

Leave No Unguarded Place

Written by The Light

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The church is vulnerable. Our enemies are many. There is a super-natural power at work to thwart every good purpose. He is set to penetrate every pure mind, to corrupt every faithful congregation. He despises the purity of the local church. He is the arch-enemy of God and man, a subtle creature who works through human agency. His power is excelled by only God Himself. Were it not for the Sovereignty of God and the supremacy of Heaven, humanity would have no hope against so formidable a foe. But we are on God's side, and have nothing to fear so long as we stay on his side.

The enemy with his troops are often easily identified. The gates of our hearts and lives—our spiritual fortress—are kept locked and barred against this mass before them. But it is the smooth conniving of the devil that we fear, searching out the small crack in our wall, the almost invisible weakness in our bold defense. He is persistent, unrelenting. Against every congregation, against every individual, he will never cease his pursuit. Never, until death rescues us from his awful relentlessness. We must leave no gate, no door, no wall unguarded—not for a moment. Vigilance locks the gate, protects the wall.

In 1453 the city of Constantinople (modern Istanbul, Turkey) was besieged by Muslim Turks. The mighty Byzantine capitol had resisted invasion for nearly a thousand years, and like the armies before them, the Turks could not break through the city's well fortified defenses. But the enemy, century after century, searched for a weakness in the wall. One day a diligent Turkish soldier found a tiny entryway into the city wall had been left unlocked and unguarded. Quickly he informed his kind, and the Turks poured through the opening and stormed the city. The last stronghold of a great empire fell, and the Muslims were in position to sweep across Europe—all because somebody left a small breach in the city wall.

I wonder about the man who was supposed to lock that door. He was probably a common sort of fellow, like you and me. Maybe he just forgot. Maybe he thought it was someone else's turn. Maybe he was lazy and figured the Turks would never find that small door anyway. Maybe he was just careless and thought it wouldn't make a difference if he did or didn't—just one time. Maybe he lost the key. In any case, his single careless act brought death to thousands, and altered the course of history.

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One verse of a song we often sing says, "Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul." Perhaps the writer had in mind Paul's admonition in Ephesians 6:11: "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Perhaps the words were inspired by Romans 13:14: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." Or perhaps Philipians 1:17: "...I am set for the defense of the gospel." Whatever the source, the thought is of utmost importance for every Christian person and for every church leader: Don't give Satan even the slightest opportunity to snare your soul or the souls of others. One open door is all he needs. Just one.

1 Corinthians 10:12 says, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The citizens of Constantinople probably thought their city would never fall. They had heard the tales of their 1000 year past they were invulnerable. It may have been that very thought that led to the single negligence that allowed the city to be taken. Never forget that Satan is our crafty and powerful enemy. He has made it his mission to destroy our souls (Ephesians 6:11-12). We cannot afford to become indifferent or negligent or careless; if we do, our fall is inevitable—it is only a matter of time. We must have concern; we must have foresight; we must have caution. "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

The poor fellow who left that small door unlocked at Constantinople probably paid with his life. If we leave a door even slightly ajar (or even unlocked), Satan will see to it that it costs, not our lives, but our souls, and the souls of our children, our grandchildren, and beyond, for generations to come. Yes, certainly, "Leave no unguarded place..."