

God's Watchmen

Book of Isaiah

By Ken Wimer

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Isaiah 62:6-9

Preached On: Sunday, April 7, 2013

Shreveport Grace Church

2970 Baird Road

Shreveport, LA 71118

Website: www.shrevegrace.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech

I invite you to look with me in your Bibles at Isaiah chapter 62. I want to speak with you today on the subject of God's watchmen. That is a pretty important matter when you consider how God's watchmen are described in Scripture. Imagine you being in a battlefield and responsible to watch for the enemy. Watchmen were those that stood on the wall and in the face of danger, in the face of the enemy would sound the alarm. And you can imagine how serious a matter it is even in real warfare as we know it is like, but how much more so in the spiritual warfare that there is in this world.

Let's never forget that the church in this world is a church under siege. So imagine even as we sit here today in the quiet of these four walls and it can be deceptive because it's comfortable and here I stand, we open the Word and we read it together and I point you to Christ as sinners and preferably our hearts are warmed and drawn to him. And yet even now as we sit here there is a warfare that is going on in your heart. And you say how do I know that? Because I know my own, that in this flesh, so long as we live in this flesh, there's a warfare.

And so I don't want you to think in terms of a watchmen or God's watchman in the negative sense of, "Oh no, what does the preacher know about me?" I know everything about you because I know everything about myself. When people say to me, "It's just as if you were speaking right to my heart." Well, guess what? I was speaking to your heart because I'm speaking to my own. And so when I talk to you about the dangers of this flesh, when I speak with you about Satan being a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour,¹ I'm not sitting up in some ivory palace talking to you from a balcony as if I'm not part of the problem. I know the struggles of my own flesh, I know the temptations of my own heart, I know the reality and what it is to be oppressed by the enemy and what it is to be pursued by the enemy.

And yet in that I find a blessing because were I not the Lord's, the enemy wouldn't care. When Christ said to Peter, "Satan has desired to sift you," don't forget, "as wheat,"² Satan doesn't have to bother the tares, they're his anyway. When he goes about seeking whom he may devour, it is those that the Lord Jesus Christ owns, those that the Lord Jesus Christ has already redeemed and paid for their souls with his own precious blood.

¹ 1 Peter 5:8.

² Luke 22:31.

And if you don't think that Satan, you might think, "Well, he knows that he can't ever take one out of the Lord's hand,"³ he doesn't know that. He still believes it right from the beginning when he rose up in rebellion against Christ, even down to when Christ appeared in the flesh, his thought was, "I'm going to get you." And if he is Christ's enemy, how much more then enemies of those that are Christ's.

And so, this is a very important portion of Scripture that we have to consider here, God's watchmen. And I will say that it has to do with those that the Lord raises up to be heralds of the gospel. I'll never forget when I was in one of my classes, one of my professors saying this to us as we were being prepared to preach. He said, "Gentlemen, in every court there is a jester and there is a herald." He said, "We have far too many preachers that are nothing but jesters and they feel that their role is to entertain people on the road to hell." "But, he said, "that is not the quality of one of the Lord's; one of the Lord's is a herald."

When you stop and think about what it is to proclaim the gospel think about a herald riding up on a horse and sounding the trumpet and then unfolding the scroll and reading exactly word-for-word what the king has proclaimed whether the people like it or not. And then going on to the next village and going on to the next. It matters not what men think, we have a message to declare and that is the role of a herald, that's the role of the watchman to sound out the watchword.

So let's read this here in Isaiah 62 and that's why I wanted Bob to read Ezekiel 33. There's too much in there even for one reading and you need to go back and read that again because it applies to everything that we have to hear today about the proclamation of the Gospel. But here in Isaiah 62, verse 6,

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day or night: ye that made mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he is establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast labored: But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness."⁴

I'm going to stop there because just in that there's more than what we can consider in the time we have. But when the Lord is pleased to do a spiritual work of conversion and a true turning to God in Christ according to the Scriptures, I have observed two things.

1. He raises up a preacher; he raises up and puts in a place one who will stand up and declare the gospel faithfully to sinners, point sinners to Christ. As I scan the horizon I am constantly looking for other preachers with which I can fellowship. I know that may

³ John 10:28.

⁴ Isaiah 62:6-9.

sound surprising to some because it seems like the clearer you declare the gospel, the clearer you set it forth, the more people want to leave you alone.

But I'm not a controversialist by nature. In fact, I don't like controversy and for that reason you might say, "Well, you're in the wrong business then." And that's true, if there *were* any other way to do any other thing, I wouldn't be standing here preaching the gospel. But, you know, it's God that has raised this one up and put me here. One preacher said coming into town, "I didn't just fall off a turnip truck. I considered God's path and direction and how it is I even ended up in Shreveport, LA from Africa. I have to tell you it's the Lord, it's the Lord."

Here we are some 18 years later, I'm thankful that any one of you still comes back to hear, because I realize this is not a popular message. But as I come back and study the Scriptures and weigh them prayerfully before the Lord and what it is that the Lord would have me to speak Sunday in and Sunday out, Wednesday in and Wednesday out whether there are many or there are few, I know that it has to be to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and warn sinners. Exactly as you would expect of a watchman, one that would stand on the wall and when you happen to wake up and walk by there he is, in position and declaring the glory of Christ.

It's not news to this city there are people I deal with every day that still don't know that the best thing about this city is that the Lord has raised up a gospel witness here. And I'm not talking about myself but I'm talking about the fact that here in this place we have the privilege of hearing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has set a watchman in this place and he's passed by a bunch of other ones.

So that's one way that I know that the Lord is being pleased to do a spiritual work. Secondly, I always say what would be a preacher, what would be a watchman without a cause? We talked about coming to church. Now this building isn't the church, it's a place to meet. The church meets here. What would be the preacher without a people? And there I see also how the Lord is pleased to manifest his spiritual work when he raises up a people small or great, it matters not. I'm not looking for a thousand man congregation. In fact, that would be a headache. I'm looking for every one of God's sheep that he is pleased to draw and to bring. And the rest I don't have to worry about.

I've often thought if the Lord did nothing else but bring one sheep to me and say, "For the rest of your life I want you to feed and nurture and take care of that one sheep and don't worry about the rest," could I be content? We'd have a high ole time with that one sheep knowing that that one is the Lord's. That is the key, knowing that the Lord is the one who draws his sheep, the Lord is the one who brings them to sit under this message and to rejoice in it.

And we see both of these in verse 6 here of Isaiah 62. I've said a lot to get to this one point here, he said, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls."⁵ Let's not fall into the trap of thinking that I'm the only one. When Elijah got reasoning that way the Lord reminded

⁵ Isaiah 62:6.

him that he had 7,000 that did not bow the knee to Baal.⁶ I don't know 7,000 but I know enough as the Lord has directed me over the years that there are others out there whether I ever meet them or not; they are laboring in that field where the Lord has put them.

And so the plural here, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls." The important thing here is it's where the Lord has set them. He doesn't send them on fool's errands. I believe wherever He raises up a preacher of the gospel he has a people for whom he has raised that one up. And you can see Jerusalem, it was the picture of the church, a picture of those that God has chosen and that Christ has redeemed. And you can see the quality of these watchmen. They're not in the preaching business for their own comfort or for popularity, they are there to declare plainly, clearly the Word of God. It says "which shall never hold their peace day or night."⁷ These are men that are without compromise and when people get their back up and get upset, none of that, either their frowns nor their smiles is going to change what they have to declare. They never hold their peace.

But notice that's the watchman but then here's the people. In other words, we're not just beating the air, not just preaching words to walls or doing a performance. It says, "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence."⁸ When they came to Christ and even asked Christ who he was, you remember what He said, "Well, that's those who follow me."⁹

If you're truly the Lord's and the Lord enables me to point you to the Lord Jesus Christ message after message, you're not going out there and when people ask you what you believe, you say, "Well, I believe what my pastor believes. Why don't you go ask him?" No, you're declaring the very same thing that I declare from here if you're the Lord's. That's who he is describing, "Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence." In other words, don't you hold your peace.

This matter of being a watchman is not reserved just for an elite few, that's what I want you to see here. It's the whole church that watches. We watch for one another, we exhort one another, we pray for one another. This is something that we *all* do knowing the dangers and knowing how deceptive error is and in love warning one another. Both aspects are viable.

I thank the Lord for those of you that come here because you believe and testify to the fact that the Lord Himself has been pleased to do a work of grace in your heart and that you come not to hear me but to hear him. Let's be careful not to exalt the preacher above the Savior or to desire the preacher's voice above the Savior's voice. Christ said, "My sheep hear my voice."¹⁰ If the only voice you hear is that of just the watchman on the wall you'll be like most others that wake up when you hear the voice, lay there for a while and think, "Did I just hear something?" And then think, "Oh well," and go right back to sleep. There are many that way.

⁶ 1 King 19:18.

⁷ Isaiah 62:6.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John 8.

¹⁰ John 10:27.

Beware of the sleep of death where you come and maybe you're stirred a little bit even by what I have to say but it only lasts as far as you getting out that door and then you're tired and it's gone. No, to hear his voice and to be warned by his spirit, that's the blessing.

And so if I were to summarize this portion that we've just read here in verses 6-9, here are three things I'd have you retain.

1. God's watchmen are God's gift to his people. We thank the Lord whenever he is pleased to raise up watchmen, one's like ourselves that care for our souls in whom Christ has been pleased to reveal himself and they have but one ambition and that is the glory of God and the good of his people. That's a blessing.

Secondly, to see that God's watchmen are charged to preach the message that is revealed here in the Scripture to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the message of Scripture. There are a lot of things you could get distracted in looking at here in this word but I have but one task and that is to point you to the Lord Jesus Christ and that's what we do with each other. I fear more than anything that after the gospel is declared we quickly greet one another and move on. "How was that fish fry?" "How was that ball game last night?" All of these things that so easily take our attention are like birds that come and take the seed immediately, take it away.¹¹

I don't know how to control that, I just know that when I'm done preaching my thought is on one thing here. There is one old preacher that literally would ask somebody in the congregation to close in prayer and when he was done the preacher was gone because he felt so impressed that he hadn't but one mission and that was to preach Christ and get out of the way. So if I disappear, you'll know what happened. Sometimes I feel that way, I feel like if I could just get out and just leave this with you and that you'd never see me or hear anything but just me declaring Christ to you and pointing you to Christ and getting out of the way. It's like John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease."¹² May God gives us all an earnestness and an urgency about what we're about right here. We must let the Lord himself be the one to direct our minds.

God's watchman, they're charged to preach Christ, they're charged to point sinners to Christ and to warn them.

And then the third thing that I'd have you consider here is that God's watchmen oversee the Lord's people in love, mercy and grace. I know this is abused, there are some that will try to impose themselves on you. They'll say, "Well, you don't contradict the preacher. Don't lay your hand on the Lord's anointed." They are very dictatorial in how they deal with you. You try to get close to them and they're pushing you away. I don't believe that's how God's watchmen are toward his people. There's a love, there's a mercy even

¹¹ Luke 8:5.

¹² John 3:30.

as the Lord has been pleased to show them his love and mercy so they manifest that in warning others.

Let those three thoughts shape our minds and hearts as we look at this portion that we have before us.

The first point that I mentioned to you, God's watchmen are God's gift to his people. I know that sounds a little bit arrogant sometimes, some people feel like they're God's gift to mankind. That's not how I'm stating that at all. But what I intend to say by that is if the Lord has raised up a watchman, it is for the good of the people. The world, the enemy may not like you there. They don't want a watchman that is going to care for the souls of the people. But the people appreciate it, the people thank the Lord that there are such ones that the Lord has raised up to be clear, to be plain, to exalt Christ and to declare him in truth.

When you go to 1st Peter and this is coming now to explain these verses that we've read where it says they'll "never hold their peace day or night,"¹³ what is their message? Look here in 1st Peter, chapter 1. This was true of the prophets of the Old Testament, it would've true of Isaiah, any one of the prophets. Their one mission was to proclaim Christ and point their hearers to him as needy sinners. This work that the Lord was going to do in Jerusalem or for Jerusalem after having taken them through those 70 years of captivity, that's what Isaiah is talking about when he would bring the people back in and raise them up again. It was based upon a work of God that he would do years later, it wasn't for national Israel's sake, but God had purposed to bring the seed of his son through this people and that the Temple should be raised up again and exist until Christ should come and fulfill it all. And here in 1st Peter, chapter 1, verse 10,

"Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you."¹⁴

This is talking about Christ's first coming.

"Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."¹⁵

So you've got the Old Testament watchmen that's how I understand these who prophesied of the grace of God, one message. You say, "Well, they were under the Old Testament so they were preaching the law." No, they were preaching the grace of God.

¹³ Isaiah 62:6.

¹⁴ 1 Peter 1:10.

¹⁵ 1 Peter 1:11-12.

That's how God saves sinners. It's always been by his grace. The law was given to shut men's mouths. That every mouth may be stopped and all the world found guilty before a Holy God.¹⁶ What saves is the grace of God and a law satisfied. In order for God to be merciful he has to be just in that mercy.

And so, these that prophesied, even these watchmen they were not preaching the law and trying to get people to follow the law. No, it says clearly here in verse 11, "Searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand, the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." That was their message.

And, therefore, when you come back here to Isaiah 62, and even though you might see it historically as being fulfilled when he brought the children of Israel back from captivity and established them again in Jerusalem but all this is a type where it says in verse 8, "The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by the arm of his strength."¹⁷ Who is God's right hand? That's Christ, his son. And what is the arm of his strength? "The arm of the Lord is not short that he cannot save."¹⁸ That's Christ.

For Christ's sake it is said, "Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies." What did Christ come to this earth to accomplish? Was it not the defeat of the enemies of his people? And there he did it not only in his righteous life fulfilling every precept of the law but in his death, sacrificial death where he accomplished every aspect of God's law and justice, paid the price in full and so complete was that work that when he had finished, "there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."¹⁹

What a message; that's what the watchman here established and declared and his message that I declare to you today in line with the prophets of old. But also if you look in the New Testament era after Christ's death, burial and resurrection, he gave to his church pastors and teachers. Look in Ephesians, chapter 4. Notice this is the work of a watchman and I'm talking about every one of us that are the Lord's. Notice in verse 1,

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love."²⁰

Let's not forget who the real enemy is. It's not your brother, it's not that one for whom Christ paid the debt.

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace..."
There's one body.

¹⁶ Romans 3:19.

¹⁷ Isaiah 62:8

¹⁸ Isaiah 59:1.

¹⁹ Romans 8:1.

²⁰ Ephesians 4:1-2.

“...one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.”²¹

Think of a community, think of a walled city, that’s how the church is described. The walls of salvation, the foundation having been laid in Christ.²² And every one for whom He paid the debt. Within those walls there’s a community, there’s a bond, there’s a oneness.

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us...”²³

This is why I say there is no such thing as elevating the preacher above the people.

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high...”²⁴

This is talking about after his resurrection, ascending into glory “he led captivity captive.” In other words, all of those Old Testament elect souls he carried with him into glory. It was at that point in time in his death that their judgment was rendered, that their debt was paid. Same time and place as any of us that are in Christ today. “He led captivity captive,” they sent it on high with him. They are seated in the heavenlies with him. But then notice it says, “...and gave gifts unto men.” And of course it is quoting here Psalm 68 and you can go back read that at some point.

“Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?”²⁵

That’s just talking about his complete humbling, humiliation, being born of man in this world, as low as you can imagine, the lowest part of the earth. He came to save the chief of sinners,²⁶ identified with the chief of sinners, yet without sin. But it says,

“He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some, apostles,”²⁷

That’s what took place right after he ascended, some prophets. But then you see the progression, there are no more apostles today. In Acts, chapter 1, to be an apostle you had to actually have physically seen the resurrected Lord and that’s why Paul called himself an apostle at a new time because Christ revealed himself to him on the road to Damascus in an unusual way. With his death and that of John who was the last of the apostles, there are no more apostles today in that sense, no more prophets in the sense of God continuing

²¹ Ephesians 4:3-4.

²² 1 Corinthians 3:11.

²³ Ephesians 4:5-6.

²⁴ Ephesians 4:7-8.

²⁵ Ephesians 4:9.

²⁶ 1 Timothy 1:15.

²⁷ Ephesians 4:10-11.

to reveal truth to them apart from this word. But what we have, you can see the continuum in verse 11,

“...and some, evangelists; and some, pastors...”²⁸

The word “and” teachers, would be pastors even teachers. And the understanding of those two is the evangelists were those who went out and carried the gospel. They are watchmen that the Lord sends from place to place. Pastors and teachers, those that he puts in one particular place and causes them to pastor. That’s not an elite term, the word means an under-shepherd, but to care for the sheep that the Lord brings to them. But notice they are the gifts unto men that are mentioned in verse 8 because in verse 11 it says, “he gave some.”

And what is their role as watchmen? How are they God’s gift to his people? It’s not to be arrogant, it’s not to get all the attention, I’m not crying because in 18 years that I’ve been here there’s never been a pastor appreciation day as you have in some congregations where they come and lay the gifts at the feet of the preacher and he’s sitting up in a chair covered with a white sheet. Thankfully you don’t do that; we’d all run out of here.

Notice verse 12,

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry...”²⁹

That’s why my responsibility is as God enables to preach to you, enable *you* to be those watchmen because you have people that I’ll never deal with or will never deal with me and yet they know you. Therefore, as you go forth as the Lord has taught *you* as a lost sinner of the glory of Christ and his finished work, *you* go forth and *you* declare that. That’s the ministry, the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ. And it says in verse 13,

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”³⁰

So that’s how God’s watchmen are God’s gift to his people for the edification of those for whom he has paid the debt.

Secondly as I mentioned to you, God’s watchmen are charged to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and that’s where we come back here to Isaiah 62 in verses 6 and 7 where I want to dwell just briefly on this statement “which shall never hold their peace day nor night.”³¹

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ephesians 4:12.

³⁰ Ephesians 4:13.

³¹ Isaiah 62:6-7.

The work of a watchman is to warn and the Lord's people are as watchman on the church's walls. As I mentioned, the church is as a city that's besieged and just as it is a sentinel's responsibility to look out for and to care for any motion of the enemy, any movement of the enemy. This is where we have to realize that error is subtle, that it's really not like most people think, the devil dressed up in a red suit with a pitchfork and horns. Noone would ever follow him.

But we know the Scriptures tell us that Satan's ministers are transformed into ministers of light.³² In other words, they'll use the same language as God's ministers, they'll talk about God, they'll talk about Christ, they'll talk about grace, they'll talk about redemption, they'll talk about mercy, they'll talk about salvation but they'll code it in such a way as those that are not part of the spirit, they're going to follow their error. It's a mixed message, it's one of grace and works, it's one of many times conditional. This is what Christ has done, but now here's what you need to do to make it effectual.

Any that are taught of the spirit of God their ears are attuned to that sort of error and that's why they get upset when they don't hear you clearly declare. It's like somebody with perfect pitch, when you sit down to play the piano, if you're not attuned you might say, "Well, that sounded really good," and someone else is thinking, it's like they say on the show American Idol, "that's pitchy." In other words, there's something not right.

Dear friends, if we're the Lord's and as we come week in and week out and we listen to the clear exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, it's that our ears and our hearts and our minds might be ever attuned to anything; that even a little leaven leavens the whole lump.³³ And it's not being overly critical, it's the desire that the Lord puts in the hearts of his people to hear a clear exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ and it gives him the glory alone. And I'd rather have ten people in a small congregation attuned by God's grace to that than to have a house full of people that can't hear the difference, don't care about it.

And even as Bob read, I don't know if you kept your place in Ezekiel 33 but if you didn't I'll read it for you. Notice how these are described in verses 31 to 33.

"And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people..."

And the key word there is "as" in profession.

"...and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love..."

Isn't that the theme of modern religion, they're such a loving people.

"...but their heart goeth after their covetousness."³⁴

³² 2 Corinthians 11:14.

³³ 1 Corinthians 5:6.

³⁴ Ezekiel 33:31.

What is their covetousness but their own glory?

“And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice...”

How many times has a preacher of the gospel heard that. If you wonder, there’s a reason I don’t stand back there at the end of the worship service. I don’t want people to walk by and shake my hand and tell me, “Well, that was...you were right on today.”

“...lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, lo, it will come, then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.”³⁵

In other words, in eternity. Don’t think yourselves safe being in this house listening to this message of grace. Some like to hear just because they feel like they don’t have any accountability but there is a day of accountability and you’re not accountable to me, you’re accountability is to a holy God that apart from the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and what he’s accomplished at Calvary paying the sinner’s debt, you’d have no hope. No matter how comfortable you may feel coming and going or how much you like the people of Shreveport Grace Church. I think you’re pretty likable. I like to think that I’m pretty likable except for I’ve got a big task I fear that makes me unlikable. But that’s what God has called me to. Be clear and plain and set it forth.

But either way, every one of us sitting here listening to this is going to have to deal with a holy God. And unless you’re bowed to that one righteousness of Christ alone, you have no hope. No matter how pleasant the words may sound.

And so that’s what we’re to do. We’re not to hold our peace neither day. If you look over with me to Acts chapter 20 and I realize the time is flying but just look at this, Acts, chapter 20. In the portion that Bob read in Ezekiel 33 it talks about if one will not warn the wicked to turn from his way and live, and you stop and think what is the wicked’s way. Well, it’s a way of works, it’s a way of self-sufficiency, it’s a way of thinking that somehow what I do matters. And this matter of salvation, but if you don’t warn those, the wicked in their ways, it says their blood is upon your head.³⁶ In other words, one who doesn’t warn, and says he’s the Lord’s he’ll end up in the same condemnation of those that he doesn’t warn.

And Paul wrote of that here in Acts, chapter 20. You talk about not holding your peace, he says in verse 20 speaking to the Ephesian elders, and these were the watchmen gathered, the Lord gathered them that day, he said,

“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you...”

³⁵ Ezekiel 33:32-33.

³⁶ Ezekiel 33:6.

“Unto you” is in italics. “Nothing that was profitable.” What’s profitable but what gives Christ all the glory.

“...but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God...

The word “and” there can be translated “even,”

“...faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

What is repentance for God but faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, they are one and the same. You can’t have one without the other.

“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.”

That’s because he was a watchman.

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus...”

To do what?

“...to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

That’s who Christ is, that’s what he’s accomplished, that’s how in his death upon completion of his death, God once for all declared righteous every one for whom Christ died. And he’s calling each one to himself. He says, “I count not my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel and grace of God.”

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.”

Here it is,

“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers...”

There’s the watchman,

“...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”³⁷

I don't know who comes and goes but I know this, the Lord has placed me here on this portion of the wall as a watchman of his people. I have but one message to declare unto you so that I don't have to try to guess when I hear tomorrow that the Lord has executed judgment and taken out of here, I don't have to go back and think, “Was I preaching on tithes that day? Was I preaching on being nice to your neighbor? Did I have any part of the gospel in that message?” I'll tell you what, there's not going to be any doubt.

And there are plenty of places where you could be happy if you don't want to hear this message of Christ and him crucified. I can open up the phone book under “Churches” right now and just blindly put my finger there and send you on down the road if that's what you want. But I wouldn't be a watchman to do anything but stand here and declare unto you the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and your need as a sinner of his absolute perfection that he accomplished at Calvary for sinners.

When the Pharisees said “his blood be upon us and upon our children,”³⁸ it was. They were sealing, they were writing their own death sentence in so declaring. And I say it to people all the time when they start complaining and all you hear is Christ, Christ, Christ, you know what? Be careful of being among those that say “his blood be upon us and on our children.” We need something more or we need something different. It's a terrible state of being to be lost and not know it.

Well, the last part I'll save for next time. God's watchman overseeing the Lord's people in love, mercy and grace, I pray that that's how you receive this message. It is in no way scolding anybody, preaching at anybody. A friend of mine helped me a long time ago when I said I was going to be preaching to such-and-such a congregation. He stopped me and said, “No, you're not preaching to 'em, if you do, you're in trouble. You're preaching for 'em.” In other words it's just a privilege the Lord has given you to stand up and one more time declare. But we don't preach at anybody, we preach to anybody.

Thank you for letting me preach for you today.

³⁷ Acts 20:20-28.

³⁸ Matthew 27:25.