

# The Accountability of a Watchman

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a watchman for others, warning them of the dangers of the world and sharing the gospel with them.*

**Duration:** 1:00:45

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 3:16

**Topics:** "Spiritual Vigilance", "Worldly Distractions"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker tells a story about a man who discovers a family sitting spellbound in front of their TV while their house is on fire. The man urgently tries to get their attention and save them from the flames, even yanking the power cable out of the wall. The speaker uses this story as a metaphor to warn against being so consumed by worldly distractions, like TV or material possessions, that we fail to notice the spiritual danger we are in. He emphasizes the need to be vigilant and focused on our relationship with God, rather than being spellbound by worldly temptations.

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## Transcript

We'll find our text in Ezekiel, chapter 3. We'll start reading from verse 16. Now it came about at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, warn them from me.

When I say to the wicked, you shall surely die, and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live. That wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. We'll stop there.

Ezekiel says that he met with God and God spoke to him. He even remembers the time when he spoke to him. He says it was after seven days.

And he said, Son of man, Ezekiel, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel. Therefore, hear the word from my mouth. God wanted Ezekiel to hear the word coming from his mouth.

He wanted him to hear it very clearly. People hear in different ways. Some people, they listen, they hear, but only half.

Some people, if there's just a bit of a background noise, they hear nothing. There's confusion and they don't understand. God wants his watchman to be close to him, right near his mouth, that they can hear his

voice clearly.

I remember Habakkuk chapter 2. Habakkuk after Nahum in the Bible, chapter 2, verse 1. I will stand on my God post. Do you hear how the prophets speak? Standing on their place where they need to stand God, at their post. Just recently someone spoke here, I can't remember exactly who it was, who said, stand there, stand firm there where God has put you.

Just recently some of the leaders here said that they want to follow Japan's example and do it in such a way. And that was just before things went wrong there in Japan. But when things went wrong in Japan, they didn't want to follow Japan's example, they wanted to follow God's example.

But when things went wrong in Japan, they didn't want to follow God's example, they wanted to follow God's example. And I thought well it will be difficult, I thought it will be difficult trying to run this country like they run Japan. Because the Japanese people have a different working tradition, where they stick to their jobs, even if their salaries aren't good, they'll work and stay in that job right to the end of their working career.

And then when they stop, the son will take over that job from the father. So they don't have ants in their pants, they stick to their job. And don't say you've got a husband, I know of a man whose wife was called to preach the gospel, and she says what will my husband say, I can't.

The next thing, a bus ran over him, his leg was amputated, and he says wife, you go where God sends you. I told her I don't want my leg to be amputated because I stood in your way. Before you, the way is clear.

You do what God tells you. That's the kind of wife I want to have. Nothing else.

I told her I don't want my leg to be amputated because I stood in your way. That's the kind of wife I want to have. Nothing else.

I told her I don't want my leg to be amputated because I stood in your way. That's the kind of wife I want to have. Nothing else.

He says I will stand, I will stand firm, where are the people today, few are the people who can stand their ground, who stand firm. I will stand on my guard post, station myself on the rampart, and I will keep watch to see what he will speak to me closely, always listening carefully to hear what he may want to say to me. This is the picture of a watchman, this is the life of a watchman, to stand guard while others are fast asleep snoring.

He's wide awake, standing guard so that he will be awake and prepared when the enemy comes, when the thief comes. Not like those who when the enemy comes they are swept with the tide, they can't stand their ground. This week we had some visitors, they came with Wampir Tsimoni.

Wampir, we've known for quite some time, I think we met about 30 years ago, at that time he was a journalist for a newspaper. And since then he's visited us every now and then. The first time I took him down to the fields and showed him the fields.

And then this time he came with an elderly man and someone else. He builds pianos from scratch. Now when they came, one man was an elderly man already, quite old, and I thought well, I wanted to know his



that house.

And as they got closer they noticed that the smoke was increasing. And then they got closer there was thick smoke billowing out of the building and they thought well it's too late. When they got there they rushed to the house and they opened the door and it looked like there was nobody there.

There was no time to waste. This was a double story building, beautiful building and house. So they just went straight into the house glasses and and crockery.

He says the setting was gorgeous, crystal glasses. One could see that this wasn't just an ornery man's house. And everything was laid on the table immaculately and set for dinner.

The floor was covered with rich oriental rugs. As you know those are the best you can get. And then they shouted and said hello is anybody here? There was no reply.

They went from one room to the other and into the kitchen. And upstairs they could hear the flames roaring already, burning hotter and hotter. And tiles and pieces of wood started falling from the roof.

There was just one more door to open. And when he opened that door he gasped. He couldn't believe what he saw.

And there he found the whole family sitting spellbound before the TV. They were so busy watching and looking at their TV that they didn't realize that their wonderful home was on fire. So they were so intrigued by what they saw on TV, so spellbound, they didn't even notice what was going on.

Do you who look at TV, are you listening? He shouted frantically and told them what was going on and they started carrying out all the valuables that he could to save them from the fire. Was he realized that they couldn't do much anymore? He didn't knock on the door when he got there. He didn't ask politely can I come in.

There was no time to waste. But he had the authority to do what he did because he saw those flames. There is such a thing that you find people sitting or saying I'm quite happy, I'm quite comfortable, quite satisfied with the way things are.

Everything is going fine for me. All the time the house is on fire. And he shouted at them, get up, leave your favorite program.

Your house is burning. Save what you can. He even yanked the power cable of the TV out the wall.

So we watchmen have to be on guard, looking out for such people who are sitting in front of their TV sets while their house is on fire. We shouldn't allow anything to bewitch us or that we are spellbound to the point where we sit and do nothing and wait until we wake up in hell. Yesterday I said to the school children's parents, we don't have a TV here.

No one has a TV set here at Sissavanto. But of course when some children go home, they've got a TV set there. And so often when the children come back from the holidays, there is a lot of work to be done to put out this fire that has been ignited by what they see on TV at home.

The latest things which are even said over the media is that even animals are starting to get addicted to TV. Not only starting, they are. Someone was complaining that his front door is totally ruined already



murderer because he told you to warn that person and you didn't do it.

Paul says, tell the people, speak to them in season and out of season, whether it's appropriate or not. One congregation, he says, I was with you and for three years I pleaded with you day and night and with tears. Woe to us, the people on the way to death, to damnation and we don't warn them.

Now, as I said, there was one story last night and then I told the youngest daughter another story this morning. So here's the second story. Now, he tells the story where one day he decided to go for a walk in their town.

And in this town, there's a big Catholic church. Now, he says he enjoys being in places like that. And so he went inside and sat there in the pew just to be alone and have a time of quiet and to be at peace.

It's important to have your time alone with God. You need that every day. Otherwise, if you don't have those opportunities on a daily basis, you'll find your life just wasting away and it'll just become cheap.

Jacob sent his wife, his children, his possessions all over the river. He stayed alone and wrestled with God. Do you know what that means to be alone with God? If you don't know it, then your Christian life isn't worth much.

You want to sit at the tables with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but you don't know what it means to live the life that they lived. I think you're playing the fool. And he says as he sat there, he looked forward and he saw a cross there.

And he thought about the cross and Jesus who died on the cross. So it's not that symbol of the cross that is the important thing to us. What is important is that it reminds us of Jesus who died there for us.

And as he was looking at the cross, his eye caught sight of a large book that was on a wooden stand. And he was curious to know what that book was. Because he thought that it didn't look like the Bible.

So he got up to have a closer look. And to my figure corner, when he got there. Now this particular book was put there that people could write something in this book.

And he started reading and one had written a prayer. Another word of thanks. To thank God.

And he turned one page after the other. And he read there because it was free for anyone to write what he wanted. Or perhaps an impression received from God.

Oh God, your spirit must have led me to this place. I was about to take my life. But now I have new hope.

And then crudely penned by a young child. What, oh God. Oh God, help me when I have to go to hospital soon.

Another little one. Another one had scribbled. Oh God, please don't let my friends tease me anymore.

There are such children who have absolutely no compassion, no feeling, who bully and tease other children. One black man who is in a leading position, he told me, he said, Oh, my child goes to a very good school, but the white children there, they give my child a hard time. But that is... But that's a known fact, that children at school, they feel nothing for the other children.

They tease them, they bully them, they have no compassion. But that's if they have the devil in their hearts. If you're on your way to hell, that's how you'll treat other children.

But if the Lord Jesus is in your heart, then even the smallest one, the weakest one, you will look after that person, be kind to him and compassionate and help him. Oh God, please don't let my friends tease me anymore. That they won't tease me anymore.

And he who is in heaven hears these prayers. Heavenly Father, help my parents not to fight anymore. But to live harmoniously together.

Let's say it. Can you imagine such a thing? A child praying for the parents. That they would live harmoniously together and not fight anymore.

Is there someone in our midst that lives such a life? I say today, after the service, the first thing you do, go and repent. And go to your wife, go to your husband, say sorry. And go to a counsellor.

And let them pray for you. James says, the prayer of a righteous man availeth much. From one another.

Bring us together again. And help us to understand each other. and when he had read these thoughts and prayers, he said, well I don't know, I don't know what need to go to India or to China or to England or anywhere else.

I can start right here to spread the Lord's message. He realized how much suffering and heartache there was right there in his own hometown. And he says, that became my first mission, to become a missionary to the people right there around me, to my neighbors.

Have you reached those people? Those who are around you yet with the gospel. Have you reached those people around you, that you've reached them with the gospel? Now this is Ronald's engagement. He says, and I say to him, Ronald, have you heard these words on your engagement? We've seen the parents bringing their little children.

Now to you parents, have you heard? And to all of you who have come today, have you heard? Don't say you are lonely, you're alone, you haven't got anything to do. Why not? Because you're sitting before your TV. That's all.

Someone I know lost her husband, and since then she just sits at home. Frequently goes to the cemetery and takes a little bench along and sits there next to the grave just staring at it. That's her TV.

She hadn't got a TV, because when her husband was still alive, she and her husband were looking at the TV set. And then suddenly a lady appeared and acted like a prostitute. She wasn't well dressed.

She came, moved her body, he jumped up and looked around and he had a big spinning in the corner. He took that spinning and gave that TV the knockout blow. He says, not in my house, such a satanic thing.

Now I don't say that if you lose a loved one that there will be no heartache. Of course it will be there. But don't make it your TV.

Now did you hear God's word today? He's challenging you about your neighbors. If they die in their sin and you haven't warned them, he will require their blood at your hand. And then this man Rudy says after that he prayed a prayer.

Lord Jesus, let me see and hear the heart cry of the needy people around me. Help me to respond to their needs with your message. Son of man, I make you to be a watchman.

If I say to a sinner, to the wicked, that he will die and you do not warn him, he will die in his sin, but his blood I will require at your hand. You think you'll enter heaven being accused of being a murderer, coming with the blood of other people upon you? Let us stand if you have the strength and we pray. Lord Jesus, I pray Lord and I ask you that you will not your people coming here, that it will not have been in vain, but that it will change lives and that the seed may grow and bear forth much fruit.

Amen.

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