

BE VIGILANT

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I hope that we keep aware of what's happening in this world. I know everyone hasn't necessarily always been – you might say – somebody who watches the news but as the body of Christ, we know that *what the Lord has opened up to us in His Word* goes beyond just our own experience with the Lord, even though, of course, that's *the foundation*. It has to begin there. If we're not saved, then the rest doesn't matter.

But if we are *saved*, we read how *the Bride of Christ is going to come back to this world to rule*. [Revelation 19:14] She's not going to come back a people that's just ignorant of what's happening or of what has happened.

I read just this morning that the Israeli Knesset – their parliament – has voted on a new name for this war. You might say: well, I thought the war was over. I said last Sunday that I didn't think it would be *a year* before they would break the agreement, before *Hamas* would break the agreement. Well, it didn't even last *a week!*

I mentioned on Wednesday how there are still bodies of hostages that they haven't turned over. And also, how Hamas is doing all it can to hold on to control in Gaza. Specifically, what they are doing against other Palestinian militias that hate Hamas.

In fact, at the beginning, two years ago, it seemed like they were all on the side of Hamas. But over these two years, they've seen that Hamas really doesn't care for them any more than it cares for the Jews.

Israel would say: *we're going to bomb a certain area*. And they would communicate to the Palestinians: *get out before we bomb*. I'm amazed how the world has criticized Israel. What other country gives a warning and says: get out because we're going to drop bombs? They don't do that. They just come in and drop the bombs.

Israel would give them *the opportunity to leave* but Hamas would stand on the outside and when the Palestinian people would try to leave, Hamas would say: you go back or we're going to shoot you, we're going to kill you unless you go back.

So they would go back and some were *killed by the bombs*. Then Hamas would say: oh look how bad Israel is: they killed so many civilians.

But the public, the people of Gaza have realized that Hamas is a terror to them, the same as it is to the Jews. So they began to form their own militias to *come against Hamas*.

And what has Hamas done? They've gone in and kidnapped certain ones of those militias. Then they bring them out in public, they make them get down on their knees, they take video, and they *execute them one by one*. If that's not a violation of the agreement, I don't know what is. That is: *Hamas asserting control of Gaza*.

Then – I believe it was just yesterday – they attacked Israeli soldiers, certain members of the IDF [Israel Defense Force] in Rafah [Gaza]. If I wanted something more blatant as a clarity that they've broken the agreement: *they've re-attacked Israel*.

So of course, Israel has counter-attacked. And they've re-named the war. The name of the war is now: *the War of Revival*.

Now, just think about that for a minute. We've been speaking on Hosea 6:2 for the past 20 ~ 30 years and what does it say? *After Two Days, He will revive us*.

Paul also, in Romans 11, said: *what will the receiving of the Jews be, but life from the dead?* [Romans 11:15] Praise the Lord.

We mentioned a few months back how Brother Jackson felt that the Gaza situation was going to be, we can say, what would *initiate* that Miracle War. And for them to now have overwhelmingly – I don't know if it was *unanimous*, but it was at least by an *overwhelming majority* – approved the name: this is *the War of Revival*, I think that is very significant.

And of course, we need to continue to be watching what's happening there.

I didn't get back into this part yet, but certain things have happened just over the weekend.

We've been talking about how there is a movement to inspire the young people – and not just the young people but they are, maybe I could say: *the target* – to inspire them to re-embrace the principles of Christianity. I'm speaking about here in the United States. A big part of that is what happened with the assassination of Charlie Kirk, and his life.

But as I was saying: there is also a parallel movement *contrary to that*. And the tension continues to grow and grow.

We have leaders today that are basically giving – we can say – giving the opposition the feeling that they are in *an almost hopeless situation* and that they are going to have to fight as we did in the Revolutionary War.

When you tell people things like that long enough, they will begin to believe it and they will begin to act on it.

Over the weekend we saw this movement, it didn't start this weekend but it's called: the No Kings Movement. And *yes*, our country was founded on the idea that *we don't have a king*.

But now when a government does come in and begins to assert some leadership and some authority, the people – really what it is, it's *the other side* that's doing this – *they don't want authority*. They *don't* want to be told: *you can't do this, you can't do that*.

When I was a kid in elementary school – I don't remember which grade, maybe in fifth grade – they had a time on Fridays when we would go to the gym and they would play like a 30-minute movie.

I remember one of the movies they showed, it was kind of a cartoon movie or animation, and it was called *Yes Land*. It was about this place where they could go and everything was *yes*.

There was this particular kid, his mom would tell him he had to come home at a certain time and there were certain things he couldn't do: he couldn't do *this*, he couldn't do *that*. He would ask: can I stay out late with my friends? The answer would be: *no*. And he became really bitter at this.

Then somehow, he found out how to go into *Yes Land*. He crossed over and he said: can I stay out late with my friends? They said: *yes!* Can I eat all the chocolate I want to eat? *Yes!* Everything was *yes*. Whatever he wanted to do, he could do it. He was just so happy.

Then all of a sudden another person in *Yes Land* just punched him in the nose, full force. Of course, he yelled out: *you can't do that!* The other kid said: *yes I can!* This is *Yes Land*.

The kid went running to one of the adults there. He complained and they said: *yes*, this is *Yes Land*, he can do it. Everybody can do whatever they want here.

It didn't take him long to realize: *he didn't like Yes Land*, and he was basically begging to get back.

I never thought that in my life we would have cities here in the United States that have basically become *Yes Land*.

The present administration wants to *change that*. They went to Washington DC and they did a marvelous job there. It's now an enjoyable city. But these other cities are fighting against it. They *don't* want any authority to say: *you do wrong* and there's a *punishment*.

Anyway, I better go ahead and get into my message this morning.

Let's go back to First Peter chapter 5.

I mentioned on Wednesday that my message was a prelude to today's message. And honestly, on Wednesday I felt I was going to go in one direction with this, but between then and now, I have felt to go in a different direction.

There's a lot here because of *the effect* of we read: *the devil wanting to devour us*. [1Peter 5:8]

The fact is: there are many different avenues – I would say – there are probably *three main approaches* that he takes. I'm going to speak of one this morning.

Let's read verse 8 again. Peter says here:

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

Now, *his roaring* is not happening in the natural world. *We don't hear that*. He *doesn't* announce: here I come.

He can use *fear* – that's one thing he can do – but that's *not* what I'm talking about this morning. Normally when he comes, *in the spirit world* when he's coming after you or after me, *he's quiet* as far as what we see.

That's why Peter says: *be sober, be vigilant*.

If he was loud in the natural sense, we wouldn't have to be vigilant. But I have to say: he wants to do a *sneak attack* from the standpoint of what we see.

First, we have to be aware that *none of us are exempt*.

And I will say this: the more we take a stand for what's right, the more we stand for Truth, he's going to look to see who he can use, who he can touch through some kind of idea or temptation, and he's going to try to get us *off track*.

First of all, as we said on Wednesday: *he's after our soul*. And he's not going to give up on that until we can say: it's all over and we have the victory. But while he can't get our soul, the next thing he's going to go after is: *our testimony*. And that's something, I have to say: that's *on us*.

Our salvation is *by the blood of Jesus Christ* [Ephesians 1:7] but *our testimony* depends on *what we do*. We can't say: well, I'm a Christian, I've been saved, so I have a good testimony.

There are many Christians who have not been vigilant and whose testimony has been damaged. You don't know the sleepless nights they've had, just wishing they could go back. No, they didn't lose their salvation but they lost their testimony.

And that also becomes a limit: if we damage our testimony, we can't really obtain the full potential of our calling.

As an easy example – although this doesn't apply to everybody – let's say: God calls a man to the ministry. He may have a true calling of God but if he's not careful, he can ruin his testimony, and then he won't have a ministry, at least to the Bride Church.

We were talking a few months ago about Ewald Frank. Somebody might say: Brother, I don't think you should mention somebody's name like that. Well, first of all, *he's dead*, so he doesn't hear me this morning.

We read where Paul mentioned *Alexander the coppersmith*. [2Timothy 4:14] I'm *not* saying that this man [Ewald Frank] was of that caliber but he was a minister and his testimony was *ruined because of sin*: he was unfaithful to his wife.

Even then, if he had recognized his wrongdoing and if he had taken a seat, he could at least have continued on as part of the church. But eventually his response was: he divorced his wife and he remarried.

The last time I checked, I don't even think the person he remarried was the sister from his congregation. Originally I thought it was, but I don't really know. I do know that he remarried and then he continued to preach, he continued ministering.

I have to say: there are people who will follow that, but *it's not the Bride of Christ*.

Paul said that *we're going to be a glorious church*. [Ephesians 5:27] We're not going to be a church that sweeps sin under the rug and just acts like nothing happened.

In fact, *Paul rebuked the Corinthian church for doing that*. There was a man who had committed sin in the church, but the church was *too proud* to do anything about it. They just went on as though nothing happened. [1Corinthians 5:1-2]

Paul said: *no, you put that man out. He has done wrong: put him out of the church and treat him as though he's an unbeliever* [1Corinthians 5:11-13] not that he was an unbeliever.

Then, of course, what did they do? They went to the other extreme and they wouldn't even talk to him. If they saw him at Walmart – I'm just using modern-day terms – they would turn around and go down a different aisle.

After a year or so, Paul could see that the man had repented. But now they would hardly have anything to do with him. He said: *you also don't want to destroy him with sadness. He's repented, it's time to receive him back.* [2Corinthians 2:6-8]

But even though they received him back, if he had a calling before, it was now *limited*. There were things *he could no longer do* that maybe he had *done before*. But he could still be taken back in as *a brother in the faith*.

Let's go to Hebrews 12. We'll start in verse 1.

Hebrews 12:1

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.

What was he talking about? *Who* was he talking about? Well, we would have to read *Hebrews 11* – which is known as *the faith chapter* – where he speaks of the patriarchs, the prophets of the Old Testament, and the different things that they went through.

We can read about them in the Old Testament. Sometimes they made good decisions, in fact, many times they did. But sometimes they made mistakes as well.

Paul is saying: *we can learn from them.*

We don't have to do the same thing, at least in the mistakes, but hopefully we can learn from them. The things they did right, we can do as well, and where they made mistakes, now we can be more – we can say – *ready*.

He says:

Hebrews 12:1

let us lay aside every weight,

Sometimes there can be a lot of things in our life that are *really not as important as we think they are*, and they become a *weight*.

A weight for what? A weight that hinders us in our spiritual walk.

Paul says: *let us put that aside.*

Hebrews 12:1
and the sin which doth so easily beset us,

Now, as a minister, the last thing we really want to preach about – I think – is *sin*, because people might think: oh, he's saying this, he's thinking about me.

But Peter had to address it from time to time. Paul had to, we're reading about it here. Brother Branham certainly did. Brother Jackson did also. And from time to time, every minister has to.

I don't like speaking about it this morning but from time to time, we have to be reminded that we would be *sober*, that we would be *vigilant*. [1Peter 5:8]

If we think: we're Christians, sin is outside the church. Well, I hope and pray *it is outside the church*. We know: it *will be* outside the church in the end. But believe me: there is a devil. And oh, he would love for *sin* to be *in the church*. That's the truth.

Again, he would like it to *stain our testimony*. It's *not* going to ruin your salvation, it's *not* going to ruin my salvation. John said: *if we sin* – first he said: *don't sin – but if we sin, we do have an advocate*. [1John 2:1]

I will say this: the *advocate* – who is *Jesus Christ* – does *not* come in and say: let's just forget about this. Will God forgive us if we sin? Well, as long as it's not the sin of unbelief, *yes He will forgive*.

But as we said on Wednesday: there is a *chastisement*. And believe me: we *don't* want the chastisement. And not only is there a *chastisement for sin*, but depending on the level, it can change the rest of our life.

Somebody may say: oh Brother, but I thought the Lord forgives? *He does*. But it can still change the rest of your life whether it's with respect to a calling that we have been given, or even something in our natural life.

There have been marriages break up. That's *lifelong*. Does God forgive? *He does*. Will the husband or wife forgive? *That*, we don't know. I will say this: there comes a time when – I mean, of course we are to forgive – but there is also a time when a spouse doesn't have to continue to allow that.

Paul says here:

Hebrews 12:1

and the sin which doth so easily beset us,

Now, he's *not* saying: oh, it's so easy for us to sin. But he's saying: *if we sin, we are then at the mercy of what we have done*. And if we've done something, then all of a sudden we are vulnerable.

So he says here: *let's set that aside, as a people*.

Hebrews 12:1

and let us run with patience

We don't always see or obtain everything we think we should. We see people today, when you tell them: *the Two Days are coming to a close*, they get angry. They say: you shouldn't be talking about dates. Brother Jackson said 2004 and it didn't happen.

You know what that is? That's *lack of patience*, instead of saying: Lord, explain this to me.

God told Moses: *take the children of Israel by this route*. And Moses was thinking: *why that route? There's a sea in the way!* But God said: *take them that way*.

When they got there, there was the sea! I guess the natural mind would've thought: well, we're going to have to build some boats. We're going to have to cross on boats. We're *definitely not* going to swim across.

And while they were there, they began to see: *there was the Egyptian army coming!* [Exodus 14:10] So they had *the sea* on one side and *the Egyptian army* on the other.

Then they began to hear those preachers: *Moses, we told you not to bring us here. You brought us out here to die. If this had been of God, we wouldn't be stuck here with this army coming after us!* [Exodus 14:12]

Moses himself didn't know the answer. But *he knew* what God had told him to do. And *he believed the Word of God*.

He had brought them there and now the only thing he could do was to say: *Lord, what's Your answer to this?* The Lord said: *extend your staff*. [Exodus 14:16] And we all know the story: how the Lord moved.

Eventually, those who had *spoken against it* had their *opportunity to repent*.

I have to say: *today, there is still an opportunity for men to repent*.

In Moses's day, they had their opportunity but there came a point that *their life was taken*. [Numbers 16:33] God wasn't going to allow that to continue.

Now, please *don't* be saying: oh, Brother Jason says that God is going to kill ministers. I have to say: they are *killing themselves spiritually if they speak against the Word of God*. I'm *not* talking about *physical death* here. We are living in a serious time.

Let's read verse 2.

Hebrews 12:2

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,

We would have to say: how could somebody endure the cross? But *Jesus endured the cross*. Praise the Lord. *He looked forward at the promise of God*.

That's what we need to be doing this morning. When the enemy comes against us and tries to pull us into the sinful things of the world, we need to get our eyes off of that and get them on the Lord Jesus Christ and the promise of God, on what He's doing in our life, living for Him. Praise the Lord.

Jesus had the victory over that current state of the world and how it came against him. Now we are in a state – I have to say – the world is *so full of sin*.

We hear young people today, maybe 25 years old – I'm talking of those *in the world* – they say: this is *my girlfriend*, or this is *my boyfriend*.

You know, the term *boyfriend* and *girlfriend* used to mean that two people *had come to an agreement*: they liked each other, they both agreed that they liked each other, and they were going to be talking, visiting, and eventually they would be considering marriage.

Today they say: this is *my girlfriend*, but *it doesn't mean* what I just said. They are basically telling you openly that they are living in fornication. They don't even really try to hide it. They live together. And that's just one level of the sin that's in the world.

Now, if they don't claim to serve the Lord, they can do whatever they want. It's still sin, but that's the life they've chosen to live.

Again – this is for *everybody* this morning, especially the young people – let's *not* think that the devil isn't going to come and try to get us tripped up in an error, in a sin.

Somebody might say: Brother, why do you say this is more for the young people? Well first of all, I just have to say: it's common sense.

But if we want some scripture, let's go to Second Timothy chapter 2 and verse 22.

This is Paul speaking to Timothy. Timothy was a young minister. When I say *a young minister*, I don't mean that he was a 19-year-old. He was maybe 30 ~ 35.

Paul says:

2 Timothy 2:22

Flee also youthful lusts:

Now, I don't think we need an explanation. It's pretty clear here what Paul is talking about. He was telling Timothy – who was *a young minister* – he says: *flee that*. Amen.

We can read about *Joseph*. He was given a position to watch over a certain man's land. The man left on a – I'll say – *he went on a business trip*. And we read about his wife. *His wife wanted Joseph to lie with her*. Eventually, *she grabbed him*, and it says that *he ran*. [Genesis 39:1-12]

Now don't think Joseph ran off because she was so ugly that he couldn't even imagine that he would do such a thing. Joseph was a young man, and I have no doubt that she was a beautiful woman. I have no doubt that was a temptation, a very strong temptation for Joseph. But when it got to the point that she grabbed him, what did he do? *He ran*. Amen. That should be *an example*.

I will say this morning to the young people, and to others also, to those who are married: I'm – I have to think of the right number – I'm 54 now. I do everything I can *not to be found in a private place* such as a house, a car, or a room *alone with a woman*, except my wife.

No Christian brother or Christian sister should find themselves in a situation like that except it be some kind of an emergency.

Obviously, if I'm driving down the road and there's a woman who's been run over by a car, and thankfully she's still alive and needs to get to the hospital quickly, would I put her in my car and take her? *Of course*.

I've given my own testimony how I was about to get beat up by five or six young people. I thought I was going to be killed. Then a student of mine – a female student – her car just appeared next to me as she was coming down the road. She said: would you like a ride back to your place? I got in as quickly as I could. I was fearful for my life.

But there was one day – this is another story – I was teaching at a school and they were going to let school out early because all the teachers had to go to another school for some training. And there was a certain teacher who didn't have a car. At lunchtime, we were all talking and she asked me: when we go over to the other school, would you give me a ride? Without even thinking, I said: *yes*.

As soon as I said *yes*, instantly I could see: here I would be driving with a lady in my car *who's not my wife*. You let the wrong person see that – because another thing Paul said is: *avoid every appearance of evil*. [1Thessalonians 5:22] Right? He said that.

I just began praying: Lord, I don't know what to do. But there was no way I could change it and tell her: well, I don't think it will look good if you ride with me. That would just make it worse. So I was just praying: *Lord, help me. Help me*.

As the end of the day came, the female teacher and I were walking out, and there was also another teacher who was going to take his car, all three of us were walking together. When we got to the parking lot, he went to get in his car, and as she and I were going to get in my car, he said: *oh no, I have a flat tire!* Well, guess what? Since he had a flat tire, I had to take both of them.

So if that wasn't important to the Lord, why did He give him a flat tire?

There was another time – this is worse [laugh] – a week in advance, the school had announced that the school kids would be going on a field trip to a water park. I don't know why, but it didn't enter my mind what that meant.

I knew for a week that we would be going to the water park, and I was supposed to go along with all the other teachers, but innocent-me, I had no clue what that meant. I mean: I knew there was going to be water and water slides, but I just didn't think of it any more than that.

As soon as we got off the bus, I looked around: oh my goodness! I was pastoring a church in New Mexico and here I was, surrounded by people who were basically naked. I said: *Lord, help me. Get me out of this. I don't know what to do*.

I had come on the bus. I didn't have my own car so I couldn't just leave. But the Lord knew my heart was in the right place: *I didn't want to be there*.

Probably within half-an-hour, one of the supervisors of the trip said: hey, the principal is calling you, here's the phone.

On the phone, the principal said to me: are you over there? I said: yes. He said: why are you over there? Well, *he knew* I was there because he was the one who had sent me. I said: well, that's what they told me to do. He said: oh my goodness!

Basically, the superintendent of the district was coming to the school to observe math classes and the principal wanted to show them what good math teachers we had. I don't know why he didn't pick any of the other teachers but he said: *you need to get back here fast*. I said: well, I came on the bus. He said: let me talk to the supervisor again.

They had a little van, I don't know why they had brought it there but they ended up giving me the keys and they said: get back there as fast as you can.

I said: *thank you, Lord*.

But we have to want to be out of a situation for the Lord to move. We have to do our part.

That's why I say: it doesn't matter if it's a sister in the church. It's *not* that I think evil of the sister. It's just *common sense of what's right*.

If Billy Graham – who we know was *not* a minister to the Bride – if he could say: I never receive a woman in my office except the door is open, I say: I go further than that, I have my wife present.

He also said: I never go on a trip alone to minister. I think he may even have heard that from Brother Branham. Either way, he would take his wife.

But now there are Message ministers who are going halfway around the world and they leave their wife at home. Then one day, everybody ends up surprised: what happened? The brother has an infidelity, there's an affair, or he's divorcing.

I can't tell you how many Message ministers have left their wife and taken a young sister from the congregation. And there have been things worse than that, I'm not even going to mention right now.

My point is: the devil is looking at us. Let's *not think* that we're exempt: well, we're Christians, we believe the truth. I have to say: with even more reason, he will come after us. And he's going to look. He's going to look if he can use somebody's mind.

Somebody may say – again, getting back to married people – *well, I'm just talking with this person*. Does your husband know you're talking? Does your wife know you're talking? *Oh, I'm just talking*. I have to say: there's nothing wrong with talking if it's done in the right place, in the right environment, and with the right people around.

But when it becomes: well, they seem to understand me a little better than my wife, I have to say: *now you're talking to the devil.*

Somebody may say: oh brother, you're calling somebody *the devil!* No, I'm *not* saying that.

Jesus told Peter: *get behind me, Satan.* [Matthew 16:23] Was Jesus calling Peter *the devil?* He *wasn't.* But *he knew that the devil was using Peter.*

But see? That's how it starts: *we're just talking.* And then: well, they understand me a little better than my spouse. I have to say: it's time to *wake up, get on our knees, and ask God to forgive us before it goes even further.*

I had a lot to read but let's just go quickly to the book of James because he kind of gives the overview.

James chapter 1 and verse 12:

James 1:12
Blessed is the man that endureth temptation:

What does he mean by *endureth?* He means: *he has the victory over it.*

Not blessed is the man that is tempted, but *if you have the victory.* The Lord can give you the victory if you ask Him, if you want it.

James 1:12
when he is tried,

In Spanish it says: *when he has resisted the trial.*

James 1:12
he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

James 1:13
Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

James 1:14
But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Now again, that's the time to *seek the Lord, ask Him for His help, turn away from the enemy, and you can have the victory.*

But if it continues, what does it say?

James 1:15

Then when lust hath conceived,

Let's *not* let the temptation conceive. But let's be *sober*. Let's be *vigilant*. [1Peter 5:8]

He says:

James 1:15

it bringeth forth sin:

And I don't want to read the rest because we've already lost the battle when we get to *sin*.

Now somebody may say: Brother, what do you have against the young people? Well first of all, this is for *everybody*. And yes, I am putting a special emphasis on the young people but it's *not* that I have something against them.

I have to say: there's a special love I have for them because I don't want to see somebody's life messed up when I can say right now: *be sober, be vigilant*.

Don't think that *fornication* is something that only happens in the world. Paul said: *avoid that*. [1Corinthians 6:18]

I didn't get to read it today but in another place he said: *don't let it be named among you even once*. [Ephesians 5:3]

So I pray that this is a help. I know it's serious.

Again, Paul said that *the sisters should teach the young women to be sober*. [Titus 2:4]
He said: *the young men also, be sober*. [Titus 2:6]

We're living in a world today when everything is laughter, fun, entertainment, and let's socialize. All that has its place but the Lord Jesus Christ has to be in *first place*.

We live in a world that wants to make *fun* 100% of our day.

Just imagine – I will close with this, I promise – just imagine if we were to eat dessert all the time: ice cream, cake, pudding, every kind of dessert. If that was all we were to eat, number one: it would kill us. And really, we wouldn't even enjoy it that well.

When we give things *their due place*, we actually *enjoy them more*.

Sometimes when we do things *less*, we actually enjoy them *much more*. So let's give Him *His place*. And then, will there be a time for *fun*, and *this*, and *that*? There will be, but it has to be *in His plan*.

Today it seems like all the world wants is *to have fun*. And they think nothing bad is going to happen. But then, we'll see them crying and there'll be nothing we can do. Afterward, there'll be nothing we can do.

So I preach the Word this morning and I pray it's helpful to us.

Let's go ahead and pray.