

Make Church a Part of Your Life

WEEKLY SERMONETTE

"The War Within"

By Pastor Ed Woods, Almena/Norcatour/Clayton United Methodist Church

Matthew 18:21-22 reads, 'Peter came and said to Him (Jesus), "How often should I forgive; as many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but seventy times seven."'

There are times in our lives that are etched in our memories forever; whether the astounding acts in war, or times when we have been scared to death, we recall the scenes for the rest of our lives, don't we? Dates like December 7th, or November 22nd don't need a year added.

Ten years ago, we all knew where we were when we heard about airplanes that hit the twin towers in New York. Or we were watching the early shows and saw the second plane hit. The truth is that in ten years, we have gone into a completely different world. It has not become easier, but harder, to take things like 'faith' as being just a word. We used to say we had faith in our military, or in our businesses, or even faith in the future. Those seem far away now, don't they? Even reading the Bible has become harder, because it drives home the differences in the world.

Our faith has been tested and found short. How did you feel when we were attacked and the enemy was unknown? How angry were you when the source of the murders was discovered?

This now is what Jesus was speaking of in this passage - we have been forgiven much, and we are asked to remember that we are called to pass on God's mercy. Yet, Jesus' words still ring through the anger and hate we have toward those hijackers for their ambush - "not seven times, but 70 times 7".

How do we do that? How do we forgive someone who sees

forgiveness as weakness, or cannot understand the whole idea of forgiveness? I think that, overtime, we can only look to Jesus' example. As He was nailed to the cross, He asked God to forgive.

Our soldiers are fighting, answering strength with more strength, but the battles for the hearts of the Muslims are being won with kindness and forgiveness; with chocolate for the children and power for the cities.

We have learned a bit, I believe, from our past history. The Germans were driven into the ground after WWI and German hate gave way to Hitler and WWII and some numbers heard earlier. But the acts of the allies after that second war were different, weren't they?

Cities were built in Germany and they are today partners with many companies, no longer enemies. Even after two Atomic Bombs, Japan too is an ally and friend.

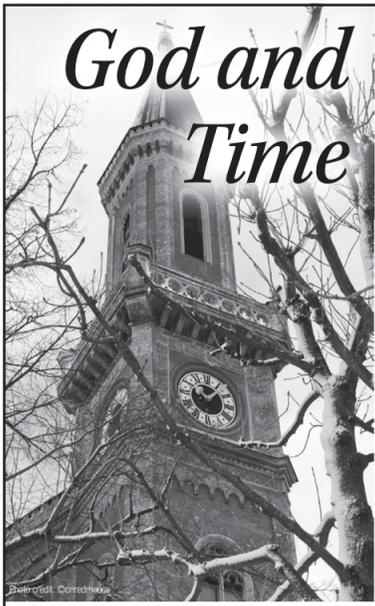
As nations, Germany and Japan were forgiven and became, through the church and national help, full of brothers and sisters in Christ.

And so today, you and I are faced with more numbers of death and destruction, and they will continue to grow. But in the end, God still has it all under His control.

This week, we remember those 3000. We remember the businessmen and women who braved the long hike out and are alive today. We recall those who were trapped and died on impact or when the towers fell. And we remember the heroes who went into the buildings, knowing the dangers, yet felt that it was their calling to try and save as many as possible, as well as those who fought back over Pennsylvania and gave their lives to defeat one prong of the attack. And we remember the men and women of the armed services who have given their lives to keep us free.

And Lastly, I would like us to remember the innocents in this latest two-front war who have been killed by both sides, those who were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

This is the desire of Jesus, an impossible request, but one we are called to fulfill. Please take time with me now to have a moment of silence for all of the heroes and innocents who died that day.....Amen. As we live our lives, we are warring, especially today, over who to pray for. If we lose our personal war, then Christ loses us if we cannot forgive. Prayer and trust make us stronger, but even out of fear, our faith emerges and there is a future.



God and Time

Time marks the beginning of life. It measures the growth of our bodies. It provides opportunity for our work and play. It reveals to us our human limitations, and then, one day, time leaves us behind. But God is the origin of life; He measures the growth of our souls. He provides our

strength and forgives our weakness and reveals His infinite love. If we follow Him, God will lead us on, even beyond the circle of time. Make time for God this week at your house of worship.

Weekly Scripture Reading

Matthew 25:1-30	Matthew 25:31-4	1 Corinth. 1:1-17	1 Corinth. 1:18-31	1 Corinth. 2:1-16	1 Corinth. 3:1-23	1 Corinth. 4:1-21
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Scriptures Selected by The American Bible Society

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