

Love Warnings

‘It was lunchtime when the father noticed that his son’s bedroom was completely neat and tidy and in the center of the bed was a letter with his name on it. The father walked into the room, picked up the letter and sat down on the side of the bed to read it. The letter read as follows: “Dear Dad, I decided that this was the easiest way to pass on the news. I’m in love. I have run off with Becky, my new girlfriend, because I knew you and mom would not approve. Becky is much older than me, but she is great. She lives in this cool shack. She has taught me that pot is okay. And we have a trade. We grow and sell the pot so we can get all the ecstasy and heroin that we need. We are going to make enough money to support our child—oh yes—you are going to be a grandfather. So I am dropping out of high school to focus on the trade and raising the child. I don’t want you to worry Dad. I’m sixteen now and perfectly capable of taking care of myself. With love, Jim. P.S. None of this is true, Dad. I’m over at a friend’s house. I just wanted to remind you that there are worse things than my report card, which is in the top drawer of the desk. Call me when it is safe to come home”.’

What a creative warning to a dad to expect a dismal report card! But did it achieve its intended result of defusing some of the

father's anger? Did he really heed the warning? Did it make the situation better, as the son intended? Or did it instead further stoke the father's fury? What do you think was his response?

So how will Father God look upon our response to His many "letters" of warning? Actually, Almighty God has sent us Americans multiple warnings, both written, as in the Holy Bible and in the writings of modern-day prophets, as well as unwritten, in truly innumerable signs and spectacles in our physical world. If you recall, in last Sunday's sermon, for some inexplicable reason my voice cracked with an unexpected wave of emotion reading this quote from Alexis de Tocqueville: "... I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness". It wasn't until that evening that the reason for that surge of grief was revealed. Can we realize how grieved Holy Spirit is at how far we've fallen, the rampant sin and unrighteousness in all sectors of our society, most of all the Church itself? If you've ever felt grief, then you fight to avoid it in the future. If that's how you feel, do you think our Father also wants to avoid future grief? Which is why He bent over backwards with warning after warning to the Jews, and now again to the grafted-in Church of America.

As mentioned last week and previously, America is uncannily following the exact footsteps that Israel and Judah took thousands of years ago as they marched headlong to their own inevitable destruction, as was prophesied in the Bible repeatedly. The multitude of warning signs to us are explicit. Yet has America heeded

the warnings, and turned back to God? The first big warning was 9-11. I remember that day vividly. Most expected Americans would rush back to the churches to pray and seek God. Church buildings right and left threw open their doors, every day for people to seek God's solace. My church then did exactly that. For many days after the attack. How many came? Not even one. All the talk that Americans would turn back to God ended up being just talk. In fact, after the initial shock wore off, not only did Americans go back to life as usual, they obstinately ignored God and redoubled the depravity of their sin. Not only did church membership not increase from many decades of roughly 70% of Americans, the decline that had begun after 1988 actually continued unabated until 2008 when, during the Great Recession, membership briefly ticked up before resuming its steady decline to now, when less than 50% of Americans claim any kind of church membership. Actual church attendance is less than half of membership figures, and they did not increase in the aftermath in 9-11. Only New York City saw a very brief blip of a slight increase in numbers for a few weeks after the attack. Today, less than 20% of Americans attend church even just a few times a year. It doesn't look like most Americans take God seriously, while many no longer believe He even exists.

Knowing these facts, is America in need of a real hard shaking to wake up? Nine-eleven was truly shocking. Almighty God desperately wants to bless, but how can He bless a people who

won't even acknowledge His relevance to their lives, or worse, that He even exists at all? His love is absolute, so He will do everything possible to spare us from judgement. So He sends His love warnings time and again. But America is repeating history. For what did God declare through Jeremiah in just the chapter we read from today? In 16:5-6 the Lord tells him: “Do not go to funerals to mourn and show sympathy for these people, for I have removed My protection and peace from them. I have taken away My unfailing love and my mercy. Both the great and the lowly will die in this land”.’ Then in verses 10-12, the Christians-in-name-only will whine, complaining: ““Why has the Lord decreed such terrible things against us? What have we done to deserve such treatment? What is our sin against the Lord our God?’ Then you will give them the Lord’s reply: ‘It is because your ancestors were unfaithful to Me. They worshiped other gods and served them. They abandoned Me and did not obey My word. And you are even worse than your ancestors! You stubbornly follow your own evil desires and refuse to listen to Me”’.

These words of God, as do so many others, apply especially to New York City, America’s greatest, largest city. New York City is ranked as the world’s most important city. London is a distant second and Tôkyô is third. New York thus represents America. Historically and to this day, it’s the main gateway to America, both physically and spiritually. And since 9-11, how has America’s primary gateway behaved? What is its reputation? Do you think of

New York as a spiritual city? A Christian city? No? Why not?

Back in 1980, American church membership was at a low point of approximately 66%. In response to the Iranian hostage crisis and botched rescue attempt under President Jimmy Carter, a massive prayer effort was launched, culminating in a huge gathering of Christians praying on the National Mall, resulting in the election of President Ronald Reagan, the first conservative president in American history. Significant numbers of Americans did return to God, and church membership jumped back up to 71%. Then and now, the national headquarters or major agencies of many of the so-called mainline Christian denominations were and are gathered together in a single large 19-story office building at 475 Riverside Drive in New York City. Today it includes headquarters or agencies of the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and many other religious organizations including Church World Service, even two seminaries and United Nations agencies. This boxy building was, and still is, affectionally called the “God Box”, or by some others the “Protestant Kremlin”, or the American Vatican! Officially it’s the Interchurch Center. But in a spiritual sense, the God Box is a horrible name. For in so many ways, we can see now in retrospect, that these many nominally-Christian denominations and non-profits were trying to put God, literally, in a box, to contain

Him, to their own man-made, worldly liberal agendas.

So even though the “God Box” is in Manhattan’s upper west side, just across or down the street from two more seminaries, one Jewish, Riverside Church, and the massive Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City is the United States’ abortion capital. More abortions are performed there than anywhere else. By far. Remember its landmarks lit up in pink to celebrate the new law allowing abortion until birth, making New York state the most abortion-friendly state of all. It had been first to legalize abortion in 1970. On January 22, 2019, the 46th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, New York City turned pink. Then what happened a year later? America’s first case of the China coronavirus. Then what happened in New York City, the abortion capital? At the peak, nearly 25 people were dying per hour, more than anywhere else. But in 2017, abortions there killed over 12 babies per hour, 288 per day, for the entire year, totaling 105,380 dead babies just that one year. The most sinful city in America has suffered more from the China virus than any other. Is there a connection? God will no longer tolerate this. The babies’ blood must be avenged. Which is why we must repent and pray and seek God’s face not only for St. Louis, but especially for New York, too.

For as God’s recompense must come, yet He promises His protection for us His people, as He promised in Jeremiah 16:19: “Lord, You are my strength and fortress, my refuge in the day of trouble!” So put your trust in Him! Dwell in Him, and know peace!

