

## Watchmen in Your Life

**“Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.” Ezekiel 33:7 NAS**

God came to Ezekiel and appointed him a watchman for his people. God gave Ezekiel very clear instructions and defined the consequences for obedience or disobedience. Ezekiel’s responsibility before God was to report what God revealed to him. **“ . . .you will hear a message from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.”** Ezekiel 33:7 If Ezekiel was not faithful to convey the message and the wicked died in his sins the wicked man’s blood would be on Ezekiel’s hands. If, however, Ezekiel was faithful in delivering the message God gave him and the man died in his sins, Ezekiel would be free from responsibility, the wicked man would bear the responsibility. If the wicked man repents of his sin, **“ . . . practices justice and righteousness”** **“None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him.”** Ezekiel 33:14 & 16

God’s desire is revealed in verse 11 of the same chapter, **“As I live!” declares the Lord GOD, ‘I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?’** Ezekiel 33:11

God also gave Ezekiel instructions regarding the righteous: don’t get too haughty. **“When I say to the righteous he will surely live, and he so trusts in his righteousness that he commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but in that same iniquity of his which he has committed he will die.”** Ezekiel 33:11

### The So What Factor

Whenever I read, teach or listen to Biblical teaching I always ask myself, “So what?” Is there a practical application needing to be added to my life? What would God weave into my heart from His interaction here with Ezekiel?

I believe this testimony is very relevant to where The Church of God is in America. That The Church is in serious trouble should not be a surprise to anyone with a pulse. However: Where are the warnings to The Church? Has God cast us off to our own devices? Having sent His Son, does He no longer care that we are being swallowed up by the darkness surrounding us? Does He not care that The Church is sinking into cultural morose? Could it be that God has given the warning and those to whom He gave it are not being faithful to share it with The Church? Could it be the warnings have been given by those He has sent but The Church is not listening? How would we know? Whom has He sent? Are we left to guess? Are we abandoned to figure things out for ourselves?

NO! God has not abandoned us! He has said, **“I will never leave you or forsake you.”** (Hebrews 13:5) and He has not. However, we must turn away from our own wisdom and see what He has designed as revealed in His Word. Then, having read The Word, we must respond in obedience!

### God’s Watchmen In the Church

Throughout history God has shown His concern for mankind. The death of His Son, the ultimate sacrifice for mankind, secured the way of salvation for those who would listen. He specified not only the watchmen in the church but also the work He would do through them if they are faithful. **“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.”** Ephesians 4:11-13 Lest those in leadership think their charge is lighter than that of Ezekiel, let me remind you of a couple of Scriptures: Acts 20:28 **“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”** and Hebrews 13:17, **“Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account.”** God-ordained spiritual leaders in the church are the watchman God has appointed over the church.

## God's Watchmen In The Home

God's watchmen, however, do not begin in the church. God's first line of instruction is in the home. Congregational leaders are to continue the warnings and admonitions given in the home. The role of husband and dad in the home is the spiritual nurture of wife and children. The purpose of man's love for his wife, like the love of Christ for the church, is to ". . . sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (to )present (her) in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless." Ephesians 5:26-27

God's direction for children is clearly stated in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." and is stated again in Ephesians 6:4, "And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Dad is the watchman in the home.

## Who Is Listening

It is important to recognize here the responsibility God gives to those who are spiritual leaders. Ezekiel was not given the responsibility to change lives, to modify behavior. He was told to warn. The same is true of all spiritual leaders. They are to share with those God gives them the admonitions of God. When spiritual leaders are faithful to relay God's message one of two things will happen, the wicked will continue in their evil ways or the wicked will repent. Either way, the spiritual leader has been faithful and is no longer responsible for the life choices of the wicked.

God told Ezekiel how people would respond to his warnings, "And they come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people, and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain. And behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not practice them." Does this sound familiar?

## Who Is Speaking

The biggest question today is not who is listening but who is being faithful with the message? With the emphasis in the church on being "seeker sensitive" the warnings and admonitions of God have gone by the wayside. Too many congregational leaders do not know what it means to be spiritual leaders who will stand on the street corners of life and clearly proclaim the warnings of the Lord. There is sensitivity to the wicked who do not like to hear the Truth about the evil way in which they are living, but there is not a sensitivity to The God of the universe whose plan it is to save the wicked from the damnation of their ways through their warnings.

We have been warned in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 ". . . the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths." In the Old Testament we are told of "prophets" who would tell the king whatever he wanted to hear in an attempt to please the king (1 Kings 22:6). Today we have congregational leaders afraid to speak the whole Truth of God to all people. The warnings are known. However, they are not being proclaimed. Deceit and lies are being practiced in the church rather than bold proclamation of the Truth.

Fear seems to predominate congregational leadership. There is a tremendous fear of confrontation, of "causing" a congregational split, of "pushing" people away from God. There seems to be little confidence in the direction of the Holy Spirit in matters which impact people where they are: Deceit in marriage, rebellion in the home, anarchist attitudes toward anyone in authority. All of which lead to idolatry, gossip, abortion, adultery and fornication, divorce, drunkenness, jealousy, strife, stealing, and self justification of a host of other cultural problems in which Christians are active participants.

Spiritual leaders, appointed by God, whether in an official position of leadership or not, must proclaim the message of Truth. It does not matter if they are well received or if it leads to their being ostracized in the church. Before God, they must be faithful! The responsibility God has given them to give a warning must be paramount in their service to God.

## Our Current Dilemma

I believe the dilemma in the church is two fold. I believe those who God has called into spiritual leadership have abdicated their responsibilities because of the hardship it brings on them and their families. Second, I believe we have unrighteously placed into positions of spiritual authority those who are not spiritual leaders. What we end up with, at best, is temporal leadership in the church. What we end up with at worse is a country club social group whose values and morals are no different than that of the pagan world, bringing complete disgrace on the name of our precious Savior.

Until those who are called by God to spiritually lead the church are willing to pay the price of leadership; until congregations are willing to release control of the church to Almighty God and humble themselves before those He has called to lead; until we begin to fear God rather than man, we will continue to pay the price of our rebellion.

### Introspective Questions

Who has God placed over you as your watchman: Father, husband, pastor, Sunday school teacher, small group leader, discipling friend? Are you honest with them?

Are you a husband and/or father? Are you being faithful with the manner in which you are ministering to your family or are you treating them with kid gloves to “keep the peace?”

Are you a wife or a child? Are you listening to the warnings given to you by your husband or father? Do you realize one day you will be accountable for the manner in which you responded to the spiritual warnings given to you?

Are you a congregational leader? Are you being faithful in relaying the warnings God has given, both to the wicked and to the righteous? Do you understand that not properly conveying the warning puts on you the blood of those needing to hear?

Are you a member of a congregation who has been part and parcel to the warning NOT being issued? Are you actively discouraging the preaching of the Truth, encouraging your leaders to tickle your ears?

Are you a member of the congregation who listens but does not practice what they hear?

If we are truly concerned about those lost in the darkness and depravity of sin we must begin speaking the truth in love to one another in the church so the light of Christ can begin to shine among us and through us. Until then the lost won't be able to see a thing.

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