

8-26-18

## CALL SECURITY!!!

We had a little gathering at our house yesterday; an end of summer gathering for family and neighbors. Earlier in the week as I was doing some shopping for some things we needed, it seemed to me that there were security guards in places I had not previously noticed. It seemed like there were more patrol cars, marked and unmarked, driving the streets and I realized that almost everywhere you go these days, there is some form of Security that 15-20 years ago nobody would even have thought about - maybe not even dreamed up yet! And then I thought about 9/11...

Tuesday morning September 11, 2001 was just another Tuesday morning until it wasn't anymore. I remember exactly how I heard about the attacks on the twin towers. I know where I was standing, and the way our living room was arranged at the time. I was home and it was a call from my Mother-in-law that prompted me to turn on the T.V. Most of us remember that day, some of us only read about it in our history books - Things weren't always like this... Things change everyday to some degree or another, we just don't always see it until a major change has really taken hold. And that's what happened after 9/11... tragedy, terrorism, fear, retaliation, more tragedy and then we look at everything in a different light. After 9/11, it seemed as though those who want to cause fear and terror and tragedy do so with much more freedom and confidence than in the past, so we beefed up security. We started by beefing up airport security. Then it seemed that government buildings became targets, so we beefed up that security. Schools became targets, so we beefed up that security. And the beefing up of security seems to have spread.

Community events that draw lots of people - The Clintonville Annual Fireman's Festival, Hamburger Days in Seymour... more security on staff each year... Schools now have Liaison officers - most schools full time - Even our leisure time is haunted with the need for security - Football stadiums have more security than ever! All this security... and why? Because sometimes bad stuff happens and when it does, we need to know that someone is there to help ward off the evil, protect us from the badness, be with us to help us through. When the bad stuff happens, we've been trained to call out for Security.

I don't think 9/11 was the beginning of all of this need for security. I think there has always been bad stuff happening; I think maybe we just didn't talk about it so much. I also think that maybe there is more bad stuff now than there was 50 or 100 years ago, but I don't know for sure. I just know that more and more, when we see, hear, or feel bad stuff happening, we call for "security". We live knowing that when we open our front doors and walk out into the world, we will encounter a need for security. We live knowing we have to be more aware of our surroundings, and where we can find that security guard or police officer.. That's when we go out, But what happens when we don't go out, when we're in? What happens In our hearts and in our minds? Do we need security there too? Maybe not in the same way, but you better believe we do! We need security every day, in every place, every aspect of our lives. And just like in our outside world, In our own personal worlds, on our inside, we wait until things are really bad before we pull the alarm, call for help, for support.

We wait until the crisis is so overwhelming - until we are so NOT in control - that it is inevitable we will be hurt physically, mentally, emotionally - When we get to this point, that's when we drop to our knees. We close our eyes - so tightly our faces are wrinkled we are trying so hard to focus; we fold our hands - maybe clench our fingers together until our nails dig into the backs of our hands: and we cry out "SECURITY!". We need help, we need reassurance, we need salvation from whatever it is that is in front of us and we want the security guard to step in, fix it, make it go away.

I can only speak for myself, but I'm pretty sure that until we feel that depth of fear, that lack of control, until we feel that insane amount of anxiety... I think that until things get real bad, we kind of forget about security - we put God on the back burner.. You know, like that great idea you had that you had to stick in the back of your mind to hold onto for another day, another time and then you basically forget about it... I think we do that with God sometimes. We don't feel this great NEED for Him, so we put our most effective security guard back there somewhere in the backs of our minds. Now I don't think we do this with any ill intent, quite the opposite. I think that when we do this, it is with the best of intentions! We step in and we block Him out because we know He's busy. He's busy with all those other people and their great needs, we don't want to bother Him with our petty

little issues, intervention isn't necessary - You know what I'm talking about. "I know you're busy God, I got this, you go ahead, I don't need you right now, go on, go... Help somebody who needs you more than I do."

Awfully kind of us don't you think? Only thing is, we are wrong. Nobody needs God *more* than you do, more than I do, regardless of what is happening in our lives. We all need God the same and we all need him right now. Whatever that right now is... Good or Not so good...

If, in our "right now", we are experiencing sickness, danger, tragedy, sadness - those are tough ones, we know we need Him, we know we can't handle those alone. But sometimes our "right now" is just petty little stuff that we can handle because we are strong and He is busy... But we are wrong. First of all He is never too busy. And secondly, we may actually need God MORE in those times. Did you know that? Did you know that we might actually need him MORE when our needs don't seem so great?

I want to share a story with you about a tree... It's called **The battle of the Beetles.**

On the slope of Long's Peak in Colorado lies the ruin of a gigantic tree. Naturalists tell us that it stood for some four hundred years.

During the course of its long life, the tree encountered many bad things. It is stated that the tree was struck by lightning fourteen times; swayed and bent almost to the point of breaking as innumerable avalanches and storms of four centuries thundered past it. It survived them all. Yet here it was, lying in ruins. In the end, the tree succumbed to an army of beetles that attacked it and leveled it to the ground. The insects ate their way through the bark and gradually destroyed the inner strength of the tree by their tiny but incessant attacks. A forest giant which age had not withered, nor lightning blasted, nor storms subdued, fell at last before beetles so small that a man could crush them between his forefinger and his thumb.

It wasn't the big stuff that toppled that tree. It was the little stuff, the stuff that something that big and that strong SHOULD have been able to handle right?... It's the same for us.

In the course of your life you WILL face struggles; some will be pretty tough storms to get through. If you haven't already experienced it, there will be a time where you are literally struck and almost knocked out by an unexpected life changing event: loss of a job, a relationship, a family member... you will be struck by a force that could, maybe even should, knock you down. There will be times where you will feel completely buried in the stress, pain, overwhelming chaos, that life can be; buried in an avalanche of the messiness of life. And you will survive. You will survive because these are the "big ones", the ones you know you can't get through alone. These are the times that you will call for security, the times you will call on God.

When we are struck hard, we look for Him; we wonder where He is, and we pray, we pray hard. These are the times we seek the security our faith offers; the security of the strength that He provides; we seek the security of the knowledge that He will be with us and He will get us through whatever difficulty we face. We call for Security... "Please God, give me a sign, let me know that you are with me. God, help me know that I will get through this." And just as we are assured in Isaiah 41: *Fear not, for I am with you; ... I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you...* He comes. And we get through that storm. Our Security Guard walks us safely to the next step in our journey. And for a while at least, we make God a focal point in our everyday lives. He's at the forefront, not on the back burner.

And then there are those times that are not so bad, maybe just a little cloudy, but no storm. Times that it doesn't feel like life as we know it is coming to an end; when the problem, the irritant, is so small we can handle it on our own... The small things like: jealousy, anger, resentment, pettiness and negativity. The small things that actually eat at us from the inside... The small things that often bring about our downfall.

That gigantic tree couldn't identify and fight off the small things in its life, the beetles that brought about its downfall. But we can. We can identify and fight off those moral or ethical "beetles". We need only be aware that - just like with the tree - sometimes those pesky little things are so small we don't see them coming, so small that we don't worry about them, sometimes until it's too late... Just like that tree, we are sometimes just too big and those little irritants are just too small for us to even recognize.

So let's consider something...

What if we had a security guard with us all the time? Not just to protect us and get us through the big stuff, but what if we had that help, that guidance, that protection every single day helping us keep an eye out for those deadly little beetles in our lives? Oh wait, we do. We just have to stop pushing Him away - even if we believe we are helping someone else by doing so. We need to remember that God has some really broad shoulders and His hands are big enough to hold ALL of us. We need to get out of our own way and have faith in the Lord. Remember, faith upholds a Christian under ALL trials, big AND small...

There are three things I'm going to ask you to do:

1. Read the book. Robert E. Lee shared with the world that in all of his perplexities and distresses: "the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength". Read the book and follow the direction heard in Psalms today: "Trust in the Lord".
2. Call for security in the small things too. Call for security in simple, everyday prayer; and then trust that your prayer is heard. Prayer is very powerful because the power of your prayer comes not from you, but from the one who hears it. And finally,
3. Remember that your security guard is always on duty. He is always there to help, to guide, to protect, we just need to let Him. To borrow the words of Pastor Paul David Tripp of Westminster Theological Seminary: "Remember, it is not your weakness that will get in the way of God's working through you, but your delusions of strength."

Wear the armor of God, Let Him be the security and the strength that you need. AMEN