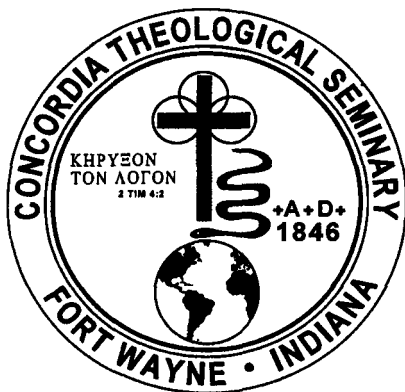


# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



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## Chapel Sermon: September 11, 2001

*Luke 11:25-35*

**Richard S. Radtke**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The news this morning is very grim. A commercial airliner crashed into one of the buildings of the World Trade Center in New York City. A few minutes later, another airline crashed into the second World Trade Center building. Then another commercial aircraft crashed into the Pentagon in Washington D. C. Just a few minutes ago, we heard news that one of the World Trade Center buildings collapsed. There is a great deal of confusion and horror about all this. In the midst of this tragic news, we ask: How can this be? How can this happen in our own land—in America? Yet, this terrible tragedy shows the brokenness of this world, and how this world is truly a culture of death. This means that today we can see even more than ever the need for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why you are here—as professor, student, staff, or pastor. In his words of comfort before the service began, President Wente said that the work of this seminary will go on because of what has happened this morning. Nothing else can give us the true hope that we need other than the word of our Lord. And so, in my homily this morning, I will spend a few moments on today's Gospel, which is our calling to follow Jesus, and then apply our calling to this morning's tragic events.

The call to follow Jesus surpasses all else. But on our own, who could qualify? Not one of us here, or anywhere, for that matter. Because of our sin, we are all not only spiritually impoverished, but the Scriptures call us spiritually dead. The call to follow Jesus is serious and severe. We must renounce all to follow Him—and not depend on family, possessions, works, or self.

But the One who calls us is gracious. The One who is sinless became sin for us, and carried our sin in His flesh to the cross. In Jesus Christ we find our life and our hope. His gospel is our invitation. He invites us to come to Him and find rest for our souls. He invites us to come and follow Him.

The call to follow Jesus is especially meaningful for us today as we witness the horrifying events of this morning. We know that the evil one, satan, is working ever so hard to silence the word of God. He is working

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evil in this world to confuse and mislead all people, even the people of God. He wants us to take our eyes off the gospel and the Lord Jesus. And so, we must trust in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord our God has promised in His word: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Our Lord Jesus invited us to come to Him with these words: "Come unto me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The Scriptures are filled with words of comfort that remind us of the presence and power of our Lord at all times, and especially when we face these difficult and perilous times.

Things will never be the same in the United States. More tragedies may yet happen this day. It will be "a day of infamy." I would urge all of us to pray for our nation, for President Bush, and for all our leaders, that God would give them strength and courage for today and for all the days to come.

In a few moments, we will have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. We so need the strength that God gives in the true body and blood of His Son Jesus Christ. We so need the presence of our Lord among us as we struggle with questions about this national tragedy. Here at this altar we will be nourished, and we will receive the strength that only our Lord can give — strength for the moment and for the days that are ahead of us with all the uncertainties of these times. Therefore I commend you to our gracious and loving God, and I pray with you for His strength for our nation and all our leaders and for those who proclaim the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. May His peace be with you. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.