

Choices for Life - Tim Wiesner Talks With Jim Cymbala - Part 1

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala shares insights on faith and community response during the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, emphasizing the importance of spiritual harvest and comfort in times of crisis.

Duration: 27:30

Scripture: Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Interview"

Description

In this video, Pastor Jim Symbola of the Brooklyn Tabernacle shares his testimony of God's faithfulness in his congregation's time of great need. He refutes the notion presented in a Time Magazine article that Christ cannot meet human need in times like these. Pastor Symbola emphasizes the all-sufficient ability of Christ to meet human need, contrasting with the pastor in Pellum, New York, who sought to educate his congregation about Islam. He also reflects on the importance of seeking God's justice rather than seeking revenge.

Transcript

Hello and welcome to Choices for Life, the radio ministry of Choices Medical Clinic. Choices for Life is sponsored by Cooper Malone McLean of Wichita, an investment firm that believes in the sanctity of life and the healing ministry of Choices Medical Clinic. During this next half hour, we will bring you up to date with current events of interest to the pro-life community.

We will also introduce you to a prominent pro-life personality. Proclaiming the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is Choices for Life. Today, Tim's show illustrates the profound differences that exist in the church with respect to the attack on the Twin Towers.

For life issues in the news, he covers an article by a New York pastor who has lost hope over the tragedy and is ready to leave the ministry. But then, for our interview segment, Tim will introduce you to Jim Cimbala of New York City's Brooklyn Tabernacle, who sees a great time of harvest awaiting in the aftermath of the disaster. You'll want to stay tuned for this and find out more about this great man of faith living the love of Christ literally blocks away from the Tower's fall.

I'm producer Brian Fitzgerald. Now here's your host of Choices for Life, Tim Wiesner, the Executive Director of Choices Medical Clinic in Wichita. My feeling was that if I could be the cause of so much pain, I had no place in the ministry.

I learned the hard way that the needs of people are so intense at a time like this, so different, that there is almost nothing you can say or do that can be right. I'm reading from an article in Time Magazine called A Crisis of Faith, and this was a quote from a pastor of the Huguenot Memorial Church in Pelham, New York, following the World Trade Center disaster of September 11th. The article goes on to say, on the Sunday evening following the terrorist attacks in an old stone church 15 miles north of Manhattan, this pastor contemplated leaving the ministry.

He had been ordained 28 years ago, but he had never seen so much misery, so much fury in the faces of his congregation as he had at that morning's service. More than 200 people looked up at him from the pews, double the normal draw at the Huguenot Memorial Church in Pelham, New York. He said, I should have scrapped my prepared sermon as I saw faces out there that had never come to my church before.

I should have scrapped the sermon that I had labored on for hours, desperately trying to get every sentence right. I should have said, I am as much at a loss as you are. When I looked out and saw all those unfamiliar faces, I should have known I faced an impossible challenge.

Oh, he tried to make a nuanced argument for moving away from rage. He reminded his congregation that ultimate justice comes not from exacting revenge, but from God. He said, suppose, God forbid, that the perpetrators of this atrocity are not brought to justice, at least not the justice we might want.

Would that diminish the value of anyone who has died? Would God's ultimate justice in any way be impeded? Absolutely not. The article goes on to say he failed utterly as he was told by several people after the sermon. Many of the worshipers that day were not ready to move past anger.

They lived in a close-knit community where at least nine people have never come home, including close relatives. The pastor went on to say they were craving faith, but not all had the religious foundation to help them understand how God and calamity can coexist. Since then, the pastor has held five impromptu services and sat for 40 minutes comforting a man who saw people jump from the towers, and he found himself working through his own despair.

As he said, my feeling was that if I could be the cause of so much pain, I had no place in the ministry. He said, I learned the hard way that the needs of people are so intense at a time like this, so different that there is almost nothing you can say or do that can be right. He said he has heard different similar stories among his colleagues of different faiths, all who are experiencing moments of supreme inadequacy.

He even thought about retiring. But now he has decided to focus on educating his congregation about Islam and sharing with them small signs of God's goodness. You know, this article seems to convey that Christ cannot meet human need in times such as this.

Well, today and next week you will hear a much different story, a different experience, a different picture of Christ as I interview my guest, Pastor Jim Cimbala of the Brooklyn Tabernacle in Brooklyn, New York. That's our host, Tim Wiesner. Don't miss his interview with Jim Cimbala, pastor of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, and the truth of how the people of New York are responding spiritually to the attack on their city.

After this. To Tim and Choices Medical Team and staff, thank you for your ministry. I have shared with the staff here.

No one else had the courage. We fear with the grave. I am indebted to you for saving the life of my grandchild.

God bless you. But her joy has been fulfilled. And it's the right choice.

687-2792. You are listening to Choices for Life. Many are familiar with the beautiful, award-winning music produced by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir.

Just as you'll find fire where there is smoke, you will find God where his people are filled with that kind of joy. Today, we are happy to bring you Jim Cimbala, husband of the choir director and also the pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle. He has some good news to share during this time of crisis in New York City.

Here is Pastor Jim Cimbala. Almost 30 years ago, my wife and I came downtown Brooklyn, the heart of it, and came to a run-down church which is called the Brooklyn Tabernacle. It's located on Atlantic Avenue then and in the heart of a very meaty area filled with drugs and alcoholism and poverty and crime and violence.

Over the last 30 years, we've seen God do amazing things and now if we fast forward to, let's say, the beginning of this year, we're meeting in a large theater that we've been in for about 20 years and have four services every Sunday, nine in the morning and 12 noon and 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. where around 6,000 people come in and out every week to our church as we minister the gospel of Jesus Christ. We're located on Foppish Avenue in downtown Brooklyn now, which is the main drag in Brooklyn and on September the 11th, when the World Trade Center attack occurred, we were in the area. We not only had four members of our church who eventually showed up as missing, we had many who just escaped from the area and literally from one of the towers.

A lot of things all happened at once, brother, in this sense. People immediately, some of them had gotten out, others, as I mentioned, we didn't hear from. We're not going to hear from them.

They perished. People started fleeing up Foppish Avenue as they came across the Brooklyn Bridge and we put our staff outside the building with water and opened up the church as a place of sanctuary for prayer and rest. So people streamed by in large groups as they were just fleeing Manhattan because no one knew what was really happening.

So they were covered with soot and debris. Their shoes were white and dusty. We offered them water and talked to them.

One lady from the Midwest, a tourist it seemed, came in really disoriented in some kind of state of shock. So we ministered on that level. Then some of our members began to show up.

One young lady named Dawn who had miraculously escaped and went through a horrific descent down 640 some stories down the stairwell to just get out of the building in time. Since then many things have been happening because people are needing ministry on different levels. We're walking through a very hard situation for three widows who lost their husbands.

We lost a firefighter. We lost a Port Authority police officer whose daughter just turned one year old last Friday. He never saw his daughter turn one.

We also lost an older man who had grown children. He worked up on the 90 something floor of Tower One. We also have a heart rending case of a young lady by the name of Ebony, an African American girl who is a sophomore in a college up in Connecticut who comes from a single parent home, no dad, no siblings.

Her mom was not only her mom but her best friend and supported her totally with tuition and paid the rent for their apartment in downtown Brooklyn not far from the church on Adelphi Street. Her mother worked for Cantor Fitzgerald, the bond brokers who took up four floors 101-105 on Tower One and that's where the first plane entered. Nobody of the 730 employees who were at their offices or work stations got out from Cantor Fitzgerald.

So on one level it's comfort and encouragement and finding out how we can serve. On another level it's unprecedented time of harvest in New York City now. Probably around the country but I can only speak for New York.

The soul of New York has been wounded. The heart of the city has been pierced instead of the typical brash New York hard exterior. There's a tenderness of heart now which is very unusual.

I'm born and raised in New York City. I'm not an import so I've never seen anything like this and on the first Sunday after September 11th more than 600 people made profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior during our four services that Sunday. So it's a moment of harvest to preach the gospel.

It's a moment of comfort and encouragement for those directly affected. It's a moment of challenge for Christians who now like the whole world are rethinking a lot of Biblical truths which God has brought front and center through this new war that is upon us. So it sounds like, at least in your experience, this tragedy is helping people come to God rather than driving them further away, isn't it? Oh, absolutely.

Absolutely. Jesus said in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, there will be wars. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars.

But don't be afraid because the end is not yet. Jesus didn't say if we prayed or if we lived godly lives there would not be wars and rumors of wars. But every century has proven that there are wars and rumors of wars.

Ethnic wars, racial wars, tribal wars, world wars, regional wars, civil wars. This is a fact of life on earth where evil abounds and men have free will and there's weapons and what not. Tim Wiesner will return with Pastor Jim Cimbala of the Brooklyn Tabernacle after this important message.

Choices for Life is sponsored by The Choices Medical Clinic at 538 South Bleckley in Wichita, Kansas. It is the only pro-life medical clinic in the nation located directly next door to a late-term abortionist. Choices Medical Clinic specializes in providing alternatives to abortion through the delivery of prenatal medical care, counseling, education, adoption assistance, and practical support, all at no charge to women facing unplanned pregnancy.

Whether you keep your baby or whether you have an abortion, it's your choice. But make sure it's an informed choice. Choices Medical Clinic is available to make a variety of presentations at your church,

school, or classroom.

These interactive discussions range from the definition of true love, life choices and consequences, STDs, the lifetime partner, and many other subjects. Choices is open daily Monday through Friday and until 12 noon on Saturday. Appointments are encouraged.

Walk-ins are accepted. Call anytime at area code 316-687-2792. Our phones are answered 24 hours a day.

That's area code 316-687-2792. This is Choices for Life. Tim Wiesner continues his interview with Pastor Jim Cimbala of the Brooklyn Tabernacle.

God is using this war and this terrorist attack to highlight spiritual truth, in many cases long forgotten by people who have been glutted by materialism and entertainment where these important questions are forced into the back of their mind where they never think about them. So, yes, it's harvest time. In fact, the night before, on September the 10th, Monday night, I went to bed a little bit before midnight with my wife.

And oddly for me, because I can sleep through pressures and difficulties pretty well, I thank God for that, I couldn't sleep. About 2.30 I got up, read my Bible, prayed, went back, 4 o'clock got up. That was the whole night, back and forth.

And I actually saw my digital clock go to 6.20 in the morning and I had not yet slept a wink. And went to bed sometime after that, slept for a couple of hours and woke up to the unfolding events that the whole country and world became transfixed by. And the one verse that was pounding in my heart and echoing in my mind through the night was an odd verse, Proverbs 10 verse 5. He who gathers crops in the summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

Not the usual comparison of wise and foolish as we see in the Proverbs, but a stronger word. That the son who sleeps during that limited window of opportunity called harvest time is a disgrace. So all during the night I was saying, God, I don't want to be a disgraceful son.

I don't want to be a failure as a pastor. I don't want our church to miss out on a harvest time opportunity. And that was the thought echoing in my mind as I went to sleep.

It's harvest time. It's harvest time. We've got to do more to reach people with the gospel.

It's harvest time. Never dreaming that just in a few hours I would see our world changed and this idea of harvest time be so accented. So it's not a time to be sitting around discussing like pseudo-prophets who's responsible for this and judging the sins of different nations.

That's not found in the New Testament. Nobody was doing that in those days. It's harvest time.

The last thing Jesus said before he went back to heaven was, it's not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father has put into his own hand, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses. First in Jerusalem and Judea and then Samaria and to the ends of the earth. So now is the time for preaching the gospel because people are realizing that tomorrow isn't guaranteed.

People are realizing that you can be having coffee and a bagel on the 85th floor of an office building in one morning and have moments to live. People are realizing you can't take a thing with you because it's

obvious that those who perished not only didn't know it was their last day on earth, but they left everything behind. So thoughts about eternity, heaven, judgment, evil, the existence of evil.

People who don't believe in evil believe in evil now. People who said God and prayer are not words to be talked about must be hiding under some kind of rock now because everybody is praying and talking about God. So in my interpretation from the Bible of these events, this is a very special moment of harvest, not just in New York, but in Kansas and every place else where churches want to arise and do God's work.

Well, you are giving us quite a spiritual lesson there. Before I ask you my next question, would you tell our listeners a little bit about the makeup of your church? The New York City Church is made up of every nation that you could imagine, every color, predominantly minorities from America or from the West Indies or Puerto Rico or South America or Taiwan and Caucasians, but it represents the melting pot that is called New York City. And since we are downtown in a poorer area, it represents the inner city in an outstanding way.

So in a day and age when a lot of churches are trying to leave the inner city, you are more than happy to be there and really finding a ripe harvest. Yes, well any of those people who come to our church, some African American cleaning lady who let's say is very poor, she is just as precious to God as President Bush is. That's right.

So yes, we count it a privilege to be there. And one of the signs of the impotence of the Christian church, the modern Christian church in America, is that we have fled the inner cities where sin is abounding. Instead of believing that grace would even more abound, we've just bounded out of the area and said, well our little church systems and our comfortable American lives can't really be carried on in such an environment, so let's go where the grass is supposedly greener.

And that's sad because what it's produced is huge inner cities and all of the world is becoming more urban and cidified. It's produced these new mission fields of downtown Chicago and Boston and Philadelphia and so on and so forth, where instead of the gospel being preached by Christian churches that are powerful in their witness, New Age and cults and every other kind of thing are dominating. A lot of these New Age and cults are moving into the churches that have been fled by the Christians that used to attend.

Exactly. So tell me then, with such a wide diversity there and so many people of varying degrees of faith or their relationship with Christ, I assume there must have been a large number as well that were angry and that were wondering where God was when this tragedy occurred? No, I haven't even felt that among unbelievers in this city. Really? To this moment, there's still a wounding.

All these weeks later, there's more a sense of sadness and remorse and shock and stunned kind of silence, more than retribution and let's go over there and wipe out people in Afghanistan and so on and so forth. And among the believers, I haven't felt any of that. Hey, these are facts of life.

We were attacked in Pearl Harbor, you know, in World War II. We were dragged into World War I. There will be wars and rumors of wars and it's unfortunate. You cry with those who cry.

But there haven't been a lot of thoughts of retribution and vengeance. This is Choices For Life. You have been listening to the first of a two-part interview with Pastor Jim Cimbala of the Brooklyn Tabernacle of New York City and his testimony to God's faithfulness in his congregation's time of great need.

Now, here's our host, Tim Wiesner, ordained minister with the gospel of Jesus Christ. While the Time Magazine article seems to imply that Christ cannot meet human need in times such as this, Pastor Jim Cimbala of the Brooklyn Tabernacle details a refreshingly accurate picture, albeit one you will not read, hear, or see in secular media. He presents Christ and the all-sufficient ability of Christ to meet human need in times just such as this.

He is not attempting, as the pastor in Pelham, New York, to educate them about Islam, nor will his focus be on any other religion. Pastor Cimbala's focus has been, currently is, and will be on the person and work of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, the way, the truth, and the life. While the pastor in Pelham had the experience that there is virtually nothing you can say or do in times such as this, because the needs of people are so intense, so different, that you can't reach them, Jesus Christ said, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. I, even I, am he that comforteth you.

I, the one who made the heavens, the earth, and the seas. I, even I, am he that comforteth you, who made the Arcturus, the Orion, and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. I, even I, am he that comforteth you.

I, who do great things past finding out, yes, in wonders without number, and he that cometh to me, I will in no way cast out. But ye must come to him in faith, nothing wavering, casting your care upon him, for he careth for you. And where do you come? You come to the foot of the cross, the place where Jesus Christ reconciled man with God, the only bridge between heaven and earth, the one place where you can confess that you are a sinner and lay your sins before God, and find grace and mercy to help you in your time of need.

And as you leave your sins there and trust Christ for his salvation, and are persuaded that these things are true, you enter into a relationship with the one true God, before whom no others can stand, the shepherd and bishop of your souls. It is the most important choice for life that you'll ever make. Don't delay.

Trust Christ today. Even so, amen. Choices for Life is grateful to be sponsored by the investment firm of Cooper Malone McLean of Wichita.

Cooper Malone McLean believes in the sanctity of life and the ministry of Choices Medical Clinic. Choices Medical Clinic is a 501c3 nonprofit ministry dedicated to providing alternatives to abortion through the delivery of prenatal medical care, counseling services, and practical support to women, men, and families facing unplanned pregnancy. 538 South Bleckley in Wichita, Kansas is the address for this Christ-centered ministry.

While their services are without charge, they are not without cost. You may partner with Choices either by prayer or by payment in delivering them that are drawn unto death and those that are risen. For more information, please call 316-687-2792.

Choices Medical Clinic. Choices you can live with.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/choices-for-life-tim-wiesner-talks-with-jim-cymbala-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net