

The Vigilant Watchman

Written by Daniel Heit

Throughout the Word of God we find many warnings of imminent danger. Two examples are Paul's general, open-ended warning to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3, and his much more specific and direct warning to Timothy of Alexander the copper-smith in 2 Timothy 4. By Paul's example we can conclude that it is important for Christians to warn one another of potential danger and harm. We can actually find that not only is it important, it's required.

In the first 6 verses of Ezekiel 33, we are given a clear description of the duty of a watchman. When the watchman sees the danger approaching, he is responsible for sounding the alarm. If he keeps a vigilant watch and sounds the alarm, his hands are clean regardless of what happens to the city. After the alarm is sounded it becomes the responsibility of the people to act accordingly. If they fail to defend themselves their blood is on their own hands. If the watchman isn't vigilant and somehow misses the approaching danger or fails to sound the alarm, he is then held partly responsible for the blood of the city.

As this analogy was given to the people of Israel it can also be applied to the church. Like the watchman in Ezekiel, if we see an impending danger approaching a brother (a congregation or the church as a whole) and don't sound the alarm, we are partially responsible for the resulting outcome.

We are all watchman in one fashion or another. We each have a different vantage point on the walls that protect the church. For example, a younger member is far more likely to have experience in the dangers of social media as younger people seem to be more tech savvy, where an older member has far more life experience, and most likely a deeper understanding of scripture to draw on and is more likely to see subtle dangers. A congregation having recently

The Vigilant Watchman

Written by Daniel Heit

dealt with struggles in divorce and remarriage will be better equipped to see the signs of that particular digres-sion. An evangelist is more likely to have knowledge of teachers of false doctrine whether it be first-hand knowledge or a warning given them by another vigilant watchman. Each of us are capable of seeing potential danger and each of us are responsible for sounding the alarm.

We are also all citizens of the city. We each watch, but we also have brothers and sisters watching our backs. With such a sinful world and so many dangers on every hand we can't possibly see every danger our-selves. We are responsible for taking the appropriate action when a fellow-watchman sounds the alarm. If a trusted brother gives us earnest and honest warning of impending danger it is our duty to react accordingly. If the watchman warned the city that a large group of men was approaching armed for war, would the logical response be to invite them in? Would it make sense to say "I don't see them, and go about business as usual? Should the citizens become angry with the watchman for doing his duty? Of course not! They should at the very least ready their defense and investigate the situation.

With the many dangers facing each of us and the Church as a whole, we must all be vigilant watch-men. It is far easier to be proactive to sin than reactive. Paul warned Timo-thy, *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts"* (2 Tim. 3:5-6). That would also apply to silly children and men. We've all heard the adage about closing the gate after the horse gets out. When it comes to our souls and the souls of our breth-ren we must close the gate and fend off the wolves before the wolves lead us away.

-307 N. Worley Ave., Blue Ridge, TX 75424

The Vigilant Watchman

Written by Daniel Heit
