

Shelter: A Weekend Update



Nineteen years ago, almost 3000 lives were lost when the World Trade Center collapsed. It's been nineteen years since the world stared in horror as those two planes crashed into the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001.

There isn't much about 2001 that I still remember, but like most Americans, I can tell you exact details from that particular morning. Carol and I were living in a small condo on Rice Ranch Road in Santa Maria and I was getting dressed for school when I saw the news. I called Carol downstairs to watch. We saw the second plane go in almost as it was happening, but we had to get going, so we tore ourselves away from the TV and headed out.

I went in that day to classrooms full of 7th and 8th graders (130+ of them) wondering what I would have to say... and I had no clue what to say.

I do remember getting choked up. I remember being afraid. I remember telling kids that it was OK to cry and telling others to leave the crying people alone. There were a lot of questions... almost none of them with answers.

Fast forward nineteen years and, with the exception of 9/11 and the wars our country has seen, we are in the heart of one of the most tragic years of our lives, for both young and old.

We've passed 191,000 people who have died with Covid-19 (Even if Covid didn't kill them all, that's still a lot of people dead.)

The sky is gray with the haze of wildfire smoke as we find ourselves reliving the horror of the Carr and Camp Fires, when we watched wildfire rip, out of control, across the landscape.

Rioters are burning cities as I type.

Half of our country hates the other half and it goes both ways.

We're talking about sending a team to help clean-up after the devastation of Hurricane Laura.

And I still feel like I did nineteen years ago in front of those students. No real clue what to say. Wanting to get choked up sometimes. Afraid sometimes. Telling people it's OK to cry.

But today I am also different. Older, yes, hopefully wiser, but definitely closer to my Lord. I don't say that to boast, but to say that I see the events of today differently than I saw the Twin Towers collapse.

Yes, it's tragic and gut-wrenching, and heart-wrenching and I desperately want to see it end, but I do not feel the weight of despair.

Recently my amazing and beautiful and Godly wife :) (That's at least 3 points honey!) shared Psalm 91 with me and I read it again... for the first time. You know how the Scriptures say something new to you every time you change? Or the world changes? Or the season changes?

I think God wrote Psalm 91 for 2001... and also for 2008... and definitely for 2020... and for...

Can you take a second to read this Psalm really slowly and just let it sink into you?

Psalm 91

My Refuge and My Fortress

[1] He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

[2] I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."

[3] For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly pestilence.

[4] He will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;

his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
[5] You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
[6] nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

[7] A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

[8] You will only look with your eyes
and see the recompense of the wicked.

[9] Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge—
[10] no evil shall be allowed to befall you,
no plague come near your tent.

[11] For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.

[12] On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.

[13] You will tread on the lion and the adder;
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

[14] “Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;
I will protect him, because he knows my name.

[15] When he calls to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.

[16] With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation.” (ESV)

Nicole C. Mullen wrote a song of Psalm 91 called Under the Shadow. It’s still good. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kX6QvhNzi8>

The line that struck me this time, in 2020 (well, besides the lines about the plagues and pestilence, which, of course, are apropos), is the line that says,

“Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place.”

In other words we all have a place of refuge and safety we can run to. I think I understand that more today than I did in 2001. The Psalmist paints this picture of these huge wings

covering us as we're enfolded in safety and warmth. It is a place we can rest and let our omnipotent Father deal with the worries of the world for a while as we catch our breath. It's safe. It's hopeful.

And, as Jim Laffoon said, "If you have been reduced to God being your only hope, You are in a good place."

Thank you God, for providing cover through 2020.

I'm looking forward to seeing you on Sunday as we wrap up our series Sow the Seeds. I'll be in 1 Corinthians 3.

We'll see you at 8:30 and 10:30. Bundle up for that first service. Might be a little chilly.

Pastor Paul

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SATURDAY WORK DAY

THIS SATURDAY, September 12 from 8:00 to noon here at LACC. Bring your wood splitter if you have one, gloves and a strong back. :) Let's sow some seeds!

STAFF APPRECIATION BBQ

We're going to have a great Sunday on September 13! Join us at 5:00 for a BYOE (Bring your own ... everything) BBQ. (We'll supply the cake!) This is not for me (Pastor Paul), because I'm organizing it to thank our amazing staff for everything they've done throughout this pandemic to keep the church not only functioning smoothly, but thriving! Without them, this would have looked very different. So, come on out and if you want to bring gifts or cards for our staff members, here are the names: Matt, John, Becca, Sarah, Kevin, and Barbara. Help us celebrate these hard-working and dedicated team!

BUSINESS MEETING AFTER BBQ

After the aforementioned BBQ, we'll head inside (around 6:00) for our annual business meeting. We'll talk about how the church is doing financially and what we're looking forward to in the year to come. We'll also vote on those by-laws that we sent out earlier this week. Masks will be required inside.

INDIAN VALLEY BIKE RIDE

Pastor John is leading an Indian Valley End of Summer Bike Ride on Saturday, September

19th from Greenville to Taylorsville on North Valley Road. Contact John at john@lakechurch.life for details.

MEMBERSHIP CLASS

We have a new Members Class scheduled for October 4. We'll meet between the two services for the first introductory session. We'll lay out the class and let you know what to expect and why we think membership is so important. Join us! Email paul@lakechurch.life for more info.

OPPORTUNITIES to SOW SEEDS

LIFEWATER T-SHIRTS

We're having church T-shirts made again. As with last year, any proceeds from the church will go to Lifewater as we continue to sow the good seeds of faith out into this world. Use the insert in the bulletin on Sunday to reserve your T-Shirt today! Cost is \$20.00/shirt.

VOLUNTEER AID for HURRICANE LAURA

We are planning to take a group back to Louisiana with Samaritan's Purse to help homeowners affected by Hurricane Laura. What a great chance to sow some seeds! Volunteers will help with mud outs, roof tarping, debris cleanup, and chainsaw work. If you're interested in learning more, please contact Donna Foes at 530-258-9123 or Pastor Matt 530-816-9268.

SAVE the DATE

September 28 – LACC Highway Cleanup on 147

October 31 - Trunk or Treat Harvest Festival

November 6-8 – Man Camp with Susanville Community Church

December 10 – LACC Sponsored Community Supper in Chester

Grace, peace,
Pastor Paul