

Get ready, the U.S. Government's TSA is warning airlines of a new twist on suicide bombing that will undoubtedly lead to more intrusive searches at airports. Christi Parsons reports for the [LA Times](#): The government has warned airlines that terrorists are considering surgically implanting explosives into people in an attempt to circumvent screening procedures, according to U.S. officials. What next will terrorists come up with to try and kill as many people as possible?

The FBI added a former Dearborn, Mich., resident to its most wanted terrorists list on July 7th, a move that puts Faouzi Ayoub among some of the most hunted and dangerous men in the world. Oh great, Dearborn, MI. That's not too far from Bay City.

It seems whenever an act of terrorism occurs in our world, we ask questions like, "How did it happen?" "Who is to blame? Was it possible to prevent? How can we prevent something like this from happening in the future?" It's good that investigations take place. We don't want our country to become like the Mideast, where acts of terrorism happen every week.

This morning we're going to conduct another investigation, a more important investigation than the one that took place after 9/11. Just think about it – what we are going to talk about today is more important than what they're talking about on Capitol Hill, raising the Federal debt ceiling. We're going to investigate spiritual terrorism that kills billions of people each year. Let's find out two things – first of all, how did it happen? And second of all, what is the solution?

How do we know that there is terrorism in the world? That's not too hard to figure out – just watch the news. How do we know that there is something wrong with our world spiritually? Once again, watch the news. Why is it that children are abducted from their homes? Why is it that there are suicide bombers in the Middle East? Why is it that people steal money? Because something is wrong - a spiritual act of terrorism has taken place – sin is here.

And sin isn't something you just hear about in the news. Look at your own life. You and your family have been affected by spiritual terrorism. Ask yourself this morning: "Why am I so selfish sometimes? Why am I always thinking about money? Why do I always forget to pray? Why do I lose my temper? Why do I make mistakes? Fail to love? Forget about God?" It's because you and your family have been infected with sin. You're not a suicide bomber, but, like that bomber, you are a sinner. Spiritual terrorism has affected you.

That's why your life will someday end. Your future has been cut short by this act of spiritual terrorism. The thing about sin, is that it seems harmless, but it isn't. It's lethal. Sin is the cause of death. Have you ever wondered to yourself why people die. There are all kinds of causes of death – heart disease, accidents, old age. But why are those causes here? Why is there heart disease? Why are there accidents? Why do we grow older? It's because our world has been infected with sin. Your life will end because of spiritual terrorism.

And then there is problem we can't see, the problem of hell. Do you realize that every person you know, the people you work with, the people you're related to, the people you love – according to the Bible, every person in this world will go to hell, because of sin, because of spiritual terrorism, unless something is done. It doesn't matter if you're a good person or not, successful or not, a good father or mother or not – every person goes to hell, unless something is done.

"The Sum of All Fears" was a movie about a nuclear bomb being dropped on a populated area. Spiritually, that has already taken place. The spiritual bomb of sin has been dropped on us. Now, we're all infected, we're all going to die, and unless something is done, we're all going to hell.

How did this happen? After 9/11, people were asking, "How did this happen?" How did

spiritual terrorism happen? God has conducted an investigation, and here are the results. Verse 12: “Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.” God is talking about Adam, in the Garden of Eden. Do you remember when Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and broke God’s command? It’s easy to blow over that story. But, according to the Bible, that moment is the biggest act of terrorism in the history of the world. How many people were hurt or killed or affected as a result of 9/11? Thousands. It was a terrible thing. But what happened in the Garden of Eden was even worse. When Adam sinned, he infected the world. Billions of people would die. Billions of people would go to hell. Imagine being at your home, and you’re having a big get-together – family, friends. You receive a package, and on the package it says; “Anthrax – do not open.” But you decide to open it anyway. You struggle to open it up, and then the package bursts open, anthrax everywhere! All your family, all your friends – they inhale the anthrax and die. Ultimately, who’s fault is that? Yours!

When Adam sinned, thousands of years ago, it was as though he had opened a package he shouldn’t have opened. When he disobeyed, sin entered his body, entered the world, and affected everything and everybody. Billions and billions of people have been affected by that one moment in the Garden of Eden. Spiritual anthrax – sin, entered the world. And it’s lethal - it results in death. Because of what Adam did, our world has become one big spiritual ground zero, in the eyes of God.

What is the solution to spiritual terrorism? President Obama and President Bush before him are following a plan to combat terrorism in our world. The plan has three points. First of all, it will be expensive. Second of all, it will involve lots and lots of people. And finally, no matter how good the plan is, it won’t completely solve the problem. Terrorism won’t go away.

There are three things to note about God’s solution to spiritual terrorism. First of all, it will also be expensive. Second of all, it will only involve one person. And finally, it will completely solve the problem. Let’s take a look at God’s plan.

First of all, defeating spiritual terrorism will be expensive, extremely expensive – making the cost of fighting earthly terrorism look like a drop in the bucket. But look at what God does – instead of charging us, taxing us, making us pay for half, what does God do – he provides the solution for free. Look at verse 15: “But the gift is not like the trespass.” Do you see the word “gift” there?

God repeats the word “gift” five times in this section of the Bible. What do you think God is trying to tell you? He’s trying to tell you that the solution to spiritual terrorism will be expensive, but God will give it to you for free. This is the greatest act of charity in the history of the world – something that no one has ever thought of before – the solution to spiritual terrorism is a free gift from God.

Often times, when a country is poor and having problems, a rich country, like the United States will give money to that country as an act of charity, to help that country get back on its feet. There is no greater act of charity in the history of the world than when God gave to our world THE gift, THE solution to spiritual terrorism. Yes, it’s expensive, God says. But I’ll pay for it myself – it’s my gift to you. And what is that gift? Verse 15: “For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!” It’s a gift that comes by THE one man, Jesus Christ.

Remember how we said that our president’s plan will involve hundreds, maybe thousands, of people? What if one person stepped forward and said, “I, by myself, will solve the problem of terrorism in the world. By myself, I will get rid of suicide bombers, protect our

borders, destroy terrorism. I'll do it myself." Would you believe him? I wouldn't. But that's what Jesus does. He steps forward, and says, "I'll get rid of spiritual terrorism myself." Jesus is the one-man solution, the secret weapon against spiritual terrorism. Just as one man, Adam, brought sin and death and hell into the world, so also one man, Jesus Christ, brings forgiveness and eternal life into the world.

There was once a movie called the Last Emperor. The young child is anointed as the last emperor of China and lives a life of luxury with 1000 servants at his command. "What happens when you do wrong?" his brother asks. "When I do wrong, someone else is punished," the boy replies. Then he demonstrates, by breaking a jar, and one of his servants is beaten. In Christianity, Jesus reverses that ancient pattern. When the servants (that's us) make a mistake, the King is punished. That's how it works. Instead of us being condemned eternally for our sins, Jesus is condemned instead.

What is the definition of grace? Maybe the first thing that pops into your head is that grace is God's undeserved love. True, but there's another way, maybe a better way, to define grace. Grace is more than just the concept of undeserved love. Grace is a person, one man, Jesus Christ. Grace is one person, Jesus, being born on Christmas, and living a perfect life as your substitute. Grace is one man, Jesus, being blamed for the sins of billions of people, and dying as your substitute on the cross. Grace is one man, Jesus, rising from the dead, proclaiming God's forgiveness and destroying the power of death in the world. Grace is Jesus Christ.

Grace is not a team effort. God does his part and you do your part? No. Grace is one man, Jesus Christ, doing it all. The whole thing is a gift that God freely gives to you. And it's the one solution to spiritual terrorism that works. The Bible says, "How much MORE did God's grace and the gift that came by the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!" This is not like any earthly solution to terrorism. Those solutions won't completely overcome the problem. But God's solution to spiritual terrorism does. Sin is forgiven. Death is defeated. Eternal life is in your future. This is something that every person can have, that every person can benefit from.

Does this mean that our world is now free from problems? Because our Savior, Jesus, there won't be any more suicide bombers? No more death and bloodshed? No more pain? Is that what I'm saying? No.

What Jesus did for us gives us benefits that are bigger and better, but invisible. Here are three. Number one: now, you can be sure that all of your sins are completely forgiven by God. Number two: now, you can be sure that when you die, you will go to heaven. Number three: now, you can be sure that someday, you will rise from the dead. These invisible benefits help us keep everything we see in perspective. There will always be problems in this sinful world – terrorism, pain, and death. But now, because of what Jesus has done, we know that there is more to life than what we experience now. There are better things coming. There is hope, and a future waiting for you.

Who is the one person who has affected your life, your world, the most? The inventor of baseball? The inventor of electricity? One of your parents? A teacher? A coach? Who is the one person who has affected your life, your world, the most?

How about Adam? His one sin has brought sin and death into your life. But more than Adam, how about Jesus, the one-man solution to spiritual terrorism, the definition of grace, the reason you can wake up in the morning and know that things are OK between you and your God. May Jesus always be for you THE gift that you treasure most in your life. Amen.

What is a major theme you hear when you listen to the news? What is a major theme you see when you look at the world? When you look at your own life? Is there a theme?

One common theme is this – problems. When you watch the news, the theme is problems. The Enron disaster. The questionable judging in the figure skating competition. Terrorism. Problems. When you look at your own life, you often see problems – perhaps they are financial problems, family or personal problems, health problems.

What is the biggest of all the problems we have? It's the one problem that no one likes to talk about --the problem of death. Death is really everyone's problem. Death doesn't care who you are – regardless of your job, your physical condition, your family responsibilities, the number of people who depend on you – death doesn't care about those things. It's a problem that everyone has, regardless of who they are.

What is the death rate in the U.S., compared to Afghanistan? It's the same - 100%. Death doesn't care where you live, or how healthy or technological you are.

Why doesn't anyone want to talk about the problem of death? Two reasons, I believe. Reason number one: because there is no solution. No one will ever come up with a cure for death, a way to prevent it. Another reason people don't want to talk about death, is because no one really knows for sure what happens next. Is there really a heaven? Is there really a hell? Or, is it like in the movies – after you die you become a ghost and float around the earth? Or are you reincarnated and become a cat, or a tree? What happens after you die? There is great confusion, there is no solution, and because of that, no one wants to talk about it.

We live in a culture of denial. We pretend that death doesn't exist, but it does. Rather than live in denial, let's face this problem head-on this morning. Let's look in the Bible, and as we do, you might be surprised to find that there is a solution to the problem of death. Our text for this morning acknowledges that death is a problem. In verse 12, it says that "death comes to all men." In verse 14, it says that "death reigns." But the Bible also tells us the cause of death. Perhaps if we knew the cause, we could find the solution. In verse 12, it says, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." Sin is ultimately the cause of death. And it all began with one man – Adam.

In our Old Testament lesson for this morning, we see the biggest disaster in the history of the world – the fall into sin. Adam failed to obey God. And when that happened, sin entered the world. I don't think people really understand the magnitude of what happened that day in the Garden of Eden.

Imagine being at your home, and you're having a big get-together – family, friends. You receive a package, and on the package it says; "Anthrax – do not open." But you decide to open it anyway. You struggle to open it up, and then the package bursts open, anthrax everywhere! All your family, all your friends – they inhale the anthrax and die. Ultimately, who's fault is that? Yours!

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From that moment on, people were born with the problem of sin. There is a test you can

perform on yourself to see if you've been infected. Let's do that this morning. Here it is – ask yourself – have I made any mistakes in the last week? Have I been selfish, even for a moment? Have I had any unkind thoughts? If you are honest, and answer yes to those questions, then you have been infected with the deadly disease of sin.

And physical death is the least of our problems – Verse 18 tells us, “The result of one trespass was condemnation for all men.” When Adam sinned, he not only brought sin and physical death into the world. He also brought condemnation. What happens after a person dies? Here we are told, “Condemnation.” In the Bible, “condemnation” means hell – eternal punishment for sin.

My friends, this problem is bigger than any of the financial or personal or health problems that you might have. The problem of death and eternal condemnation. Spiritually, we are living at ground zero, we are suffering the effects of Adam's sin from many year's ago. Do you see why most people don't like to talk about this subject? Where is the solution?

We find it right here. God intervenes. God is not some sort of aloof, faraway God that doesn't care. He comes to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ, our God, looks down at the world. He sees our problem. He loves us too much to let us suffer and die eternally. And so Christ our God steps into our world as a human being. He visits our ground zero as one of us. He sees how we all have been infected by Adam's sin. And he offers a solution, a way out, a way for you and me to escape. And here it is...

He faces the Devil head-on, as we see in our Gospel lesson for this morning. He does what Adam and Eve couldn't do, and what we have failed to do all our lives. He resists temptation, as our Savior. And then he takes upon himself all of our sins and the sins of the whole world.

Imagine being in a room with all the anthrax ever made in the entire world – it's all right there in front of you. Imagine inhaling all of it, so that no one would ever have to worry about that sort of thing again. That's what Jesus did – he came into our world, and took all of the sins of the world and placed them on himself. And then he suffered the consequences, didn't he. That condemnation that is described here – that's what Jesus suffered when he went to the cross. Instead of us being condemned for our sins after we die, Jesus is condemned instead.

There was once a movie called the Last Emperor. The young child is anointed as the last emperor of China and lives a life of luxury with 1000 servants at his command. “What happens when you do wrong?” his brother asks. “When I do wrong, someone else is punished,” the boy replies. Then he demonstrates, by breaking a jar, and one of his servants is beaten. In Christianity, Jesus reverses that ancient pattern. When the servants (that's us) make a mistake, the King is punished. That's how it works. Instead of us being condemned eternally for our sins, Jesus is condemned instead.

That's the solution to the problem of sin and death! We read: “Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification for all men.” Because of what Jesus did, you are justified in the eyes of God. God looks at you and says, “Not guilty!”

Adam's sin was the worst mistake in human history. But what Jesus did – his death on the cross – that is the best thing that has ever happened in human history. The single most important event in the history of the world – right here – Jesus taking on our sin and dying on the cross. How many people are affected by this? Billions. Our text says: “Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.” God offers this solution to all people. Because of one man, Jesus Christ, and what he did, all who believe are made righteous in the eyes of God.

Do you see how this can change your life, right now? It is true, that in the eyes of God, our world is one big ground zero, because of all the sin and death that is here. And it is true that we as Christians will continue to have problems, because of the world in which we live. We'll still physically die. But now, because of what Jesus Christ has done, things can be different for you.

Now, you can be someone who has hope, someone who has peace. You can be someone who has confidence. When you think of death, whether it's the death of a loved one, or your own death, you no longer have to be afraid or confused. You no longer have to worry about condemnation for your sins. You can be someone who has peace, because you know that God will welcome you into heaven after you die. Your sins have been taken away.

You no longer have to wonder about the purpose of your life. Jesus has changed all that. Your purpose is to learn more about the God who has saved you. Your purpose is to help others in this world, to help others to find Christ, that they too might have the same comfort that you have.

When you face all the problems that come your way, you no longer have to feel pressure to fix everything yourself. You no longer have to feel despair that life is helpless and hopeless, that you're on your own. You can feel peace and confidence, because you know that God will strengthen you and guide you. He has proven this to you by his death on the cross for your sins.

Imagine wanting a gold medal in the Olympics. More than anything in your life, you want that gold medal. But, you have been born with all kinds of physical problems. And then, to top it off, you get into a car accident that paralyzes you. It seems that the Olympic gold is something you'll never have. But then, one of those athletes you see on TV visits you one day, and gives you his gold medal. He earned it, but he gives it to you, and you can't believe it.

That's what Jesus has done. More than anything else, you want to be at peace with God, don't you? You want to get rid of that problem of death and condemnation to go away. But all that sin makes this an impossible dream. Then, Jesus steps into the picture, and wins that gold medal for you. He gets rid of your sin. He comes to you and gives you that gold medal of peace and confidence and joy and hope. He even promises you that on Judgment Day, you will stand on the winner's platform with him.

May God bless you, as you continue to walk with your Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.