



Title: A Watchman's Vision
Theme: Biblically Achieving Our Call
Topic: Biblically Understanding CrossRoads Vision

“Stand at the crossroads and look... ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. I have appointed watchmen over you and said, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet.’” (Jeremiah 6:16 NIV)

Warning of a destruction

At this time in Biblical history, Judah was in danger of destruction because she had strayed from the ways of God. Therefore, the Lord raised up a prophet of God to admonish the people and gave them instructions on how to walk in a manner worthy of the people of God.

The New Testament has a warning of a destruction for all who do not desire the ways of God, destruction that affects the life and soul of mankind. Romans 1:18-32 says, “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--His eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened...

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.” (Romans 1:18-32)

I would propose to you that in a world bound in the modern day wrath of God, there is a call upon the church to become aggressive in her fight for the souls of mankind.

Just what is our purpose at CrossRoads Church? Just what is our call? What is our belief based on?

Grasp our purpose /concept of prophet as watchman

The first step to enjoying God's will for us in the "Great Commission" is to grasp our purpose. Jeremiah wrote to a people who were about to suffer the consequences of sin, "I appointed watchmen over you and said listen to the trumpet." (Jeremiah 6:17)

The concept of prophet as a watchman is found throughout the counsel of God's word. Hosea 9:8a says, "The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman..."

"Prophet" (*nabiy*) here is an inspired spokesman who is raised up by the Lord to proclaim the message from God who does not contradict the law of the Lord or one who speaks from his own mind or heart. (The Complete Word Study) Thus, a prophet is a spokesman for the Lord and one who speaks under God's authority. (Exodus 7:1; Easton's Bible Dictionary; Harper's Bible Dictionary)

The whole Word of God as it was written by men who received the revelation from God (2 Peter 1:20-21) communicates the Lord's mind and will to men. Anyone who is a spokesman for the Lord, preaching the Word of God is thus exercising the grace gift of prophecy for the purpose of proclaiming divine truths to mankind. (Easton's Bible Dictionary; Harper's Bible Dictionary)

In the New Testament the prophetic office is continued. Our Lord is frequently spoken of as a prophet of the church. (Luke 4:2; 13:33; 24:19; Matthew 13:57; 21:11; John 4:19; 9:17) He is the Great Prophet of the Body of Christ and He has given the grace gift of prophecy to the modern day church. (Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:26-32; Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:20; Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; James 5:10; Harper's Bible Dictionary; Easton's Bible Dictionary)

The Body of Christ who understands her purpose and call will have someone in their congregation who has the grace gift of "prophet" as mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. "Prophet" (*prophetes*) here generally refers to those who have the Holy Spirit gift of speaking the heart and will of God to mankind. (The Complete Dictionary of the New Testament; Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament) Men or women exercising this gift have a healthy walk with the Lord and they are sent by Him to warn, correct and exhort people. It has been said of these Christians, "They love God and disturb people." (Donald A. Leggett)

"Watchman" (*sapah*) in practical application is to have someone stand guard.

When applied to the duty of being a watchful prophet with Jesus Christ in this dispensation, it is having a spokesman who is proclaiming the truths of God to a people who are being overcome by sins that feed the flesh, that embrace a world view and listen to Satan's lies.

Where were watchmen stationed? Historical researchers tell us that whenever possible, towers were erected in fields, vineyards and especially in key positions around the city so as to have someone give a warning call. The church who grasps her purpose as being a watchman has someone with the Christ apportioned gift of prophet (Ephesians 4:11-12) getting the Word of God out to those suffering the consequences of not living for the Lord.

Those who are called of the Lord to exercise this gift are very much illuminated with the same exhortation that was given to Ezekiel, "Son of man, I have made you a watchman... so hear the word I speak and give them warning from Me. When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sin, but you will have saved yourself. ...Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways!..'" (Ezekiel 33:7-11)

Taylor in his teachings on the duty of the watchful prophet writes, "A dying person unwarned would be regarded as a murder victim. The murderer would be the watchman who failed his duty."

The purpose of the watchmen today is to be out proclaiming the Word of the Lord publicly, give a warning call of God's wrath, God having surrendered mankind over to themselves, just as warned in Romans 1: 18-32. Through the teaching of God's Word this watchman is used to bring conviction of sin and to point the lost to Christ Jesus.

By God's grace, through exercising of the Spiritual gifts of several in this Body of Christ, we can say yes, we are watchmen. *CrossRoads* is found on the second page of the *Norton Telegram* every Monday. It reaches 4,600 homes, including every home in the Norton County area and beyond. These articles are also placed in the church section of *The Telegram* every Friday. In addition, they are scheduled by the Norton County Ministerial Alliance to be used in devotionals on the first Friday of each month. The *Norton Telegram* staff also visits our website regularly to get these Biblical teachings for their devotionals. New *CrossRoads* articles are placed on the front page of our website weekly. Christians and non-Christians, some being shut-ins due to age or physical ailments, have expressed thanksgiving to us for having *CrossRoads* in the paper each week. People cut out the articles and send them to family members and friends. We have received thanks from individuals around the country who have received *CrossRoads*

articles in this way. *CrossRoads* articles are excerpted from full transcripts of Sunday morning messages, which are regularly placed on two websites: *standatthecrossroads.com* and *SermonCentral.com*. According to *SermonCentral*, we currently have 95 messages on their website with nearly 8,000 viewings. The viewing rate continues to grow weekly.

Proclaiming the Word of the Lord

Once the church has grasped her purpose she is to fulfill her call by proclaiming the Word of the Lord. 2 Timothy 4:1-2 says, “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in the view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word: be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

The best of men, corporations or anyone in the work force need someone to give and remind them of their duties, even more so the preacher of God’s Word.

The Apostle Paul’s charge to Timothy was not to preach *about* the Bible, but to proclaim or herald the Word of God. To preach (*kerusso*) means to publicly announce, to publish abroad religious truth, the gospel with its attendant privileges and obligations in this gospel dispensation. The herald is to proclaim in such a way as to persuade, urge, warn and intrigue people to comply to the message. (Dictionary of Biblical Languages; The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament; Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament)

In the early days of my walk with the Lord, I was so moved by Dr. Billy Graham’s faithfulness to preach the Word of God. There was that so familiar phrase in the messages he spoke forth, “The Bible says.” In watching the film, “The Cross and the Switch-blade,” I took notice of the scene that presented David Wilkerson as a man who was not ashamed of the Word of God. Every letter, e-mail and transcript of messages I get from him is full of the Word of God. I excitedly open his material with a full expectation of receiving something from the heart of God and my hope in the Lord is restored.

Once when Missionary David Haag was about to share a word to a group of Christians, when he stood to speak, some of the younger appointed leaders spoke out, “Don’t preach, Don’t preach!”

To the delight of the God who created him, to the delight of the Christ who died for him and in the empowering of the Holy Spirit who anointed him, Missionary David Haag preached the Word of God anyway.

There is a Biblical term, “man of God.” It has been reduced to someone who is religious or has regular church attendance. However, Biblically the term “man of God” refers to God’s spokesman, often referring to men exercising the gift,

prophet, evangelist, apostle, pastor or teacher. Our key text in this division of the message was written to the young pastor Timothy, whom Paul accredited the term “man of God.” (1 Timothy 6:11) This term is given to the person who represents God by speaking His Word. In 1 Timothy 6:11-14 the Apostle Paul lists four marks of the “man of God,” one being a man or woman who is faithful to fulfill the responsibility of their charge or calling. (Rediscovering Expository Preaching, John MacArthur)

CrossRoads Articles fulfill the ministry of watchful prophet and must always be overseen by a person who is called to and has proven faithful the “Preach the Word.” The one who proclaims God’s Word in this ministry that reaches out to those in this world, must be overseen by men or women of God who are Holy Spirit illuminated with 1 Timothy 4:13-15, “Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift... Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.”

Those who prove faithful and unashamedly preach the Word do so because they have a firm belief in the foundation of what they preach. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16) Hebrews 4:12 says, “The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword... it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Hebrew 4:12)

Timothy was about to face false teachers and a people who no longer wanted to hear truth. Therefore, Timothy needed assurance and exhortation so as to not fade from his charge. Thus the Apostle Paul reminded the young pastor that all Scripture is God-breathed (*theopneustos*), that is, God’s words were given through men superintended by the Holy Spirit so that their writings are without error.

CrossRoads Articles rest upon the foundational truth that the Bible is the Word of God, is Holy Spirit inspired, and is the key source from which we write. Over the course of a year, CrossRoads Biblical teachings cover all four areas on which Paul told Timothy to preach. These articles teach, rebuke, correct, and train in righteous living addressing the times we live in today.

In the public distribution of CrossRoads Articles we fully trust that the Word of God is able to do the work God wants done in its readers’ spiritual hearts. The Book of Hebrews tells us the Word is living and active (*energes*) meaning energizing (Thru the Bible) having vital power in itself and exerting the same to the human soul. (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon) Paul is also teaching us that man’s thoughts cannot be kept to himself once he has been exposed to God’s Word. What mankind holds secret is brought to the surface before the Lord as he reads or hears the spoken word of God. (The Expositors Bible Commentary; Matthew Henry Commentary; Bible Knowledge Commentary; New Bible Commentary) It is imperative that the word of God get into every home possible so mankind may be made aware of his heart condition in the eyes of God and they may hear about Christ.

Faith comes by people hearing the message of God's Word concerning Christ. (Romans 10: 17) As God's Word goes out to the public, it will not return to Him empty, but will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it. Isaiah 55:11 gives us this assurance, "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11) The word of God will either harden unto death or it will soften unto salvation bringing knowledge of and enjoyment in the will of God.

Understanding the results of planting God's Word

Watchful Prophets are confident in their work with the Lord and have full understanding of the results of planting God's Word. 1 Corinthians 3:6-9 says, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building."

Through CrossRoads Articles we joyfully plant the seeds of God's Word in the Norton County area and beyond, knowing full well that Jesus taught that there are four types of soil which represent the hearts of mankind: 1.) The hard trodden-down pathways are like the hearts of those who hear, but the devil comes and steals away the Word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 2.) The rocky ground promotes shallow roots and is like the hearts of those who believe for awhile, but in the time of testing fall away. 3.) The thorny ground creates seed growth that is like those who have hearts of faith but whose faith is quickly choked out by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and the believers never mature. However, 4.) The fertile soil is like those with good and noble hearts. They will hear the Word, retain it, and, by persevering, produce a crop. (Luke 8:11 - 15)

Jesus taught clearly, "But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering, produce a crop." (Luke 8:15)

The parable of the seed sower shows us that Jesus was not impressed by the crowds that followed and heard the words He taught. He knew that most of the people did not really hear the Word and receive it in their hearts in true repentance. Jesus gave this spiritual teaching to encourage the disciples in their future ministry, and to encourage us today. When you consider how much of God's Word has gone out into the public over the years through teaching, preaching, and personal witnessing in different ways, it should not surprise us to see so little harvest. The harvest is small because what Jesus teaches is true, "Enter the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it." (Matthew 7:13)

Although most people will reject the message, there is that heart out there that receives it and not every heart will produce the same amount of harvest, nor is the harvest the same in every person. Some seeds will produce harvesters being used of God to bring others to Christ. (Romans 1:13) Some of the harvesters will give to the Lord's work. (Romans 15:25-29) Other seeds produce good works and those able to grow in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:10) Some seeds enable others to grow tremendously in Christ-like character (Galatians 5:22-23) and there will be those who will whole heartedly offer praise to God. (Hebrews 13:15) (Matthew Henry Commentary; The Bible Exposition Commentary; Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Getting the Word of God out of the church walls will find noble hearts in due season and it will have its harvest for Christ.

Rests upon the promise

Watchful prophets proclaim like Christ did planting the seeds of God's Word on every heart and they express a faith based on God's Word. Every faithful servant of the Lord who takes the gospel out to lost souls rests upon the promise found in Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Here we see the empowerment that is going to enable the Body of Christ to take the gospel of Jesus to lost souls around the world. Without the Holy Spirit's leading there is no vision from God on what to do, there is no enabling to achieve the task set before us, and mankind is not drawn to hear the message.

The heart of anyone who is a watchman, proclaiming the message of the Lord in this sin-trodden world rests upon the promise found in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

The Apostle Paul did as he often does, suddenly he moves from theology and makes a challenge; suddenly the Holy Spirit speaks through God's anointed to address the practicality in ministry so that we might stay steadfast in our callings. (The Daily Study Bible Series) Here we have the assurance that as surely as Christ is risen from the dead, Christians shall rise and be fully rewarded for their labors with the Lord. This will be fully enjoyed at the judgment seat of Christ. The challenge of the Holy Spirit to us is that we remain faithful and serve with an expectation that God is going to reward our labors with Christ! (Matthew Henry Commentary; New Bible Commentary; Commentary, Critical and Explanatory)

In Closing: *The Word of God holds a truth or principle that lays deep in the heart of our CrossRoads Articles ministry which, I believe should govern all ministry opportunities.* 1 Thessalonians 5:12 in the King James Bible says, “And I beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.”

To “know” (*aida*) generally means to know instinctively, (The Complete Word Study of the New Testament) to have intimate or close relationship with or have knowledge of the work someone is doing for the Lord. (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament) In regard to CrossRoads, you should possess information about and have knowledge of the high status of this ministry. (Dictionary of Biblical Languages) Christians are to be able to take note of this work and identify the works of this ministry. (The New American Commentary)

To “partner” with someone in ministry means to have fellowship, to be a partaker in common experience in the work of the Lord. (The Complete Word Study; Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament) Therefore, quality ministries will make every effort to communicate, share vision, battles, successes and most importantly, prayer needs to all who desire to oversee the Lord’s work in a Biblical manner.

This why we have put together a nice booklet that can be handed out or sent to Christians who may want to know about what the Lord has done and is doing through this ministry. **Your Partnership is Requested:** In partnering with us we ask that you pray the following: 1.) Thanksgiving to the Lord for this ministry. 2.) Anointing and honor given to the Word of the Lord as it is spread rapidly 3.)The calling of lost souls to Christ Jesus. 4.) God’s work through *CrossRoads* articles in connecting people to Bible believing and preaching churches. 5.) God’s will as you consider helping us meet the financial needs of this ministry.

Many of you have heard the story of “Mutiny on the Bounty.” In brief it is the story about men who were sent off on a British ship, bound for the South Seas. The idea was to plant fruit-bearing trees and do other things to make the Islands more habitable. When the job was completed the order to embark was given, however, the men formed strong attachments to the ladies and the climate. The result was “Mutiny on the Bounty.” Captain Bligh and a few loyal men were set adrift and in an almost miraculous fashion, Captain Bligh survived the ordeal and made it back to London to tell the story. An expedition was launched and fourteen men paid the penalty of mutiny under British law.

Keith Miller, in “Edge of Adventure,” shares a story only a few have heard about. He shares how the Bible played a very vital part in that historical event. He writes:

“Nine of the men (the mutineers) had gone to another Island. They formed a colony. Perhaps there has never been a more degraded and debauched social life than that colony. ...Whiskey and other [sins] led to their ruin. Disease and murder took the lives of all the native

men, only one white man survived, Alexander Smith. He found a Bible and started reading it, he believed and began to appropriate it into his life. He taught it to the children and women." According to the story by the time they were found, people lived in decency, prosperity and harmony. No crime, disease, immorality." God honored His Word among them. (Swindoll, The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart)

I wonder what might result if we stay steadfast in getting the Word of God out, praying and asking for Holy Spirit revelation of Christ to be given to hearts prepared to receive. Just how many would be saved from this modern day wrath of God. Souls saved from self-living, the world's view and the lies of the devil, so repentant sinners may choose to live in Christ and He in them? Let us pray!