

ON THE ALERT

WILLIS 1/10/10

Mk13:32-37

We are continuing today in our focus, **how to bust out of the status quo and break the cycle of complacency**. Last week in our message entitled “Tipping Point,” we spoke from Jer.48 where the Lord speaks to those who live complacent and at ease saying, “He will send those who “tip vessels” and tip them over.”

- Complacency we said is the first stage of apostasy. **Where apostasy is the abandoning of your post, complacency is inactivity in your post...Asleep at your post.**
- So to combat the status quo and break us out of the cycle of complacency, Jesus left us with the command to live “On the alert, dressed and ready.”

Mk13:32-37

At least 25 times the Scriptures give us similar commands of alertness:

- **“Be on the Alert” (Mt24:42,43; Mt25:13; Mk 13:33,34,35,37 Col4:2)**
- **“Keep Watch” (Mt26:38,40,41; Mk14:34,37,38; Lk12:36; 2Tim4:5; 1Pt4:7)**
- **“Take Heed” (Mk13:33)**
- **“Watch and Pray” (Mk14:38)**
- **“Be Dressed and Ready” (Lk12:35, 40)**
- **“Be on Guard” (Mk13:9; Lk21:34)**
- **Watch and Be Sober” (2Tim4:5; 1Pt4:7)**

I knew “On Alert” was the disposition Jesus left the Church in, but I had no idea that He and the other Apostles spoke to it as often as they did. **There are few subjects in Scripture that get at least 25 different mentions and if they do, we best take heed.**

- After the first verse we should take notice. After the second mention we should take heed. After the third we should take action. **We are to take action against “The Subtlety of Erosion.”**
- Most people don’t become complacent overnight; they erode over a long period of time. Their lack of alertness, turning a blind eye to watchfulness, hearing but not doing...opens them up to the erosion of devotion and the breaking down of conviction.
- Elevating relationships above truth opens one up to the erosion. Wanting the approval of man more than the favor of God opens one up to the erosion. Refusing to draw Biblical

lines opens one up to the erosion. Holding on to offense opens one up to the erosion. Living by emotion rather than principle open one up to the erosion.

- **The erosion of devotion is stopped only as we get dressed in readiness, take heed, watch and pray, be on guard...all these commands that leave us “On Alert.”**
- The erosion stops when we surround ourselves with burning ones. Lone logs in the fire never burn. Logs that burn are those next to logs that are burning.
- **Complacency will cease if you...surround yourselves with burning ones...get a burning coach...entertain yourself on wood that feeds the fire...make decisions that fan the flame.**

Last week we said, in using clothes as a metaphor, there is an act of “putting something on” that defines us as “dressed and ready.” So we began to breakdown what we have to “put on” for us to break the cycle of complacency and get dressed. We began with 2. We must put on...

1. **A Sense of Urgency:** In the void of urgency complacency prevails, so cultivating a sense of urgency is always the first step out of the status quo.
2. **An Encounter with the Fire of God:** Complacency is consumed in the fires of intimacy. Burn for God and complacency is the first enemy to fall.

So today we want to continue breaking down what we must “put on” for the cycle of complacency to be broken.

3. **The Sword of the Spirit: Ep6:10-17** Here we see again the metaphor of getting dressed. Our readiness is defined by what we put on. So Paul exhorts us to put on the full armor of God and take up the sword of the Spirit that we might stand against the schemes of the devil.
 - We will never reason ourselves out of the status quo nor can we will ourselves out. **When stuck in the cycle of complacency God gives us the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, to cut our way out.**
 - Heb4:12 tells us “the Word of God is powerful, sharper than any two edged sword...”
 - The Word of God has power to cut destructive cycles, cut away faulty mindsets, cut through ungodly agreements, power to cut through oppression, discouragement, accusation and fear.
 - **Jer20:9 “But His Word was as a burning fire shut up in my bones...”**
 - Complacency is burned up through the power of the Word. As we memorize the Word, meditate on the Word, pray read the Word, obey the Word, the cycle of complacency is broken and the status quo is burned away.

4. **Praying in the Spirit: Ep6:18** Please note the link between the Sword of the Spirit and Praying in the Spirit. **There is an exponential power released when we combine the Word with prayer or when we pray read the Word.**
- Specifically Paul says when we “pray in the Spirit with this in view, Be on the Alert.” I Cor14:15 identifies praying in the Spirit as praying in tongues. Paul ties praying in tongues to being on alert.
 - ICor14:4 “He who speaks in a tongue builds himself up.”(esv) “Those who speak in tongues set themselves on fire.” (naw)
 - **Praying in tongues is a God given means to keep us on alert and break the cycle of complacency.** Praying in the Spirit is very intentional. It takes intentionality to bust out of the status quo.
5. **Prophetic Vision: Mk13:33** “Take heed, keep on the alert.” The Greek word for “heed” means to intentionally see, purposefully look, earnestly contemplate. Once we quit looking we forget who we are, we forget why we are here.
- The status quo is the thief of spiritual identity. To break the status quo of complacency you must remember who you are, why you are here and where you are going. To get into the status quo you must forget.
 - **Complacency shrouds remembrance.** David said in Ps144:11 “Rescue me and deliver me out of the hands of aliens whose mouth speaks deceit.” These were those who forgot who they were and acted like they were from Mars.
 - When man refuses to take heed and forgets he is capable of doing the worst...but if we take heed and keep alert, we are destined to do the best.
 - **To take heed is to burn with purpose. Eternal Purpose; Created Purpose; Immediate Purpose and Future Purpose.** To take heed is to act on the purpose you know. Burning is not accidental...you burn on purpose.
6. **Change: 2Cor3:18** **Complacency is the consequential lack of change. Eliminate enough change and you die.** Death is the ultimate void of change. Eliminate enough change for enough time and you die.
- Religion can be defined as a onetime relationship that refused to change...in the void of change complacency prevails. Being that revelation is progressive, at any point we become stayed, we begin to crystallize and resort to form and religion.
 - **Crystallized people are easily offended people but those who value change stay fresh, focused and on fire.**
 - To value change is to accept that all change is costly...but no change is deadly. Becoming intolerant to change is the first step into the status quo.

- **Failure is all too often a side effect of change. So if you fail, learn to fail fast...acknowledge it, confess it and repent from it but don't dwell on it or live in it.** "A righteous man fall 7 times and gets right up again."

7. **Innovate: Lev6:12** The command to the Priests was, "The fire must never go out." **Never let the perceptions of success lull you into the reality of complacency.** Yesterday's accomplishments are like manna...they were for yesterday.

- Yesterday's accomplishments position us for today but they don't satisfy today.
- **Yesterday's fire will not produce today's heat.** So to burn away complacency we must never stop devoting, never stop learning, never stop pursuing, never stop obeying. Never stop receiving the unconditional love of God.
- To burn away complacency we must challenge our engagement of worship, deepen our involvement in prayer...prioritize our time in the Word...
- To burn away complacency we must become an expert at something...study to show ourselves approved...educate to validate...inform to reform.

"Take heed...be on alert...watch and pray." As our Homeland Security General, Jesus left us on level 5...code red...condition Severe. It wasn't a neighborhood watch, tsunami watch or a terrorist watch; it was a readiness watch...

- A readiness watch that keeps the fires burning and prevents us from falling prey to the erosion of the status quo.