

Dear Lillian Methodist Church family,

Can you believe it has been twenty-five years since the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City? Every person today over the age of thirty-five knows exactly where they were when they heard the news. Most of us watched it happen on television. It was this generation's Pearl Harbor.

I vividly remember the very next Sunday following the attack. In my hometown church, the morning worship service was standing room only. Most churches reported the same. Shock and fear drove most people back to church. For a while, when the expected second wave of domestic attacks never came, people breathed a sigh of relief and became less anxious. They became comfortable again. Most returned to their pre-9/11 routines, which no longer involved church. They became patriotic again, but they put the Bible back into their favorite bookcase marked "In case of emergency, break glass." For most, that is where their Bible still sits. They believe the emergency has passed.

Humans have the amazing ability to "return to normal" in the midst of ongoing turmoil. It seems we crave the routine, especially Americans. Our exceptionally high standard of living allows us this luxury. During the past twenty-five years, our society has normalized terrorism, rioting in the streets, burning cities, suspicious elections, rewriting of history, and all manner of cultural gangrene via the internet and social media. As long as we believe none of this impacts us directly, we are content to live a "normal" life.

Our generation is not the first to do so. Scripture tells us of a generation that was so evil that God could bear them no longer. Genesis chapter 6 reports that "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that He had made man..." Genesis continues its condemnation: "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence.....all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth... the earth is filled with violence through them." Noah's generation was the most evil that mankind has ever produced.

Yet Jesus says this about that generation: "They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the Ark." (Luke 17:27) They were being normal. Despite cultural evil unequaled in human history, that generation found a way to still be normal. They found a way to be indifferent to God despite Noah's warnings. (II Peter 2:5) They believed they were living a normal life, right up until "the flood came and destroyed them all."

Jesus says, "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man." (Luke 17:26) It will not be the same level of evil, but it will be the same sense of indifference and normalcy. After twenty-five years, we have learned to live a normal life in an increasingly evil world. Will our generation see the Son of Man coming on the Clouds of Heaven?" We are definitely normal enough.

See y'all Sunday
Perry Cunningham
Lay Leader