

The Meyer Minute for September 3, 2001

Keyword: Time Off!

Enjoy your time off this Labor Day weekend! "And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all he work of creating that He had done." (Genesis 2:2-3)

Why did God rest? Not because He was tired (Isaiah 40:28). God rested to admire His creation. "And He saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:10,etc). Something else. God rested to show us that He is Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). In the first days of history and on the first pages of the Bible, God identifies Himself with our pattern of work and rest. So, taking time off this Labor Day weekend is a godly thing for you to do!

God, my Creator, help me lay aside my work this weekend and savor all the goodness You have give me. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for September 5, 2001

Keyword: The Greatest Commandment

Shark attacks...headlines. Congress is back...headlines. The economy sputters...more headlines. Now that the summer season is over, we'll be force-fed with crisis headlines.

"Sometimes the most comforting news of all is that the headlines don't really count. The things that seem so overridingly important today-the news events that dominate the papers for days and weeks on end-almost all turn out to be, in context, rather fleeting." (Bob Greene, "The Chicago Tribune," August 8, 2001)

That being so, please, remember what's most important.

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

"Jesus replied, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:36-40)

Dear Savior, make this my headline: You and others. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for September 7, 2001

Keyword: Patience

God ought to punish the whole lot of them. On Tuesday police in Northern Ireland arrested 4 Catholics for hitting and killing a 16 year-old- Protestant on his bicycle. Wednesday a grenade was thrown at about 100 Catholic schoolgirls and their relatives as they walked to Holy Cross Primary School under heavy police protection. Four policemen were seriously injured. Loathsome, damnable behavior.

Once God did punish. "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become" (Genesis 6:5). The next verses tell that He sent a flood to wipe out almost all of mankind.

Today? Strangely, He waits, too patiently it seems, pleading that we all change, thugs and respectable people alike, that we live holier lives today than yesterday and here's the motivation: God forgives our sins in Jesus Christ. He is amazingly slow to anger.

Lord, others will do what they will. For Jesus' sake, don't let me trifle with Your patience. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for September 10, 2001

Keyword: Spirit of Truth

Here's a snippet from a speech Mark Twain gave in London in 1899. "Yesterday I was at a luncheon party. At the end of the party a great dignitary of the English Established Church went away half an hour before anybody else and carried off my hat. Now, that was an innocent act on his part. He went out first and, of course, had the choice of hats. As a rule I try to get out first myself. But I hold that it was an innocent, unconscious act, due, perhaps, to heredity. He was thinking about ecclesiastical matters, and when a man is in that condition of mind he will take anybody's hat. The result was that the whole afternoon I was under the influence of his clerical hat and could not tell a lie. Of course, he was hard at it."

Make me yield today to Your influence, O Spirit of truth. Amen.

Special Meyer Minute for September 11, 2001

I don't know what the situation will be as you read this. As I compose my thoughts the news reports are still breaking from across the East Coast of the United States. One thing echoes in my mind, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Genesis 6)

As citizens of the United States, most of whom call themselves Christians, we dare not be naive about the world in which we live or the role our trust in God requires us to take. When a congressman asked me how to reconcile Christian love with his service on the the House Anti-Terrorism Committee, I answered that it is also sacrificial love when our government and military personnel put themselves into danger and even combat to protect us. God has given the government the right to use force to protect its citizens. (Romans 13) The memory of that conversation is strongly in my mind today.

As individuals we dare not be naive, either. There are evil forces that want to attack the goodness of God in your life, to make you doubt, to shake you from your place of stability and peace. Peter, (the one Jesus called "Rocky" but whose own behavior was anything but steady), reminds us, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." Therefore, always, but especially today, God help us in our personal individual lives to stand firmly in His love and to not be tossed to-and-fro by the uncertainty of these early moments of terror. And, then, let us pray for wisdom as Christian citizens, that we might "resist evil steadfast in the faith." (1Peter 5)

Lord, our final refuge and strength, deliver us from every evil of body and soul, give comfort and peace to those who face the pain of loss or the uncertainty of a loved one's safety. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for September 14, 2001

Keyword: God's hand

"See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides Me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of My hand" (Deuteronomy 32:39).

The suicide terrorists acted as if they were God, determining who lives and who dies. For that they are now experiencing God's judgment.

As for you and me, we can't fall out of God's hand. Quiet, invisible, but strong and sure is His hand upholding you.

"Neither death nor life, nor angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Lord, You're upholding me, sustaining me, comforting me, right in the palm of Your hand. Thank you for this needed assurance. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for September 17, 2001

I delivered the following remarks (September 16, 2001) at a civic gathering in St. Louis.

"Where is God in all this? Once again I have been reminded-I trust we all have-how precious little we know about the eternal God.

"Last December some friends took me to dinner near the top of the World Trade Center. You can imagine how spectacular was the view of the New York skyline, but I thought most about how small, how insignificant everything looked below. Even the Statue of Liberty appeared only an inch tall from high up on the 106th floor. After dinner, back down on the street, I knew I was back in real life. Impatient motorists blowing their horns. Business execs on cell phones. The homeless. A woman passes me. She's crying and I wonder why. Down on the street, not up on the 106th, was real life. I remember thinking that God sits high but looks low. Nothing down on the street is insignificant to God.

"Oh, how we need the God who sits high to look low now! To look into the rubble caused by evil, to embrace devastated families, to heal us, and to use us to make Liberty stand taller than she has ever stood before. With an expression of my respect to other world faiths, I believe that's what the cross of Jesus Christ is about. The most-high Son of God came down to suffer with us and, not only suffer with us but to suffer redemptively for us. The Spirit of God is in our land. He bends His ear to our sighs. He touches our tears with His mercies. He is ready to fill our hearts with new hope. God sits high but looks low.

"Yes, there are so many questions about God that are unanswered, but He has shown us what He wants us to do down here. That is to follow Him, to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. We know so precious little about God, but what we know is so precious...especially now."

The Meyer Minute for September 19, 2001

Keyword: Cross

Two Sundays ago-that was before the terrorist attack-I heard Sue Peterson speak about her work at a crisis pregnancy center. While some Christians shout down abortion and sex outside of marriage, Sue represents the many who act on the truth that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:17). This is her passion, a place that offers free pregnancy tests, adoption information, up-to-date information on the dangers of abortion, and the free ultrasounds. Of women wanting abortion, 85% see the heart beating and the little hands and arms waving and choose to bring the child to full term.

"Let your faith be active in love" (Galatians 5:6). Jesus did; that's the message of the cross. So whether it's volunteering at a center, giving blood

because of the attack, or whatever you choose, shouldn't we be passionate about the hurting?

Jesus, You went to the cross for our forgiveness and life. Move us to help others. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for September 21, 2001

Keyword: Complain!

Late in 1941, some time after the Nazi invasion of Norway, Bishop Elvind Berggrav preached the following.

"Prayer in times of great need has its difficulties. It seems impossible to pray. At the most one can protest, and more easily accuse God. I dare, in the name of Jesus Christ, to say Yes, do it! Accuse God face to face if it is impossible for you to approach Him in any other way. He will understand you...Speak out to God, break through all the false ideas of piety, and come to God Himself...Personal need, family need, national need-if it becomes a prayer, even though only a cry to begin with, even though only a momentary sigh-if only it is directed towards God, it will give deliverance. Need which becomes bitterness creates a canker. Need which becomes a prayer creates life."

Lord, in our personal and national needs, teach us to pray. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for September 24, 2001

Keyword: Twisted Truth

A friend tells me that some New Yorkers are saying, "An eye for an eye and the whole world will go blind." Read the context of Exodus 21:24 and you'll discover "An eye for an eye" was directed to ancient Israel as a nation, not to individual citizens.

Things can get twisted, especially Bible passages. People started using the Exodus passage to justify seeking revenge in personal relationships. So Jesus did some "untwisting" in His Sermon on the Mount. "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth'. But I tell you, do not resist an evil person..."(Matthew 5:38)

Figuratively speaking, "an eye for an eye" is still the way government should administer justice. The government "is God's servant, an avenger to execute God's anger on anyone who does what is wrong." (Romans 13:4)

Guide government to do justice, O God, but blind us as individuals to revenge. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for September 26, 2001

Keyword: Atonement

God, turn off the tape! I keep seeing that plane crash into the World Trade Center. The first days of numbed watching have given way to an attack of fearful emotions and unanswered questions. And that terrible tape keeps playing and playing and playing.

Tonight begins Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. According to Leviticus 16, the high priest sent the "scapegoat" into the wilderness to symbolize the removal of the people's sins, thus making them at one with God. Atonement. At-one-ment.

How we in these anguished days need the comfort of atonement, to see God is with us. Suffering on the cross, Jesus hung between heaven and earth for just this purpose: to reconnect us with God. Rehearse that scene in your mind over and over again and you'll come through this terrible time.

Dear Savior, as You have taken away our sins, give us a new sense of oneness with our heavenly Father. Amen.

The Meyer Minute for September 28, 2001

Keyword: "Just As You Are Doing"

"Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." (1Thessalonians 5:11)

I got home last night from a few days in Washington D.C. I went there to see some friends, people who live and work too close to the terror of September 11. One told me how he was driving to work and suddenly saw flames shoot up from the Pentagon. Another how she rushed to get her children out of school. Another that his church lost 6 members in the attack.

This visit the talk was different. No political posturing, no bravado; their words were spoken toward healing. For healing we have prayed. Let your talk this weekend and mine be used by God to that end. "Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

O Lord, may my conversations contribute to healing, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

