

## Watch Therefore and Pray

2-13-11

When asking the Lord about the new season here at *Reach Out For Christ Church*, I heard this:

1. **We are to make a mark and establish a boundary on the east side of Ithaca.** From this place that remembers the things of God, God shall send forth His Spirit, even to the ends of the earth.
2. **We shall be a Watchtower, keeping watch in the hills of central NY.** We are to sound the alarm, for the enemy is at the gate but he has no authority. Only have faith in God's redemption. When we have faith, we will not only watch but be watched by others as towers of strength!

God takes boundaries seriously. The Law of Moses says: "Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark" (*Deuteronomy 27:17*). The ancient Israelites piled up stones as altars, monuments and towers wherever they encountered God, and returned to those places again and again. The stones marked the boundaries of God's Kingdom on earth, where God revealed his nature and purposes. We are to be a place of worship and Godly instruction that people return to again and again.

Establishing boundaries belongs to the very essence of God. When the earth was "without form and void" God spoke to create order. His Word separated and established *boundaries*... between light and dark, firmament and water, earth and sky, in order to bring forth life from chaos. The Hebrew word translated "without form" (*Genesis 1:2*) also means "desolation" and "waste." God established boundaries to create life out of desolation and waste, and He said His Creation was *all Good!*

Because God gave humanity free will, sin entered in to corrupt the world. But the whole Bible speaks of God's eternal plan to redeem the effects of sin, and sin itself, until His good world is restored. *Romans 8:22* says that all of creation has been groaning until now as in the pains of childbirth to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Jesus changed our understanding of the boundaries of God's Kingdom. He said: "The kingdom of God does not come with observation.... For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (*Luke 17:20-22*). In the Sermon on the Mount, He taught us that ***the only reliable markers of the boundaries of God's Kingdom are those that exist within our own hearts.*** For our church to become a true boundary marker of God's Kingdom in our region, people are going to have to see God's Kingdom shining forth from inside each of us. We are going to have to live the Gospel, not just talk it!

What about the call to be a Watchtower? Watchtowers are for sentries to keep watch against danger. Certainly there is plenty to be watchful about these days. Jesus warned (*Matthew 24:4-9*): "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars... for nation will rise against nation... and there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places." Hidden in the recent trouble in Egypt was the underlying fact that a drought in Russia drove the price of wheat up to intolerable levels for the poor Egyptians, along with many in other Arab nations that have been wracked by poverty for years!

Jesus also said: "take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." *Luke 21:34-36* When we learn to watch not only outside events, but our own inner spirits, we will become not only a tower that watches, but a tower that is watched by others, a witness to the goodness, grace and redemptive power of God in our region.