

In the Oscar-winning movie *Crash*, Sandra Bulluck plays the character Jean, the wife of the Los Angeles District Attorney. If anyone should be safe from attack, she should. And yet, when she and her husband are carjacked, she is startled to discover that her wealth and privilege do not protect her from even the most basic assault.

When they return home, Bullock arranges for a locksmith to come and change her locks. The locksmith who arrives turns out to be Hispanic and Jean now sees threat everywhere. She takes one look at the locksmith and tells her husband they will need to change the locks again, because "your amigo in there is gonna sell our key to one of his homies." Jean's world has been knocked off its axis. All that she is able to see is danger. What she sees is the need for better, more secure locks.

In the last 10 years our new norm is now longer delays at the airport. We take off our shoes and we can't take liquids or nail clippers on the plane while those of us who are pilots are able to carry guns on board. We are fearful of posting our pictures on the internet for fear that perverts will use the pictures of our children in nasty ways. Our local hometown Charlotte Panthers are sponsored by a security system and we think nothing of it. Many of us have some type of weapon in our home to protect us from intruders.

Rather than having block parties with our neighbors they call the police when they see more than two cars in your driveway. Rather than meeting with government or school officials to find solutions to problems we rant on blogs and other social media or in conversations with friends about how people in authority are enemies to be taken down. Our rhetoric has gotten pretty violent.

On my Facebook page I receive updates from the Onion. The Onion began as a satirical newspaper but has now made the transition to social media and cable television. The Onion posts fake news stories that poke fun at others but what I like about the Onion is that there is a grain of wisdom in many of their satirical stories.

This week a satirical story appeared from the Onion that said this, "As media coverage of the 10th anniversary of 9/11 ramps up this week, citizens across the United States collectively realized they would rather think about the terrorist attacks of 2001 than about anything else that has transpired in the subsequent decade.

The events of Sept. 11 were unspeakably tragic, but really, when you think about it, things have only grown more horrible and unbearable since then," said Phyllis Bennett of San Jose, CA, who considered 9/11 a notably less unpleasant topic than the Iraq War, the worldwide financial meltdown, Hurricane Katrina, the nation's debt burden, the deaths of 6,200 U.S. troops, China's rise into a global superpower, the housing market, relentless partisan bickering, millions of job losses, the war in Afghanistan, nuclear proliferation, unchecked climate change, declining household income, swine flu, or the 9/11 Truth movement.

"That was an awful day for America, but at least the nation came together and people actually seemed to care about one another. Just compare that to now." While stating they felt "kind of terrible" about it, Americans expressed a longing to return to those "better days" of shared national agony in September 2001, when everybody truly believed things couldn't get any worse.

We have been reading through the book of Exodus over the past few weeks and today we read a passage about Moses protesting being chosen by God as a leader. In chapter 4 Moses says, "I have never been eloquent, neither in the past or now." As I read that passage I have been thinking about the heroes after the tragic events of 9/11 who never saw themselves as eloquent.

People who stepped up to provide safety and security and who have sought to help direct us in a more positive direction. The men and women who charged into the World Trade Center to help rescue survivors only to meet tragic death themselves. Others who still suffer physical and emotional trauma from the event. The everyday people who became heroes that day and in the years after.

People like Lt. Heather “Lucky” Penney who was on a runway at Andrews Air Force Base and ready to fly. She had her hand on the throttle of an F-16 and she had her orders: Bring down United Airlines Flight 93. The day’s fourth hijacked airliner seemed to be hurtling toward Washington. Penney, one of the first two combat pilots in the air that morning, was told to stop that plane.

The one thing Lt. Penny didn’t have as she roared into the sky that day was live ammunition. Or missiles. Or anything at all to throw at a hostile aircraft. She had been training so that all she had was her F-16. She was given orders to be a kamikaze pilot. But, of course, she did not have to carry out those orders when that plane crashed in a Pennsylvania field due to the heroics of its passengers.

Heroes after that tragic event like the leaders of Heartsong Church in Cordova, Tennessee who reached out and welcomed their new Muslim neighbors who were building a mosque next door. The 600 member non-denominational church even allowed the Muslims to use a portion of their church building while their mosque was being constructed. As a result, the diverse Christian and Muslim neighbors in that Tennessee town live in peace with one another today rather than fear.

On this tenth anniversary of 9/11 as we read the stories of Moses, I think today we recognize there is evil in the world. We do not deny it. Scripture attests to the evil in the world. We know evil is real. And on this day we celebrate the heroes that day ten years ago and we celebrate the ones who have been faithful since. Everyday people who were not born with any particular special gift but rose to the occasion around them.

But if we just use this event and this Scripture as a memorial event, then I don’t think we are being faithful. Because you and I are charged to be in the heroes who step up today and tomorrow.

You are I are called to be today's and tomorrow's heroes. Working to create a world not focused on fear but one focused on hope. Not me, you may say, I cannot do that. I am just a humble homemaker. I am just a shopkeeper. I am just a service provider. I am just a teacher. I am just a student. I am unemployed. I am just a Mom or Dad. I am too young. I am retired. I am just a whatever you think you just are.

But I think it is just tragic if anyone of us use an excuse to not seek to make a positive difference in the world. You and I are not called to be couch sitters. We are called to make a faithful difference. To be people who share God's love and hope and mercy. Who work to overcome fear and hostility.

We are called to be the ones to care for our neighbors. We are called to be the ones to seek resolution and not add to the conflict around us. We are called to be the ones to leave a positive footprint in the place where we live, work, and play.

And let me say that yesterday, you here at ACPC were those everyday heroes. You put on a community event. You pulled together as a group of followers to offer a day of celebration, fun, artistry, outreach, and you even raised a little money for the ministries of this church.

I heard several people tell me about how much they enjoyed yesterday. Strangers who told me that they felt that being around the people at ACPC have them a very good feeling. The hospitality touched them I was told.

That is what it means to be a witness to God's love. In the eyes of many, including me, you are those everyday heroes. Don't ever say you can't do something. Because yesterday was proof that with God's guidance you can do anything.
AMEN.

-<http://www.theonion.com/articles/nation-would-rather-think-about-911-than-anything,21309/>

-Washing ton Post, <http://ht.ly/6pQoY>

-Garrett, Greg, "After Anger, Fear, and 9/11," 9/7/11, and found at <http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/After-Anger-Fear-and-911-Greg-Garrett-09-08-2011?offset=0&max=1>