (ESV)

Jesus asks something really hard: to pray even for people who hate us.

We can pray that people trapped in hatred would come to know Jesus, and we can be kind to neighbors who are different from us.

“...we who hated and destroyed one another ... now, since the coming of Christ, ... pray for our enemies.”

Justin Martyr, First Apology 14 (c. AD 155)

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

ROMANS 12:21 (ESV)

What about feeling scared?



It's normal.

Grown-ups felt scared that day too.
Tell a parent when you feel afraid.



People keep us safe.

Every day, many people work to keep
airplanes and cities safe.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea."

PSALM 46:1-2 (ESV)

"fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God."

ISAIAH 41:10 (ESV)

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

JOHN 16:33 (ESV)

Christians run toward people who are hurting

Around AD 260, a terrible sickness spread through the city of Alexandria. Many people ran away, even from their own families.

The Christians stayed and cared for the sick, even when it cost them their lives.

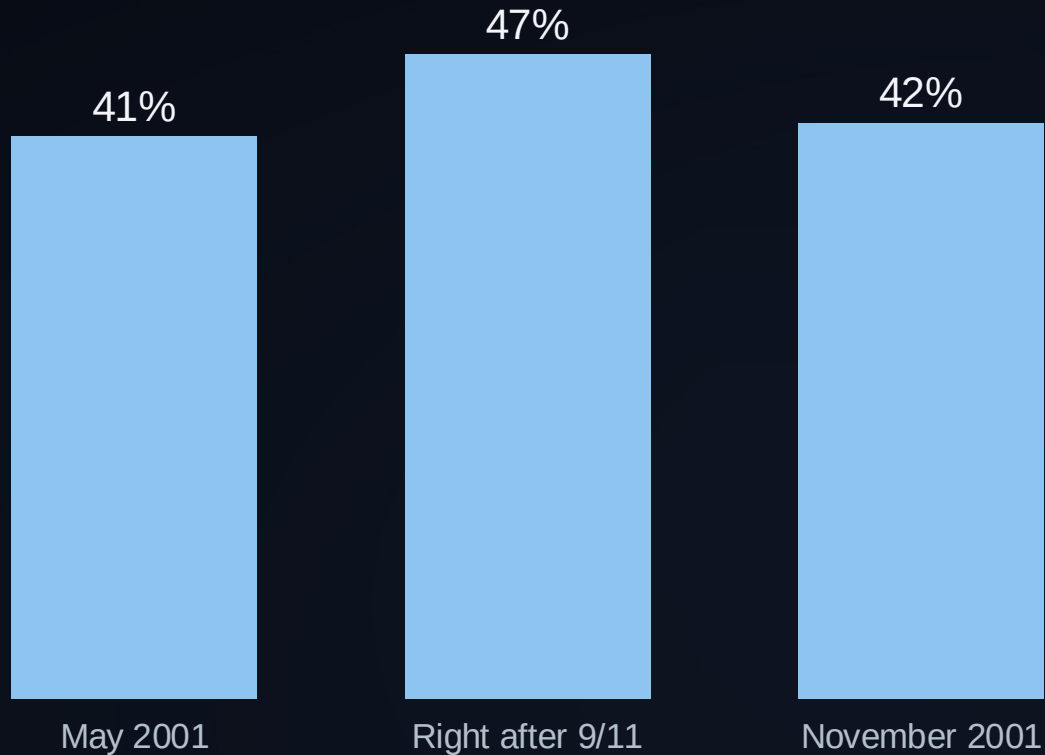
On 9/11 the helpers ran toward danger. Jesus calls His people to do the same kind of thing.

parakaleō pah-rah-kah-LEH-oh to comfort (2 Cor 1:4)

“The most of our brethren were unsparing in their exceeding love and brotherly kindness. They held fast to each other and visited the sick fearlessly, and ministered to them continually, serving them in Christ.”

Dionysius of Alexandria (c. AD 260), quoted in Eusebius, Church History 7.22

When the churches filled up



Source: Gallup

Right after 9/11, many Americans went back to church. But within two months, most had gone back to normal.

Sad days make people look for God. What matters is whether we keep walking with Him when life feels normal again.

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

PSALM 46:10 (ESV)

Our hope: a world with no more tears

“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

REVELATION 21:3–4 (ESV)

For everyone who trusts in Jesus, death leads home to God.

“...they are not lost, but sent before.”

Cyprian of Carthage, *On the Mortality* 20 (c. AD 252), writing about believers who died in a plague

elpis el-PEES hope that is sure

If a friend asks you...

“What was 9/11?”

You can say: Terrorists who believed lies attacked America with airplanes, and almost 3,000 people died. But lots of brave helpers saved many others.

“Why did God let it happen?”

You can say: God hates evil. He was with the people who were hurting, and one day He will end all evil. Jesus came to beat sin and death.

“Are we safe?”

You can say: God is our refuge. Lots of people work to keep us safe, and nothing can separate us from God’s love.

...yet do it with gentleness and respect. **1 PETER 3:15**

Pass it on

“We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.”

PSALM 78:4 (ESV)

Someday you will tell your own children about September 11, and about the God who was faithful.



CLIP 11C

9/11 Memorial & Museum · Tribute in Light

Insert video over this frame · in/out points in presenter notes

Every year on September 11, two beams of light, one for each tower, shine over Lower Manhattan: 88 lights, reaching up to four miles into the sky.

Let's talk

1 What's one thing you learned tonight?

2 Which helper's story stuck with you? Why?

3 What would you say if a friend asked, "Where was God?"

4 Who can we pray for tonight?

Let's pray

- ✝ For families who lost someone they love
- ✝ For firefighters, police, soldiers, and everyone who keeps us safe
- ✝ For our neighbors, including our Muslim neighbors
- ✝ For our enemies, that they would come to know Jesus
- ✝ For us: to be brave, kind, and always ready

“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

LAMENTATIONS 3:22–23 (ESV)

Sources

History: The 9/11 Commission Report (2004) and 2005 staff report; National September 11 Memorial & Museum; NIST WTC investigation; National Park Service, Flight 93 National Memorial; George W. Bush White House archives; U.S. Army; Town of Gander; Maine Department of Education; Gallup; Pew Research Center.

Video: NBC News, ABC News, CBS News, and CNN broadcasts via the Internet Archive TV News Archive (“Understanding 9/11”); C-SPAN; George W. Bush Presidential Library; 9/11 Memorial & Museum. Used for private, non-commercial family education.

Early church: Ante-Nicene Fathers and Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (public-domain translations).

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