

**Sunday Morning Worship at Brentwood, Sept 11, 2016**

**Notes for the sermon on Rejoicing in God's Grace**



**Ps 51:1-10 and Luke 15:1-10 – Sermon Text = Luke 15:10**

***Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.***

**[Hymns = 347, 640, & 706 the Canadian Presbyterian Book of Praise]**

**Key Ideas**

1. Have you every thought of God as someone who is constantly coming after you? – an overpowering being filled with unimaginable energy who is chasing you, pursuing you – for far too many, that is a scary thought – their understanding of God has been distorted with images of a demanding judge, a stern disciplinarian, an authoritarian presence who demands payback for all the wrongs we have done – it might be a bit of a stretch, but I could not help thinking this morning, on this 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, that some see God as a horribly ingenious terrorist who pursues us to pay us back for the wrongs we have done – exaggeration, yes – but I have dear and close friends who struggle with this angry, vindictive image of God every day – no wonder they stay away from church
2. But there was another kind of pursuit that took place on 9/11 – it was from the first responders – it was the pursuit of those who were lost, who had been wounded and maimed in the attack – they searched the rubble for days for people trapped in there – they searched with a determined love and compassion for the possibility of life to be saved and healed and restored – that's the kind of pursuing, searching, unimaginably loving energy that is constantly after you – amidst the horror of deep hatred, seeking to sow fear and hatred, one can only give thanks in joy and wonder for this kind of courage
3. Why? – why does the God revealed in Jesus Christ engage in this kind of pursuit, this chasing around after us wandering, wobbling human creatures, prone as we all are to fear and division – the answer is pretty simply – and profound - to give us a new life, to carry us into the dawn of a new era – to open up opportunities for us to heal and engage afresh in lives of blessing – to nourish our souls to flourish in the grace of Jesus Christ – what an amazing cause for joy – and no wonder that joy fills the heavens and the earth

**At this stage in our ponderings, then ...**

Joy is shared throughout the heavens and the earth when someone alienated from their Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer realizes that they have but to turn around and see things as they actually are, through God's gracious act of healing that rift through Jesus Christ – how can we here at Brentwood make space for that kind of realization? – how can we here at Brentwood invite people to consider this transformation in their lives? - how can we here at Brentwood rejoice with the angels when this happens?

Sermon notes of Rev Dr Brian Fraser,  
Minister with Brentwood Presbyterian Church, Burnaby, BC