

Based on a Bethlehem Outreach Tool

# Ever Thought About This?

Sunday, Sept. 11 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, Sept. 12 at 7 PM  
17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity – 2016

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: On this day of 911, *September 11, 2016*, most of us remember what happened 15 years ago when Muslims, *faithful to the Quran*, attacked our nation, killing 2,996 and injuring over 6,000 others. The events of that day resulted in (1) fear—*what is next?* And (2) anger—*how should we strike back?*



Those are natural reactions, *but what is pleasing to God?*

- Fear, we SHOULD fear *only God* because only He “**is able to destroy both soul and body in hell**” (Mt. 10:28 NAS).
- Anger, we SHOULD respect the words of the LORD, “**Vengeance is Mine, I will repay**” (Rom. 12:19 NAS).

So, **through knowing Jesus**, we are not afraid of people and we do not live with anger; instead, we ➡ *forgive as we have been forgiven* and ➡ *share God’s saving truth with everyone* –  
 ♦ family members, ♦ the guy next door, ♦ coworkers, ♦ people of every skin color, and even with ♦ Muslim terrorists!

This sermon includes ♦ the foolishness of the gospel, ♦ reasons why some need to repent, and ♦ Pascal’s Wager.

1. **The Foolishness of the Gospel:** <sup>ESV</sup> **1 Corinthians 1:18**  
 “...the word of the cross [that God would save all people through Jesus’ death on a cross] **is [foolishness] to those who are perishing** [to those who reject Jesus], **but to us**

**who are being saved** [*who know Him as Savior and seek to follow Him as Lord*] **[the word of the cross] is the power of God...**" // Even though *the word of the cross* is foolishness, we believe because *God has given us the gift of faith (1Co 1:30a)*! God worked through *the water and the Word* to unite us to Jesus; now He is working through *the Word and the Supper* to ♦feed us, ♦grow us, ♦equip us, and ♦assure us!

2. **Why Some Need to Repent:** A recent Pew Research Poll<sup>1</sup> included this information:
  - a. Some don't believe because – They learned about evolution in college; too many Christians do unchristian things.
  - b. Some don't like organized religion because – It's a business; it's all about money.
  - c. Some are inactive because – They don't have time to go to church.

To some people those reasons sound legitimate, *but those answers will carry no weight with God!*

3. **Pascal's Wager** (based on Pascal's writing called *Pensées*<sup>2</sup>):

#### FRONT OF THE CARD

### Ever Thought About This?

Pascal<sup>3</sup> was a seventeenth-century French philosopher, mathematician, and physicist; he took a *logical* approach to eternity:

- > Heaven and Hell: Do they exist or not?
- > Faith: Does a person trust in Jesus or not?

**Consider these four categories...**



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/08/24/why-americas-nones-left-religion-behind/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://web.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/web%20publishing/Pascal\\_Wager.htm](http://web.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/web%20publishing/Pascal_Wager.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaise\\_Pascal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaise_Pascal)

INSIDE OF THE CARD – TOP

**1: Heaven and hell—No [do not exist]! Trust in Jesus—No [faith]!**

- > I can do whatever I want.
- > There are **no** eternal consequences.

**2: Heaven and hell—No [do not exist]! Trust in Jesus—Yes [faith]!**

- > I have missed out on some sinning.
- > There are **no** eternal consequences.

**3: Heaven and hell—Yes [do exist]! Trust in Jesus—No [faith]!**

- > I choose to do whatever I want.
- > I will be sent to hell when I die!

**4: Heaven and hell—Yes [do exist]! Trust in Jesus—Yes [faith]!**

- > I live for Jesus who lived and died for me.
- > I will be welcomed into heaven when I die!

- a. Pascal wrote, “**God is, or He is not.... What will you wager [bet, gamble, risk]?**” Then, to put the wager into the proper perspective, he wrote, “**If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing.**” In other words, if heaven and hell **do** exist, *and you trust in Jesus*, “**you gain all**”; but if heaven and hell **do not** exist, “**you lose nothing.**”
- b. When considering what to wager, Pascal wrote, “**...is there no means of seeing the faces of the cards?**” Then he answered his question by writing, “**Yes, Scripture...**” That is the place where *God shows us the truth!* Furthermore, that is the means through which God works to give the gift of faith, *to enable trust in Jesus!*
- c. Then Pascal wrote of the benefits of knowing Jesus, “**You will be faithful, humble, grateful, generous, a sincere friend, truthful. ...you will see so great certainty of gain, so much nothingness in what you risk, that you will at last recognize that you have wagered for something certain and infinite, for which you have given nothing.**”

INSIDE OF THE CARD – BOTTOM**What is YOUR category? 1 2 3 4****According to the Bible, *which is God's Holy Word:***

- > God created,
- > All people sinned, and
- > Heaven and hell are real,

***So all people need Jesus!***

***God is calling all people to repent – to be sorry for their sins and believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord.***

***Join us at Bethlehem to be sure of heaven! See the back!***

BACK OF THE CARD**Sundays:**

- > 8:00 – Divine Service (*Our Glad Reception of Word and Sacrament*)
- > 9:10 – Refreshments
- > 9:30 – Bible Class and Sunday School (*3 Years and Older*)
- > 10:45 – Divine Service (*staffed nursery*)

**Mondays:** 7 PM – Divine Service (*Missed Sunday, Join Us Monday*)

**Website:** BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com

**Podcast:** Benefit from the Bible

**Facebook:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma

**Childcare:** M-F, 6:45 AM - 6 PM; SUTQ Rated; 440-884-0430

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road  
Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230**

**Conclusion:** In a world where so many do not know Jesus, let us be filled with **joy** and **thanksgiving** because of *God's work in our lives*; then, let us use our new Bethlehem resource to reach out to others!

**Let us pray:** Dear Father in heaven, we thank You for our trust in Jesus; *please move us to share the good news with others!* In Jesus' name, we pray...

**CONNECT WITH US → Website:** [www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com](http://www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com)

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