

Words From a Watchman

by Daniel Kenaston

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being vigilant and aware of spiritual dangers in the world. It uses the analogy of a watchman on the wall, highlighting the responsibilities of both the watchman and those being watched over. The sermon warns about seeing the lost as God sees them, being cautious of becoming complacent in comfort, and being alert to the subtle influences of the world that can seep into our lives. It calls for awakening, putting on the armor of light, and making no provisions for the flesh in a time of increasing darkness and sin.

Scripture: Romans 13:11, Isaiah 21:6, Isaiah 62:6, Ezekiel 3:17, Amos 6:1, 2 Corinthians 4:3, Matthew 9:37, 1 Thessalonians 5:6

Topics: "Vigilance in Spiritual Warfare", "Responsibility of the Watchman"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being vigilant and aware of spiritual dangers in the world. It uses the analogy of a watchman on the wall, highlighting the responsibilities of both the watchman and those being watched over. The sermon warns about seeing the lost as God sees them, being cautious of becoming complacent in comfort, and being alert to the subtle influences of the world that can seep into our lives. It calls for awakening, putting on the armor of light, and making no provisions for the flesh in a time of increasing darkness and sin.

Transcript

Greetings to all of you this morning, and yes, greetings from my family to all of you. I'm keenly aware of their absence. It's been a month that I've been here in North America and traveled and preached, been in and out of Lancaster County, but also been all over the Midwest and South and up into Canada, and I fly home tomorrow.

So you can imagine that after a month, I'm looking forward to that. Last week, one of the churches that I preached in, a dear sister brought me a chocolate bar and said, you should eat this chocolate any time you miss your wife. And I texted my wife and said, if I start eating a chocolate bar every time I miss you, I'm going to come back a couple sizes bigger.

We kind of agreed as a family that this time it would work better for me to do some of the traveling alone, so we had a shorter furlough, which we were here with you all and enjoyed that. That was February, March, and April. Then we spent three months in Ghana, and then I have used this month alone to do about three months worth of traveling if we were together as a family.

So we've done this alone. Yes, it's a bit unusual, but it seems to be the best thing for our family this particular year. So I'm grateful to be here with you, and after being in a lot of different places, to come home and share here is a blessing, and I want to thank you for giving me that opportunity.

I was texting with Brother Aaron Ulrich this morning. I saw prayer requests for their family up on the board. He specifically sent greetings to all of you, and I want to pass those along.

I've had a theme on my heart for the last about six weeks. It started in Ghana, and I preached a message there, and then I preached a couple of different messages in different places across the states, but I just keep coming back to this theme, and I feel like the Lord would like me to share this morning with you. Words from a Watchman, if you like titles.

Words from a Watchman. I do feel keenly that when you give a title like that, automatically people presume that that makes me the Watchman, and that I'm the one speaking to you from the wall, and you're in the city, and I do feel a bit embarrassed to use that wording, and yet I'm trying to be faithful to what God has been speaking to my heart about the role of a Watchman. So I trust that as we go through this message, you will understand that I don't see myself as being in some superior position, but rather I just want to be faithful at where God has placed me.

Let's bow our heads for prayer, and then we'll get into the Word. Father, we're grateful to you this morning for the great salvation which you have purchased for us in Jesus Christ. Father, we're grateful for these brothers and sisters.

Lord, for my old home church, I want to thank you for them. Lord, thank you for their commitment to us, their faithfulness, their friendship, their prayers, Lord, over many years. Father, we're gathered here today around your Word, and I pray, Father, that you would open your Word to our hearts and speak to us.

And Lord, please enable my mouth to communicate the things that you have placed on my heart for your glory. Father, we thank you in Jesus' name, amen. Amen.

There are lots of words which are used in the Bible, and as time has gone on, we have moved away from the cultural context in which those words were given. And so when we use the word, it's a biblical word, but we no longer have the everyday understanding of what is meant by that word. And the word watchman is such a word.

I don't think that in your context, any of you have a hired watchman sitting outside your house. That still happens in Africa. We have watchmen who sometimes sleep outside our gates.

In some of our communities, the chief of the village will not allow us to not have a watchman because there's this feeling that having a watchman is essential for security. So we at least use the word watchman, but even that African context of a man who sits or sleeps outside the door of your house at night is not the Old Testament biblical context for the word watchman. So I just wanna talk a little bit about what that context would have been.

In the Old Testament days, the people lived out and in their farming villages outside the cities, but during times of danger, during times of war, people would come in from the village communities and they would live inside of the city. The city had great walls, maybe 30 feet high, depending on the city, maybe taller. And the people lived within those city walls for security.

At night, the gates would be closed. During times of war, the gates would stay closed. In order for there to be security, when people are living down below a 30 foot wall or higher, there has to be people who are standing up on the wall to be able to see the approaching danger.

And that is the word watchman. And that's the context in which the word watchman is used in the Bible. God speaks often using the term watchman or the concept of a watchman and applies it to spiritual leaders.

And so this morning, I'm thinking of the fact that there are here in our room, in our midst this morning, there are pastors, there are fathers, and there are leaders. You may be a leader without having achieved a particular title or role, just because maybe you're one of the older young people in the youth group. You may be a leader because you are an older sibling over a bunch of younger children.

But God speaks about the roles and responsibilities of leaders and uses the term watchman. I want us to look briefly at a few verses which talk about those duties. The duties of a watchman.

Let's turn to the book of Isaiah and chapter 21. Isaiah and chapter 21. Briefly looking at the duties of a watchman.

I want us to build, spend a good bit of time building an understanding of the responsibilities of the watchman and the duties of those who are being watched over before we look at a couple of specific words from a watchman that I feel God has asked me to share. We are in the book of Isaiah chapter 21 and verse six. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, go, said a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.

And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses and a chariot of camels. And he hearkened diligently with much heat. And he cried, a lion, my Lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime.

And I am set in my ward whole nights. Incidentally, we wear on our wrists, at least some of us do, we wear watches. And the whole concept of the passing of time is very closely related to watchmen because these were men who watched and the periods that they were responsible for were called watches.

The first watch, the second watch, the third watch. And so the night was broken up into periods when people were responsible to watch. God says here very simply in verse six, a watchman has a responsibility to be first of all set.

He has to be in a position where he can see. And then he has to see. And then he has to declare what he sees.

This is just extremely basic. But when we think about it from the spiritual connotation, we understand that a watchman is someone who is placed in a position. When he's in that position, he must have his eyes open observing and seeing.

And then he needs to communicate what he sees. What's going on in the world? What time is it? What's happening in the world around me? What are the dangers which are approaching the church? A watchman must see and tell what he sees. Turn to in the same book of Isaiah chapter 62 and verse six.

Isaiah 62 verse six. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence.

Watchmen who have a continual responsibility to be on the wall and to speak. Move also over to the book of Ezekiel and chapter three. Just briefly looking at verses which speak about the responsibilities of a watchman.

In Ezekiel chapter three, God is very specific in connecting the concept of a watchman physically to the spiritual responsibilities. We're in Ezekiel chapter three and verse 17. Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel.

Therefore, hear the word at my mouth and give them warning from me. Verse 18. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life.

The same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul. And here again, we see the specific responsibilities of a spiritual watchman.

God says, I have placed you as a watchman. You are going to hear the words at my mouth and you're going to communicate them to the people. Now we have the watchman not standing observing dangers and shouting down warnings to the people down inside the city.

We rather have a watchman who's listening to the words of God and attempting to be faithful to pass those warnings on to the people. The stakes are raised pretty high in verse 18 and 19 when God says, when I give you a message and you don't warn that person, the person who dies, they will die in their sin, but I'm going to hold you responsible because you did not pass on the warning. I think that that's understandable for us.

I mentioned that we still have watchmen in Ghana. Incidentally, when there is a robbery or a theft in Ghana, the first person who is arrested is the watchman. That kind of feels a little bit unfair.

How do you arrest the watchman? That's his job is to protect you. Why would you arrest him? Well, he's not always held, but he's always arrested first for questioning because if there's something that goes on and the watchman did not raise the alarm, then maybe the watchman was in cahoots with the thieves, and that does happen. God says, I'm going to hold you responsible if you don't warn the people that I've asked you to warn.

On the other hand, if you've given the warnings and the people choose not to follow them, I do not hold you responsible. So we're looking at the responsibilities of the watchman. Let's look at one last verse in Isaiah on this subject before we move on, Isaiah 56.

I in no way am implying that this verse applies to this group of people, but I want you to understand that in order for this verse not to apply to this group of people, I have to be faithful to share what God gives to me. Isaiah chapter 56 and verse 10, God is giving this terrible description of the people that are in responsibility over the children of Israel. Verse 10, his watchmen are blind.

They are all ignorant. They are all dumb dogs. They cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

And so here we jump from the picture of a watchman who is blind and doesn't see what he's supposed to be seeing. Then we jump over and use the word picture of a dog. A dog is also a watchman.

Probably in America today, the dog has replaced the traditional watchman who sleeps outside the gate. And there are people who really count on their dogs. They believe if some strange car pulls up the driveway or someone's walking around the back fence row, the watchdog will start barking.

What about if that watchdog is a dumb dog? And by that, we don't mean dumb, as in not having a mouth. A dog that cannot bark, who loves to sleep, always lying down slumbering. After a while, that watchdog is no longer qualified to be called a watchdog.

As I've been meditating on the role of a watchman, I've also been thinking a lot about the fact that the effort between the watchman and the people who are watched must be a cooperative effort. In order for the people who sleep inside the city to be able to rest, knowing that they are protected, there must be a cooperative effort between the watchman and those who are watched. Yes, watchmen have a responsibility to watch and then communicate what they see.

It is the responsibility of the watchman to stay at his post on the wall and to have his eyes open and to be discerning. The watchman on the wall has to determine if what's coming towards the city is a threat or just a flock of sheep coming home. It's the responsibility of the watchman to stay awake and alert and ready to shout the warning.

But that's only half of the picture. Those who are being protected by the watchman also have a responsibility. And that's what God has continued to lay heavily on my heart in the last few weeks, both before I came back to the States and as I've driven all over the United States.

I keep thinking about the fact that, yes, we need watchmen who see and communicate, but we, as those who are being watched over, also have a responsibility. Let's turn in the same book of Isaiah back to chapter 30. Now we're moving away from the responsibilities of the watchman and looking at the responsibility of the watched, if you will, or those who are being watched out for.

We're in Isaiah chapter 30. God is speaking about the children of Israel in Isaiah chapter 30, and he's putting down a record of their stubbornness. Isaiah chapter 30 and verse eight.

Now go and write it before them in a table and note it in a book that it may be for the time to come forever and ever. And I just wanna bear witness of the fact that God's word is true and exactly what Isaiah was told to do was accomplished. And here we are thousands of years later reading these words from a book.

And what was God wanting to witness? Verse nine, that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord. Verse 10, which say to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. And we'll stop reading there.

God is bearing a testimony or having a written testimony put down on record of the attitude that the children of Israel had to those who were responsible to protect them. And God says, this is the kind of people they are. They're so stubborn that they say to the seers and seers is another old English word for the people who saw the prophets, those who stood on the wall and saw, those who spiritually prophesied of the future.

They say to the seers, stop seeing. And they say to the prophets, stop prophesying the truth to us. Please just prophesy smooth things to us.

Stop, in verse 11, they say, stop bringing up God consciousness in front of us. We want to live our lives without a constant reminder of the truths of God's word. Stop bringing God's word in front of us.

And I realize that this is extreme and I am in no way suggesting that you are those stubborn people. I'm not, please. But God's word gives us a warning that those who are being watched out for could turn on those who are protecting them.

And instead of encouraging them to speak the truth, could discourage them and rather encourage them to speak lies. It's a terrible thing. If people who are being protected by watchmen say to those watchmen, hey, stop seeing.

This is the picture I have in my mind. I have a picture of it's dark, it's evening time. It's in one of these Old Testament cities that you may have a mental image of from Bible story books.

And the watchmen are at their posts on the wall and one by one, the children of Israel are going into their houses within the city walls to go to sleep. And I see one of these Israelite men shouting up to the watchmen and saying, hey, look, tonight I want a solid seven hours of sleep. Please, I don't want any alarms at two o'clock in the morning.

I don't want you up there shouting about danger at two o'clock in the morning. I just want to sleep. Hey, seer, stop seeing, okay? Could you just stop seeing? It seems like you're just always seeing stuff.

There's this like all the time up there on the wall, you're like danger, danger. Could you just let us sleep tonight? Seer, stop seeing. Prophet, stop telling us right things, okay? Prophecy to us smooth things.

Can you imagine going to the doctor's office and you say, doctor, I'm here for my checkup. You know, I'm 50 years old and I'm here for that checkup we're all supposed to get when we're 50 and I know you did the blood work and everything, but I just want you to understand that I am going to decide whether you are a good doctor or not based on how happy I feel when I walk out of your office, okay? I don't want to hear about prediabetes. I don't want to hear about hypertension.

I don't want to hear about my waistline. I don't want to hear about more exercise. I just want you to tell me smooth things.

How foolish would that be? Why would you go to a doctor if your measurement of the success of that doctor is not whether he tells you the truth, but whether he tells you things that make you walk out of the doctor's office and say, hey, I'm 50 and the doctor says I'm as good as 20. But that's exactly what the children of Israel said to their prophets. Stop prophesying to us the truth.

Give us smooth things, even if it's lies. We just want smooth things. I remember when my father had cancer.

As a family, we were all gathered there in a hospital in Indiana. He had had a biopsy and American doctors are so kind and gentle, at least from my perspective, compared to Africa. Whole family's in the room there and the doctor sat there and starts talking with us and he's kind of smoothing the road and he's looking to see, is somebody gonna faint? Is somebody gonna scream? Is the family gonna lose it? And finally, I remember my father just saying, doctor, I'm on my way to heaven.

I don't need you to smooth it out. I don't need you to give me the best possible scenario. I want it straight.

That's a wise man. Because we really do want to know. The doctor said, sir, you have 90 days.

And I think my father passed away on day 93. I was pretty close. It was good to know the truth.

You're a wise person if you go to the doctor and say, doctor, I really want to know. If there's something wrong, if the blood test shows something, if my perimeters don't match a healthy man, please tell me. And we are wise if we say to the watchman who stand on the wall protecting us, please, any warning, any danger, don't worry about waking me up in the middle of the night.

Don't worry about the fact that you gave a warning last night and you're giving another warning tonight. Please tell me how it is. Children want a story? Here's a story from Africa.

I travel pretty often from Tamale, which is where we live in the north, 13 hours by a bus ride to the capital city to do paperwork or meet the teams or things like that. And it's a 13 hour bus ride. And almost all those buses run at night.

So I get into the bus at around four or five o'clock in Tamale, and then I'm gonna get into Accra at about six the next morning. I'm going to ride all night on some of the most dangerous roads in the world. A lot of accidents occur.

So I pray before I get on those buses and I walk around and look at the tires. But then I get on that bus and the bus drives about three hours south out of Tamale to a town called Kintampu. Some of you may remember Kintampu.

And at Kintampu, the bus driver stops for 15 minutes for people to grab a bite of food or some drinks, go to the bathroom. And then from there on, we're gonna drive all night. By that time, it's about eight o'clock and it's dark.

And I have a policy that I get out of the bus and go to one of the nearby shops that sells cold drinks. And I buy two cans of Red Bull for that driver. Do you children know what Red Bull is? Red Bull is like a cold kind of sweet.

I don't think they taste good. I don't drink them. It's an energy drink that has a lot of caffeine.

And when you drink two cans of Red Bull, your eyes will be bulged open. So I usually come in, I climb back up into the bus and I kneel down beside the driver. And I say, sir, I bought you a gift.

And Africans love gifts. I kneel down beside him, I give him this gift. And the driver is always just so shocked.

He's like, hey, he's calling other people. Look at this white man. Look, other people are going to buy food for themselves and he's buying drinks for the driver.

What a good man. And he praises me. And as the Africans say, I laugh inside my stomach.

That's when you laugh and you don't want to laugh out loud, you laugh inside your stomach. Because I'm getting ready to go back to seat number 17 and I'm going to go to sleep. And that bus driver needs to stay awake all night long.

The stubborn people of Israel said to their seers, see not. This gentleman says to the bus driver, see, okay, see. I want you sitting up there all night long like this.

I know that because I gave him those drinks, he's going to drink those drinks and he's going to be more awake. It's not altruistic. I'm just trying to make sure that that driver stays awake.

Now, I'm not suggesting that you need to give Red Bull to your pastor so they can pray on, study the Bible all night for you. But the attitude crosses over. The children of Israel said to their seers, stop seeing.

And God's people should say to their watchman, shine your eyes, please, we're trusting you. We're going to go down and go to sleep. And we're trusting that you're on the wall.

We're living our lives and God's placed you in a position of responsibility to watch out for us. Please watch for us. And when you see something, don't worry if it's two o'clock in the morning, sound the alarm.

Don't worry about if you gave us a warning yesterday, sound the alarm. I would love it if you could connect Red Bull and what I just said forever. I don't drink it, but it really keeps people awake.

It would be a wonderful thing if the attitude that we had towards our watchman was, what can I do to help you stay awake and alert and watchful? How can I welcome your words of warning so that you will continue to warn me? The Bible says that we will reach a time in history, in church history, when people will want to hear only words that make them happy. 2 Timothy speaks about this. They shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears.

We're living in a time where you can go to churches and you might not know whether you're in a church or whether you're hearing a positive speech at a business meeting. There's lots of that going on in the world we live in today. If you are in a place, and I believe you are, where the watchmen give warnings, welcome it.

Because the only way it works for us to go to sleep down inside the city is if we have watchmen on the wall and those watchmen are alert and those watchmen are issuing warnings and we who are being protected are listening to those warnings. So today, maybe you're a watchman or maybe you're one who's being watched over. Some of us fit both categories because I definitely do serve as a watchman to some, but I also know that I'm being watched over by others.

Seer, see. Prophet, prophesy. Just tell me the truth.

Even if it's uncomfortable, even if it's not what I wanted to hear, tell me the truth. That should be our attitude. All right, I think that's enough of a foundation about words about watchmen.

Now let's look at a couple of words from a watchman. I've thought a lot about the fact that it could sound very presumptuous for me to say, I'm a watchman and I have free warnings for you. I've thought a lot about the watchmen because those watchmen were not placed on the wall because they were the best or the most powerful.

They weren't necessarily from the ruling class. They were not necessarily from the ruling family. They were probably not the most spiritual men.

They might not have been the strongest men, but they were chosen in their cycle of responsibilities, they were chosen to stand on the wall. And they had a unique perspective because they stood on the wall. Can

you imagine trying to protect a city from 30 feet down behind a wall? Your only option would just be to keep the gates closed and hope nobody climbed up over the wall because you would never know what was happening outside.

You need people on the wall. And so I don't think that I'm something special. I'm definitely not a watchman with a capital W, just a little W. Just that I have maybe a unique perspective because I don't live here in North America.

I live somewhere else. And maybe that gives me a slightly different perspective. I hope that you can hear my words from that angle and recognize that I'm just trying to be faithful.

And I do have to share what God has laid on my heart. I have three warnings. Each of the warnings has a picture.

Remember that I preach mostly to illiterate people and pictures are super important. Three pictures that are in my mind. The first warning that I want to give to you is that we as a church must begin to see the lost as God sees the lost.

In my mind, I have a picture of a house on fire in the middle of the night, a house that is flaming out the roof, not quite fully engulfed, but definitely ablaze. It's two o'clock in the morning and the family is sleeping within the house, totally oblivious to their impending doom. This just happened a few weeks ago, somewhere here in the States.

I didn't read the whole story, but a woman woke up at like two o'clock in the morning to let her dog out. Probably the dog saw the fire. Watchmen, you know, dogs are watchmen.

But she got up to let her dog out at two o'clock in the morning. And she realized that the neighbor's house across the road was engulfed in flames. And because of these ring doorbells or whatever they're called that can video, we get to watch her.

If you want to, you can go watch her come running up to this house in the middle of the night, hollering and pounding on the door. And because of her willingness to come out of her house in the middle of the night and make a bunch of noise and bang on the door, that family was saved and no one died. Everyone got out of a burning house.

And quite likely had she not woke the family, they would have died in their beds. That's the picture I have in my mind. It's a house on fire in the middle of the night and the people in the burning building don't know.

Second Corinthians chapter four. I said, I have three warnings. Three things that are burdens on my heart for the church.

Three things that I believe God wants me to communicate to you. Warning number one, we must see the lost as God sees the lost. We're reading from second Corinthians chapter four and reading from verse three.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost in whom the God of this world have blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them. We'll stop reading there. We have a course at Scent One which we call Combating Universalism.

Brother Elijah taught that course last year and I think he will again this year. The burden of that course is that if the church does not have a right understanding of how the lost are truly lost without Christ, we will not be motivated to do what is our duty in bringing them to Christ. I firmly believe that.

I do not believe that in our number here, we believe in universalism. Universalism says all roads finally lead to heaven. Different forms of universalism say as long as you're sincere in whatever you believe, you'll get to heaven.

Other forms of universalism say possibly after you die, everyone has another opportunity to believe on Jesus. These are extra biblical. That's not what the word of God communicates to us.

Think about the fact that this woman, it was two o'clock in the morning. She had just woken up. Most of us don't really feel like getting out of bed and running across the road at two o'clock in the morning.

Probably this woman didn't have her hair done up the way she liked to have it. Probably she wasn't fully dressed the way she liked to be dressed. Probably this woman was a bit of a soft-spoken kind of person.

Probably the people who lived inside this house were not really very friendly with her. In fact, I'd like to imagine that the family that was in the house that was on fire, the man was known for having a nasty temper and they had a big dog. That's how it feels to me when I go walking in American neighborhoods, there's a lot of big dogs.

Something made this woman overcome all of that and go and wake up that family in the middle of the night. I think that she thought they were gonna die. You agree with me? She thought they were gonna die.

And so because they were gonna die, the dog, her makeup not being on, the fact that the man had a nasty temper, the fact that she was just sleeping, it's two o'clock in the morning, all those things did not matter. But you know, if she had thought, you know, I think I heard they were on vacation this week. There's probably not even anybody home.

Maybe she wouldn't have gone. I don't think any of you would be capable of rolling over and going back to sleep. Would you? You wake up, the neighbor house is on fire.

Would you just roll over, go back to sleep? I don't think so. Because you would feel responsible because you know there's a fire and you're not sure if the people in the house know that there's a fire. And so those dots connect in your mind and overcome so many things that would otherwise stop you.

2 Corinthians 4 says, if our gospel is hid, it's hid to those that are lost. Those that are lost are really lost. Those who die without Christ are really lost.

Those who die without choosing to put their faith in Jesus Christ pass into a Christless eternity of conscious torment. That's what the word of God tells us. So my first warning to you this morning is that we as a church must see the lost the way God sees the lost.

This is a danger that I see from my little perch from where God has placed me on the wall. This is a danger that I see coming against the church. If our understanding of the lostness of the lost is eroded, we're not gonna be motivated to do what God has asked us to do.

Verse 4 says, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of those that believe not. Just so that a little bit of gospel light doesn't shine into their hearts. I was driving the other day meditating on this and I

thought, you know, is it possible? Is it possible that Satan respects and understands the power of the gospel and is proactive in limiting its ability to reach the lost? Is it possible that he's more aware and more proactive than the saints are aware of the power of the gospel and proactive in sharing it? Please just think about that.

Read the power in this verse. If our gospel is hid, it's hid to those who are lost in whom the God of this world has blinded their eyes so that, lest, the Old English says, so that there's no chance that the gospel light would shine into them. Wow.

Satan is so aware that a little bit of gospel light transforms lives that he wants to make sure that those people stay blinded. Well, you and I know that the gospel light changes people's lives. Shouldn't we be all the more proactive wanting that gospel light to reach them? Verse five says, we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

You know, I wanna think that this woman who woke the family at two o'clock in the morning was kind of a soft-spoken woman. I don't know. I'd like to think that she wasn't all that good in making up speeches on the fly.

But you know, she wasn't going there to talk about herself, to impress anyone with her looks. She wasn't going there to practice her oratory. She was warning a family of danger.

Paul says, we're not preaching ourselves. You and I are not preaching ourselves. We're not preaching that we've reached a special level.

We're simply communicating the light of the gospel out of our lives. We preach not ourselves. We must see the world the way God sees the world.

Verse six, for God who commanded the light to come shining out of the darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels. I understand we're not perfect and I'm far from perfect, but we are only responsible to communicate what God is putting into our lives.

God, your God, my God, the God who pulls light out of darkness is the God who shines on our life and makes it possible for us to communicate. We must see the lost world as Jesus sees them. When we see them that way, all of our excuses about our voice or the big dog or the nasty temper or the fact that it's the middle of the night, all those get pushed away.

And there are a lot of things to overcome to take the gospel around the world. Please, just because I'm talking from Africa, I'm not speaking about Africa. I preached in Missouri a couple of weeks ago and I had breakfast with a young man who grew up here, Jeremy Martin, Nolan Martin's son Jeremy, married to Davina.

And he told me, he said, Daniel, I'm raising chickens and I could make a living on my chickens, but I drive school bus to have an opportunity to minister in my community. He said, Daniel, this is a conservative Bible Belt area. This is not Chicago, this is Missouri.

He said, Daniel, there are two children on my bus who live in a home with their mom and dad. Their biological parents are both in the house. He said, so I drive every day, 50 children get onto that bus, pray blessings on them.

I started thinking I wanted to be a bus driver. I'm not talking about just taking the gospel to Africa. Every morning, 50 children get on the bus and there's Jeremy and those of you who know him, he's got a huge smile.

50 children, pray for him. Get to school, 50 children get off. Go back in the afternoon, 50 children get on.

Drop them at their houses, 50 children get off. Two of them have their parents in the home with them. If our gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost.

And that's true whether you're in Chicago or Ghana or Missouri of all places. So that's the first warning that the Lord laid on my heart. Moving to the second one, I told you that each of these has a picture.

In my mind, this second one also has a picture of a house. This house is not on fire. The danger in this house is a much more subtle danger.

This warning is a warning of a house full of fullness, full of feasting, full of quietness, full of blessing, full of fellowship, full of comfort to a place that becomes dangerous. We don't need to turn there, but the book of Amos chapter six and verse one says, woe to those that are at ease in Zion. And you think about that verse that the word woe could almost be translated curse or at least cursed are those who are at ease in Zion.

And I think Zion is where we all want to go. We're living in a spiritual Zion and we're marching on our way to Zion. And Zion is a picture of the household of God.

It's a part picture of the kingdom of God. And yet this warning says that there's a danger for those who are in Zion and at ease. And so in this house, there's a different kind of danger.

This is not a danger for people who are going to burn and go into a Christless eternity. This is the danger of people who are in Zion, who are in Christ, but who are so caught up in enjoying the comfort of the life around them and the blessings of God that they become dull to the real spiritual awareness of what God would want them to be aware of. Comfort has a dulling effect.

Never in the history of Christianity has any group of believers tried to live for Christ's kingdom and maintain a fiery Christian life, a hot Christian life with this level of comfort. Does that make sense? And please, just please don't react because Daniel lives in Africa and doesn't have air conditioning, okay? I'm not asking you to give up your mattresses. I have a mattress.

I just wanna use the perspective where God has placed me to give a warning. That's all it is. Think about it.

All of us here are middle class. No one here is upper class, I don't believe. But I believe that we here live at a level that the kings of 300 years ago would be jealous of.

And so I'm just, again, putting it out there that we ought to think about it that no group of Christians has ever tried to live kingdom-centered lives at this level of comfort. That doesn't mean that we can't have this comfort, but we surely need to be aware. Comfort has a dulling effect.

You know what? The government knows that. I believe during the COVID lockdown, the tightest lockdown of all was in China. In China, if you went out of your home one too many times, the government showed up and welded your door closed, put bars across your door like this.

You're not coming out. One of the things that the government did to keep people content was to make satellite television free during COVID. Can you see that? Even in Ghana, I got this text message during our lockdown.

We're all in this together. Isn't it interesting that that phrase was used in America and also used by an African phone company? We're all in this together. Enjoy free YouTube time.

YouTube, yeah. Enjoy free YouTube data during lockdown. This is not about YouTube or about satellite television.

I'm just highlighting the fact that they realize that when you keep people comfortable, things that would otherwise alarm them, things which would otherwise wake them up, things that would otherwise make their consciences say, no way, you can't do this. It would just say, okay. The phrase on the streets is, yeah, just Netflix and chill.

The older generation may not know that, but I promise your children know that phrase, just Netflix and chill. And so I'm warning a house full of people in Zion who live at a level of comfort, and so do I. We must be cautious that the comfort doesn't blind our eyes from eternal realities, either from the dangers around us or from our father's true heart for his kingdom. You familiar with the song, my house is full, but my fields are empty? Push away from the table and look out through the window panes.

Just beyond this house of plenty lies a field of golden grain, and it's white unto harvest. But the reapers, where are they? In the house, why can't the children hear their father and see his heart and see where his eyes are? I grew up in a home business, which meant that we got to come home for lunch. And I remember coming in, myself and my brothers and the other young men who worked for my dad, and the Kennistons loved to talk.

We would chatter at the table and talk and eat, and we just had a lot of fun. It was family time. But my father had this pattern that he did every single day.

At a certain moment, probably 33 minutes into lunch break, my father would slide his chair back, and then he would say, same words every time, this is really nice, but. And that was the cue. He never went further than that.

All of us would stand up, all of the guys at the table stood up and walked back out to the shop. It would seem crazy for my father to get up and go back to work while we sat at the table, wouldn't it? So I want to alert us today that we need to have our eyes on our father's heart and make sure that the comfort and joy and delight that we experience in Zion, and we should be experiencing it, we should make sure that it doesn't dull our senses from the spiritual dangers around us, and make sure that it doesn't dull our senses to where we forget what our father's eyes are still on. Because our father keeps doing this.

Back here smiling at the table in Zion. Love my family. Oh, that's a funny joke, that's nice, I love that.

The heart of the Lord Jesus has been and is still and will be until the church age ends. Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring. And so I believe that my father and your father slides his chair back sometimes and says, this is really nice, but, and that's our cue to stand up and get back to work.

Let's not allow the comfort and ease that we live in to deaden our senses to the fact that at the end of the day, we are living in war. A.W. Tozer has a book, *This World, Playground or Battlefield*. There are some wonderful lunch times, but at the end of the day, this is a battlefield.

We live in the midst of spiritual warfare and our father, if you tune in, you'll see that our father keeps looking out the window. Let's join him, amen. My third and last warning, thank you for being willing to hear these warnings from my heart.

I share them with love and with a desire to just be honest to what God has asked me to do. The last warning also has a picture of a house. Maybe there's a theme there.

In this house, there's not a flame along the roof. In this house, the danger is a quiet danger. It has a potentially fatal consequence, but not an automatically fatal consequence.

It's a house in the middle of the night. This is a house that's hooked up to a propane or a natural gas line, and the family is sleeping. And while the family sleeps, we cook with gas in Africa.

And I have this nagging fear, always behind in the back consciousness of my life, because our hoses and everything we buy is, sorry, it's Chinese, it's cheap, and they leak a lot. And I constantly catch them leaking. And I have this wonder, what about some morning, somebody gets up to put the pot of tea on in the morning and lights a match, and we didn't realize that the house was filled up with gas? Do you children know that LP gas does not have any scent, no smell whatsoever? They put an odor inside the gas, otherwise we would have no idea.

Thankfully, there's an odor in that gas so that when you wake up in the morning, you go, hey, guys, let's open some windows, let's turn off the gas. So in this house, the family is sleeping, and there's just a little leak, a gas leak at night. And this warning refers to the effects of the world around us filtering quietly into our lives with a pernicious and possibly fatal effect if we are not aware of it.

I think that we are living in a period where, as the Bible says, evil men will wax worse and worse. And not only is the evil of this world, the spirit of this world getting worse, but it has more fingers into our lives than ever before. We are not living in some valley in the Ozarks where we only know a few church families and a few other people.

That's not how we're living anymore. We're living in the modern world where there are so many fingers, so many pipelines, if you will, so many avenues through which the spirit of this world can leak into our families and into our lives. It's not automatically fatal.

You can open a window. I've woken up to gas leaks and been able to get the house emptied out and there was no fire, no explosion, but it's potentially fatal. There was one recently, I saw it on a news headline that a house exploded from a gas leak and they weren't sure.

They came in with a forensics team, I think they call it, to study whether it was a terrorist attack. They thought maybe it was a bomb. The house fills up with gas and then a hot water heater kicks on.

Bang. We're living in a period where the world is more evil than ever and we're more connected to it. And so from my position where I live out there at a very far corner of the wall, I see that danger coming.

And a watchman is responsible to look out and say, I see dust coming. What is that? Is that a flock of sheep? Is that a group of children running a race? Or are those chariots? And when the watchman determines that there's danger, the watchman has to say, danger! Close the gates! And so from my perspective out there on my little corner of the wall, I see the world that we're living in as very dangerous. That doesn't mean I don't cook with gas, but it does mean that I get up and check regularly.

It's not unusual at all for me to put my nose down. We just have little gas cylinders. It's not at all unusual for me to bend down and put my nose right up there to the cylinder just to see, put my ear down there and listen.

And it behooves all of us to be that aware. Let's turn to Romans chapter 13. Just a few closing thoughts here.

Romans chapter 13, and we're reading from verse 11. And that knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep for now is our salvation nearer than when we believe. The night is far spent, the day is at hand.

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. How do we respond to the danger of a potential evil influence of the world around us? We wake up and we realize that maybe it was possible to be a Christian and be sleepy in the past, but it's not possible now.

It is high time to awake out of sleep. Let us cast off all works of darkness and put on the armor of light. I just flew back from Canada.

And it really stood out to me when I was going through the airport that all the people who were checking us, the border guards and all those people were all wearing bulletproof vests. I've never worn a bulletproof vest. It looks a little bit like wearing a life preserver.

I'm sure most of you have worn a life preserver. Awkward. They definitely affect how thin you look.

They definitely are really hot. But you know, those border guards must believe that there is some risk that somebody just comes into an airport and starts shooting. Otherwise they wouldn't wear those vests.

So when you realize my life is at risk, suddenly you put on that awkward, heavy, obvious, not exactly high cultured looking. You put that on and you wear it because you know your life is at risk. It's not a fashion symbol.

It's time to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. We're living in a period where even if it looks a little strange, it's time to put on our bulletproof vests. Even if we look a little strange to the world around us, we've gotta wear our protection.

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and don't make provision for the flesh. If we're going to live in this dangerous world and we're going to survive as believers, we're gonna have to make sure we're not making provisions for the flesh. And God has to apply that in your lives and know exactly what that means.

But when you recognize I am in a house with a potential gas leak, you're cautious, you're aware, you listen, you sniff. As a dad, you walk around. I do it, I do it at night.

That's the world we're living in. A house with a potential gas leak slowly filling up. I want us to, I want us to make it, you know? It's 2022, I don't know how many more years we have.

I sat in these pews and listened to preachers when I was a boy talk about how awful the world was getting and how Jesus' return must be around the corner and it's gotten a lot worse. This verse says our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. It must really be nearer.

I want us to survive and I want us to thrive. I believe that in this period of darkness and sin that's coming on this world, I believe that God's people don't need to peter out. I don't believe that the end of the church age is just sort of a well, some, you know, last person turn the lights out when you leave.

Not at all. I believe that when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Lord will raise up a standard and I wanna be part of that standard and I want all of us to be part of that standard. And so this last warning says, it's time to be awake.

It's time to put on our armor and it's time to make sure we're not making any provisions for the flesh where those gas leaks might be coming into our life and influencing us. We sort of had two parts to the message. The first half, talking about the responsibilities of the watchman and the responsibilities of those being watched.

To say to our watchman, please watch out for us. Hopefully that gives you enough understanding of why I've spoken frankly about these three things that I see from my little place on the wall. I wanna thank you for being willing to listen and giving me the opportunity to share.

Let's bow our heads. Lord, I thank you for your people here this morning and I thank you for your word. Lord, I believe that this big family of God loves you and loves the world and wants to thrive in the midst of this darkness.

I believe that about them, Father. I shared these words because I believe that is their desire. Father, I pray that you would apply your word specifically to our hearts in whatever way we need to receive it, Lord.

This one point for this person, a different point for another person. Lord, we want to be your people. We wanna be part of the standard that you raise up against the evil.

And Father, we want to communicate your word to a lost and dying world. Father, I thank you for your people this morning. Lord, I pray that you would bless them.

We thank you in Jesus' name, amen. Thank you.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/Nisrofj7aZU.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/daniel-kenaston/words-from-a-watchman/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net