

Air Traffic Control

When Jesus said to his disciples “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak” it was because he found them sleeping when he had asked them to pray with him. He wanted them to watch and pray so that they could avoid temptation. This was at a time when he was going through pressure that made his temptation in the wilderness seem simple in comparison. The pressure was so great that he was sorrowful even unto death even before anyone laid a hand on him. He was sweating blood - literally - even before a thorn touched his brow or a rod his back.

I find it interesting that with all the pressure he was under he wanted the disciples to watch and pray with him so that *they* would not enter into temptation. He knew what was coming and knew that time in prayer would strengthen the spirit.

Lately there has been a lot of news coverage of air traffic controllers sleeping on the job. They are paid well to be modern-day watchmen. They work from special towers and with their equipment see into the distance and into the darkness and know what is coming long before it arrives. This is symbolic of the spiritual watchers who are called to be alert both night and day praying and listening for instructions from the Lord.

Before Jesus was crucified he had many instructions and warnings for the believers concerning the days ahead of them. He instructed them to watch and pray so that they might escape all the things that he was warning them about. A number of his warnings were concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and what signs would precede this. Historical reports from those days indicate that the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem listened and watched and all were able to withdraw before the Roman legions sealed off all escape.

I have been praying about the air traffic controllers. Not only in light of safety for the many planes and people traveling by air, but in a spiritual sense. I have been wondering if there might be a warning in this for those of us who are called to be watchmen and women in a spiritual sense. Have any grown weary in well doing? The air traffic controllers who were found to be sleeping have been terminated. Situations could have been worse however. In a theater of war sentries are posted at night to watch for danger when others are resting. If a watchman is found sleeping in a theater of war the punishment can be quite severe, because the consequences are so far reaching. In biblical times the punishment for sleeping on watch could be death.

Spiritually speaking those who are called to watch and pray can expect the singular blessing of hearing the voice of the Lord. There are numerous prophets in scripture who were spoken to by the Lord while they fulfilled their time as a watchman on the wall for their city. Both Habakkuk and Ezekiel have great examples of wonderful revelation that came to them while they were on watch. Habakkuk even seemed to expect the Lord to speak to him while he was on his post.

Hab 2:1 “I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me...”

A number of years ago I was awakened by the Holy Spirit with an unction to pray. My normal inclination when such an instruction would come would be to sit up in bed and begin to pray quietly for whatever came into my spirit. But not this time - I was very tired and didn't feel like praying! I said “Lord I'm tired and I don't want to pray, I want to sleep.” Again I heard “I want you to pray.” and again I protested. Then I heard “Alright then if you don't want to pray, than

turn on the light and read". I groaned within myself a bit because I knew I could pray in the dark, and now I had to turn on the light. But with concern that things might get worse for me if I didn't obey at this point I turned on the light and without looking reached for a book on my night stand. There are always books and magazines on my night stand and the one I happened to grab was one I had been reading previously. I opened the book to the place where the book mark had been placed weeks before and read the words "Those who sleep not bless Thee: they stand before Thy glory and bless and praise and extol ... And here my eyes saw all those who sleep not: they stand before Him and bless and say: Blessed be Thou, and blessed be the name of the Lord forever and ever. And my face was changed." I have to admit that at that point I closed the book and I prayed.

We are in unique times, potentially perilous, often opportune. We must be listening to the Lord and following His lead if we are going to escape peril and enter opportunity as it is presented. Those who will watch and listen can enter promises of great blessing for themselves and for others. In our day the word of the Lord is precious in and of its self, and is a great value to be treasured. Often what happens in the natural precedes what happens in the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46). We can learn something from the air traffic watchers - that those of us who are called to watch and pray are found at our post awake and alert when the Lord finds us.

Ezek 33:7 "So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me."