

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Life Given, not Taken

By (Jerry Fite)

Jesus said, “*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*” (John 15:13). We value our life so much that we will do almost anything to keep upright. But to lay it down to benefit others is manifesting a selflessness that reaches the epitome of “love.” Jesus said there is no greater love that we can give our friends.

On Tuesday morning of September 11, 2001, four hundred and twelve emergency workers in New York were killed trying help others. Two hijacked American air liners had entered the twin towers at speeds exceeding five hundred miles per hour taking the lives of passengers and workers at the World Trade Center. 2,977 lost their lives that day with the crashing planes and falling towers. But 412 of that number primarily comprised of firefighters and police officers “gave their lives” seeking to help others. They did not die that day but laid down their own lives to save others.

This selfless love was not restricted to age or sex. **Moira Smith**, a 38-year-old police officer was leading many to safety exhorting them to keep moving with firm but reassuring exhortation. One man that she led to safety looked around five minutes later and saw her no longer as the building fell.

Michael F Camarrata was a 22-year-old firefighter who entered the towers to help. His last voicemail to his dad was, ‘*I am going to the World Trade Center. A plane just hit it. Just tell everyone I am all right.*’ He knew the challenge was great, but a note found in his furniture drawer at home manifested his willingness to sacrifice his life for others: ‘*Don’t mourn me this is the career I chose.*’ **Peter James Ganci, Jr.**, the 54-year-old fire chief instructed the fire commissioners to clear the north tower area but remained because he said he “*would not leave his men.*” He died with 71-year-old first deputy commissioner **William Feehan**, as the north tower collapsed in on both. Before the north tower fell, police superintendent **Ferdinand Morrone**, age 63, reached the 45th floor above helping others and police chief, **James Romito**, age 51, reached the 31st floor to help firefighters save others before all suddenly descended with the rubble. **Ronald Bucca**, a 47-year-old fire marshal ascended to the 78th floor to try to help survivors where the airliner entered, only to fall with the south tower. These did not run from death but laid down their lives in death for their fellow citizens.

Even those doomed to death in the United Air Lines flight 93 plane did not have their lives taken. Those on board who stormed the cockpit

to take over the plane from the hijackers knew planes had hit their targets. These hijackers were probably not seeking comparatively unpopulated farmland to crash the plan. But in an empty field in Pennsylvania is where they crashed because passengers forced the issue, giving their lives, saving others in the targeted capital city of our Nation.

While we honor in memory those who gave their lives for others, **Jesus** gave his life to save every soul from eternal death. While the ungodly used lies and power to crucify Jesus on the cross, they did not take His life. He gave it.

Jesus said, “*Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*” (John 10:16-17). Jesus laid it down, and being God, raised it up again, giving us hope of eternal life.

Soldiers armed with weapons to take Him met Jesus who said, “I am He...”. When they heard these words, the armed soldiers “*went backward and fell to the ground*” (John 18:6). At this moment they were not merely astonished, but powerless before God. They did not take Him; **Jesus** gave Himself up into their hands!