

GOD BLESS AMERICA



“Prayer has comforted us in sorrow and will help strengthen us for the journey ahead. In all that lies before us, may God grant us wisdom, and may he watch over the United States of America.”

— *George W. Bush*

In his address to a joint session of Congress
September 20, 2001

On Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001, the United States was attacked by terrorists in an assault on freedom. Within a matter of minutes, two hijacked airliners flew into the towers of the World Trade Center—the center of world commerce. Another hijacked airliner smashed into the Pentagon—the center of our nation’s armed forces. A fourth assault, most likely directed at the Capitol Building, was prevented, when passengers overcame the terrorists, only to crash in the fields of Pennsylvania.

Three days later, many leaders, including members of Congress, past presidents and President George W. Bush, gathered at the National Cathedral to mourn the loss of

thousands, and to call on God for comfort. Among the speakers was Dr. Billy Graham, looked upon by millions as a spiritual father and someone to be trusted in a time of need. Here is a portion of his words to all Americans:

“We have always needed God from the very beginning of this nation. But today we need Him especially. We’re facing a new kind of enemy. We’re involved in a new kind of warfare, and we need the help of the Spirit of God. The Bible’s words are our hope: ‘God is our refuge and strength, an ever present hope in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.’

“But how do we understand something like this? Why does God allow evil like this to take place? Perhaps that is what you are asking now. You may even be angry at God. I want to assure you that God understands these feelings that you may have. God can be trusted even when life seems at its darkest.

“I have been asked hundreds of times in my life why God allows tragedy and suffering. I have to confess that I

really do not know the answer totally, even to my own satisfaction. I have to accept by faith that God is sovereign and He's a God of love and mercy and compassion in the midst of suffering. The Bible says that God is not the author of evil. It speaks of evil as a 'mystery.' In 2 Thessalonians 2:7, it talks about the mystery of iniquity. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah said, 'The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?' And that's one reason we each need God in our lives.

"The lesson of this event is not only about the mystery of iniquity and evil. But secondly, it's a lesson about our need for each other.

"What an example New York and Washington have been to the world these past few days! None of us will ever forget the pictures of our courageous firefighters and police, many of whom have lost friends and colleagues, or the hundreds of people attending or standing patiently in line to donate blood. A tragedy like this could have torn our country apart, but instead it has united us and we've become a family. To those perpetrators who took this on

to tear us apart, it has backfired. We are more united than ever before.

“Finally, difficult as it may be for us to see right now, this event can give a message of hope—hope for the present, and hope for the future.

“Yes, there is hope. There’s hope for the present, because I believe the stage has already been set for a new spirit in our nation.

“One of the things we desperately need is a spiritual renewal in this country. We need a spiritual revival in America, and God has told us in His word time after time that we are to repent of our sins and return to Him and He will bless us in a new way.

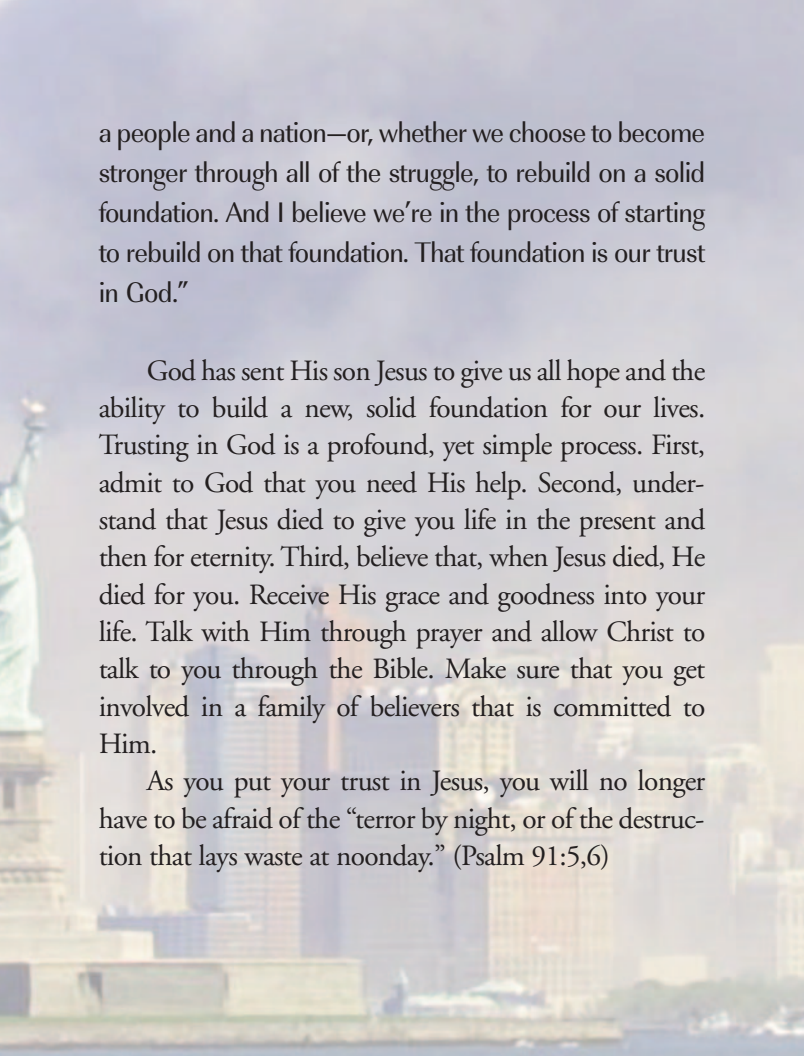
“But there’s also hope for the future because of God’s promises. As a Christian, I have hope, not just for this life but for heaven and the life to come. And many of those people who died this past week are in heaven right now, and they wouldn’t want to come back. It’s so glorious and so wonderful, and that’s the hope for all of us who put our faith in God. I pray that you will have this hope in your heart.

“This event reminds us of the brevity and the uncertainty of life. We never know when we too will be called into eternity. I doubt if even one of those people who got on those planes or walked into the World Trade Center or the Pentagon last Tuesday morning thought it would be the last day of their lives. It didn’t occur to them. And that’s why each of us needs to face our own spiritual needs and commit ourselves to God and His will now.

“For the Christian, the cross tells us that God understands our sin and our suffering. For He took upon Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, our sins and our suffering. And from the cross, God declares, ‘I love you. I know the heartaches and the sorrows and the pains that you feel. But I love you.’

“The story does not end with the cross. For Easter points us beyond the tragedy of the cross to the empty tomb. It tells us that there is hope for eternal life for Christ has conquered evil, death and hell. Yes, there’s hope.

“Yes, our nation has been attacked, buildings destroyed, lives lost. But now we have a choice: whether to implode and disintegrate emotionally and spiritually as



a people and a nation—or, whether we choose to become stronger through all of the struggle, to rebuild on a solid foundation. And I believe we're in the process of starting to rebuild on that foundation. That foundation is our trust in God."

God has sent His son Jesus to give us all hope and the ability to build a new, solid foundation for our lives. Trusting in God is a profound, yet simple process. First, admit to God that you need His help. Second, understand that Jesus died to give you life in the present and then for eternity. Third, believe that, when Jesus died, He died for you. Receive His grace and goodness into your life. Talk with Him through prayer and allow Christ to talk to you through the Bible. Make sure that you get involved in a family of believers that is committed to Him.

As you put your trust in Jesus, you will no longer have to be afraid of the "terror by night, or of the destruction that lays waste at noonday." (Psalm 91:5,6)



Dedicated to the brave firefighters, police and rescue workers who risked everything in the tragic events of September 11, 2001; and to all our men and women in the armed forces who are willing to give their lives for the cause of freedom.