

## Home Front

June 14-15

The Watchman's Call

### Intro/Recap

Aloha everyone and Happy Father's Day! I'm Mark and I want to welcome you to service. Today we are concluding our family series, *Home Front* where we've been talking about the battle for Christ-centered homes. Your success as a family, our success as a community and as a nation does not depend on what happens inside the White House, but on what happens inside your house (To paraphrase Barbara Bush).

If we want to see revival in our cities, healing in our State, and the Presence of God in our streets — it starts on the *Home Front*.

This Father's Day, I want to speak to everyone — but especially to men. We need to address a role that's often neglected, misunderstood, or even abandoned: The role of a Watchman. [Someone say, "Watchman"] As the dawn of our Lord's return draws near, it has never been more crucial for God's Watchmen to be vigilant through the night.

Through every generation, in every civilization, there are those who must stay awake. While others sleep, someone stands watch. While others are distracted, someone stays alert. While stores are closed, someone watches the cameras. While families swim and play, a Lifeguard scans the waters. One parent always sleeps near the baby monitor so they can run to their child at the first sign of trouble (Thank you Moms).

It's not the most glamorous role, it often gets overlooked or taken for granted, but it is absolutely vital. Because when no one is watching, disaster is right around the corner.

There were two men in a correctional facility who understood the importance of a watchman. Yea, these two podagee guys named Mano and Silva. They were planning their escape from the correctional facility and the plan went as follows: Sneak up to the gate, knock out the watchman, open the gate, and run.

It seemed like a foolproof plan but when they reached the gate, the watchman wasn't there and the gate was left wide open! In shock, Mano turned to Silva and said, "Brah, the watchman no stay!" To which Silva replied, "Das ok, we come back tomorrow!"

You see, when the Watchman is not in place, the whole thing falls apart!

We see this, not only among humans, but in the animal kingdom as well! In the wild, certain species — like vervet monkeys and meerkats — use sentinels. This is a member of the group who goes to an elevated vantage point (like a termite hill or a tree branch) and stays alert, scanning for danger while the rest go about their activities.

Researchers conducted a study where they played recordings of predator sounds, like a leopard growl or eagle call, while observing the group. Here's what they found:

When a sentinel was present, the group responded to the threat and escaped over 90% of the time. When no sentinel was on duty, the group responded less than 40% of the time.

The presence of even one vigilant sentinel more than doubled the group's chance of survival.

*“Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour,” (1 Peter 5:8).*

The Bible tells us we have a very real enemy who is on the prowl looking to devour our families, divide our marriages, and destroy our Churches. We don't want Satan to sneak up like Mano and Silva to find the watchman gone and the gate wide open! God's Watchmen must man their posts and stay alert!

### **The Watchman's Call**

We see the importance of a watchman in the book of Ezekiel chapter 33. In this chapter, God uses the imagery of a watchman to communicate the importance of staying vigilant.

*1 “The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, 3 and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, 4 then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head. 5 Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone's life, that person's life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood,’” (Ezekiel 33:1-6).*

You see, in ancient times, cities were surrounded by walls for protection. Trump would've loved it. “We're going to build a big beautiful wall.” And stationed on those walls — especially at night — were watchmen. These men had one job that the survival of the rest of the city depended on — stay awake, stay alert, and watch for any signs of danger. Whether it was an invading army, a natural disaster, or a traveler in need, the watchman's job was to spot it and sound the alarm.

You see, the watchman wasn't the cavalry. It was not the watchman's job to fight all of the battles himself. But if he failed to speak up, lives would be lost and the fate of the entire city was at stake. So how do we answer the call to live as watchmen for our homes, our Church, and our communities?

#### **1. Stay Alert**

It's one thing if the watchman is absent all-together, but *equally* dangerous is a watchman who is asleep at his post! It makes no difference at all if the watchman is at his post if his warning goes unheeded or is never signaled at all.

Over and over scripture shows us what it looks like to be vigilant as God's watchmen.

*3 “Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer,”*  
*(2 Timothy 2:3-4).*

Picture a watchman at his post. The rest of the city below is absorbed in civilian affairs — buying and trading, entertainment, carousing. But the watchman knows his duty. Too much is at stake for the watchman to become entangled in civilian affairs. He must stay alert and vigilant. Heed this warning from Jesus,

<sup>34</sup> “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup> For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man,” (Luke 21:34-36).

The day of reckoning will come when we least expect it. Be on watch and pray. Do not become entangled in civilian affairs.

<sup>1</sup> “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things,”  
(Colossians 3:1-2).

A watchman can't live at street level. He has to climb the ramparts to an elevated vantage point. He must keep his eyes fixed beyond the city walls, the noise, the markets, and the distractions of daily life. While people below are consumed with what is in front of them, the watchman has a different focus. He keeps his gaze fixed on the horizon — on what is up ahead. This is what sets him apart. As God's watchman we cannot become shortsighted. We know that this life, no matter how consuming, is a vapor. Our perspective must be elevated, fixed not on what is seen but on what is unseen. Not on the temporary, but the eternal.

Hawaii's history offers a painful reminder of what happens when the enemy is underestimated and the watchmen are not on alert.

It was an ordinary Sunday morning. Most people were still asleep in their beds. Families were cooking breakfast. Soldiers were going about their usual business. The mood was calm, quiet, normal. But up on a hill on Oahu's North Shore, a small radar station picked up something strange: A massive formation of planes headed toward the island.

The young radar operators, barely out of high school, saw the signal and reported it. They knew something was off. This wasn't just a few planes, it looked like an invasion. But the officer on duty dismissed their alert. He told them it was probably just a group of B-17's flying in from the mainland. And just like that, the warning was not signaled.

That day was December 7, 1941. A day that would go down in infamy. Less than an hour after that report, Japanese bombers blackened the skies above Pearl Harbor, Battleships were ripped open, over 2,400 lives were lost, and America was thrust into World War. The threat had been spotted but the alarm had not been heeded and the results were disastrous.

And here's the sobering question: Could history be repeating itself?

Do we underestimate the resolve of our enemy the Devil? Are we awake? Are we alert? Do we recognize that our enemy is not idle and is targeting our children, our marriages, and our families? Have we become too distracted and entangled in civilian affairs? Are we heavenly minded or living for the here and now? The day is closing in like a trap and the Church must be ready. Watch and pray, set your minds on things above, do not get entangled in worldly affairs.

So we must stay alert.

## **2. Silence is Never an Option**

After giving Ezekiel the imagery of a watchman, God followed up with a personal application.

<sup>7</sup> “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from Me. <sup>8</sup> When I say to the wicked, ‘You wicked person, you will surely die,’ and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. <sup>9</sup> But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved,” (Ezekiel 33:7-9).

As a watchman, “silence is not an option!” [Tell the person next to you!] Picture a watchman at his post. It’s the third watch of the night and all is quiet. But suddenly, something appears on the distant horizon. The watchman strains his eyes to make it out. It looks like a tiny speck of light. Suddenly that solitary light is joined by another, then another. Suddenly, the whole countryside is ablaze with the light of a thousand of torches. The watchman sees it all. He watches as the lights grow brighter. He watches the formations draw near. He watches as they reach the city gates. And still... he says nothing. No alarm. No warning. Just silence.

Moments later, the gates are breached. The enemy pours in. Families are ripped from sleep. The city is overrun — *not because the threat went unseen*, but because the one who saw it chose to remain silent.

Be honest, if you heard this report how many of you would think that the watchman was in leagues with the enemy? You see, in God’s eyes, silence is not neutrality — it’s complicity. God told Ezekiel that He would hold him accountable for what he did not say. Silence was never an option.

In the wake of the attacks on 9/11, officials realized that ordinary people had seen suspicious activity before the attacks took place. Many of them said nothing, either out of fear, uncertainty, or a sense that it was “probably nothing.”

So a campaign was launched by the NY Metropolitan Transportation Authority and later adopted by the Department of Homeland Security. Its goal was to empower everyday citizens to speak up when something seemed off — even if it was uncomfortable, even if you were unsure — because one small voice just might save the lives of many.

What was the slogan? “If you see something, say something!”

That is our job as watchmen, watch-women, and watch-children. We can’t just notice, we need to warn. When you see deception creeping in, say something. When you see sin being tolerated, say something. When you see a brother or sister going astray, say something. Not out of condemnation, not out of judgment, not to gossip, or out of anger but to sound the alarm in love. Just as bad as not seeing the threat is to see it and stay silent.

<sup>1</sup> “Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ,” (Galatians 6:1-2).

<sup>19</sup> “My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, <sup>20</sup> remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins,” (James 5:19-20).

<sup>8</sup> *“Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—* <sup>9</sup> *yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.* <sup>10</sup> *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death,”* (2 Corinthians 7:8-10).

Paul said, “I had a choice — to leave you in worldly sorrow, which brings death or to say something that caused Godly sorrow and eventually life.” We think it is unloving to speak the truth to somebody but it is actually the opposite. If we love someone we will say something.

This past week I went to the Doctor for some recurring symptoms I’d been experiencing. How weird would it have been for my Doctor to listen to me, diagnose the problem and then say, “I see exactly what’s going on, I know why you’ve been experiencing so much pain, but out of consideration for your feelings I’m not going to tell you.” We go to the Doctor because we want the truth, not someone to coddle our feelings. We know something’s wrong, that’s why we’re there! Why should Church be any different? Anyone here perfect? No? We all have something going on? Then let’s speak the truth to one another in love. Silence is not love. Silence is to leave someone in worldly sorry, which leads to death.

### **Conclusion: The Dawn is Coming**

<sup>11</sup> *“And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.* <sup>12</sup> *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.* <sup>13</sup> *Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.* <sup>14</sup> *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh,”* (Romans 13:11-14).

I know when you turn on the news or look at the headlines it feels like the darkness is overwhelming. It seems like the enemy is gaining ground and that our Lord is delayed in His return. But the trumpet of the Lord will sound. And on that day the skies will split open and the Son of Man will return like the rising sun, with healing in His wings.

The day is coming when the final trumpet will blast. Not the trumpet of the watchmen but the trumpet of Heaven. The shofar of eternity. And when the trumpet sounds, the King of Glory will descend in power, riding on the clouds, and every eye will see Him — and the long night will be over.

Until that day, we must stand vigilant. We must not fall asleep, we must not lose sight of eternity or become entangled in worldly affairs. Be found ready, be found faithful, because when that trumpet sounds we will not have time to get ready, we must be ready.

May it be said of us, while others slept, we stayed alert, while others were silent, we sounded the alarm, and when the King returned, we were ready with the dawn.

### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. What does it look like to “stay alert” today? What civilian affairs do you find yourself entangled in?
2. What do you find most challenging about speaking the uncomfortable truth to others?
3. What helps you to maintain an eternal perspective in the midst of the daily chaos?