

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
March 3, 2021

"I'M WARNING YOU!"

"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me." Ezekiel 33:7

A few years back, as I was serving a church in which I was previously called to be the pastor, (I won't give the name in order to protect the innocent and not incriminate the guilty) I caught some flak for something that I would never have imagined was part of my job description. You see, it was the second Sunday of March, and a few of our members showed up an hour late for worship on that day...the very day that Daylight Saving Time began. The word that I heard was, "well you didn't warn us!" Again I believe, I did then and I still do today, that this falls beyond the scope of what a pastor is to do. But despite that belief, I've made it a point to go out of my way to publicize time changes from that day forward. I don't need anything more to get yelled at for. So, with that being my history..."I'm warning you!" We have a time change coming up a week from Sunday, March the 14th. Daylight Time starts early that morning so if you don't set your clocks ahead an hour before going to bed Saturday evening you might just show up an hour late for worship on Sunday morning. This year, if that happens, it won't be on me. Maybe it's not within my call documents to warn you about time changes, but according to Scripture I do have the call to issue warnings, those having to do with sin and its consequences. People don't like to hear about sin, especially their own sin, but ignoring it won't make it go away. Our holy and righteous God is a God of justice. Justice must be served and if there is injustice, sin, it must be judged, and payment made for it or it would violate the holiness of God. In Romans 6:23a, the Apostle Paul tells us that *"the wages of sin is death"*. Sin leads to physical death as well as eternal spiritual death, which includes an eternity of hell for the sinner, and we're all sinners. While God is most certainly holy, righteous, and just, He is also perfect love, and in that love His desire is that no sinner would die eternally. In order to make that happen for us He sent His Son into the world to take on all sin, including all of ours, and die under that guilt and as punishment for it. His sacrifice on the cross is judged sufficient By God the Father and His resurrection is living proof of that fact. The sin of all mankind has been atoned for and justification, being set right with God, is offered as a free gift of God's grace in Christ Jesus. That's where the 2nd half of Romans 6:23 comes in, *"but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* The gift is received by faith, by believing in Jesus and all that He has done to save us. Those who receive this grace are the ones who acknowledge our sin and the death that it brings, and our need for Jesus as our Savior. This is where the warnings come in. God calls the Prophet Ezekiel to be "a watchman" for the people of Israel. He was to warn his brothers and sisters about living in sin and wickedness. The call is issued in chapter 3 and renewed in chapter 33. The call to the sinner is to turn from sin and live, rather than die under its condemnation. As a pastor that is a big part of my call, to preach and teach the Law of God that exposes sin and sinfulness so that those who hear will turn and receive the mercy and grace that God wants to pour out upon us in Jesus His Son, for Jesus sake. Being a watchman is also in part YOUR call as a Christian. We are to lovingly warn those around us, our family, friends, neighbors, whomever comes across our path, about ignoring God and His Word...the Law that points out our sin and need of a Savior, and the Gospel that reveals that Savior to us and actually delivers God's grace through the power of God the Holy Spirit. We are all called to be watchmen, ready to give warning, with a heart that desires what is best for our neighbor, that is to receive forgiveness and eternal life as the gift of God in Christ. We never do that from a position of pride or conceit, thinking that we are better than those who are presently outside the family of faith. We do it from a loving heart, a heart that mirrors that of God, who's desire is that no sinner dies, but that all would be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4) Jesus is the embodiment of all truth!