

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. [www.dtminc.org](http://www.dtminc.org) Today's Date: October 1, 2023

## Pray and Watch For God Himself

by Dan Trygg

“Pay attention to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for I pray to You. <sup>3</sup> At daybreak, Yahweh, You hear my voice; at daybreak I plead my case to You and watch expectantly.”

Psalms 5:2-3

“...a person's enemies are the people in his own home. <sup>7</sup> But as for me, I will watch expectantly for Yahweh; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.”

Micah 7:6-7

“I will keep watch for You, my strength, because God is my stronghold. <sup>10</sup> My faithful God will come to meet me; God will let me look down on my adversaries.”

Psalms 59:9-10

“I will stand on my lookout, and station myself on the rampart; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and how I will answer upon my inner conviction.”

Habakkuk 2:1

The past two messages were about the two words, “watch” and “pray”. First, we looked at Jesus’ counsel to “watch”, or “be alert, circumspect, aware of what is happening around us”, and to “pray” in order that we might not enter into temptation. We talked about how it was important to be watchful against the attacks or tricks of the enemy, and to stay on task regarding our responsibilities before God. It is easy to become lax, and unwittingly let our guard down, or become distracted from our primary responsibilities as followers of Christ. Alertness to what is important, and to what is happening in our surroundings, and asking for God’s help to keep us from error or poor judgment is a key lesson that Jesus taught about over and over again. **In a second teaching, we turned these words around, and saw that the scriptures teach us to “pray” and then to “watch” for what God is doing in response to our prayers.** We are to be quick to thank God for His interventions and provisions, and be alert and ready to act on His direction, so that we can partner with Him in what He is initiating. Often, we pray, but we really are not watching for anything. It is like we are not *expecting* God to act, so when He does, we often are oblivious to what He is doing, and miss our opportunity to work-together-with Him. To pray, and then watch, demonstrates our faith that God *will* act, and our eager desire to join Him as His servants. Then, when we do see Him act, we are to act in accordance with what He is doing (Jn. 5:19). When we do that, we become fellow-workers with Him, and His Spirit can use us to do His will.

**As I was praying about the message for today, my mind kept coming back to these same words, “pray” and “watch”, so I dug into the scriptures a little bit farther.** There were some similar teachings, ...for example, in Proverbs 4:23, we are told to “**watch over our hearts** with all diligence, for from the heart flows the springs of life.” Just a few verses later, we are exhorted to “**Watch the path of your feet**, and all your ways will be established” (4:29). Several times, we are told to “**Watch yourselves**”, lest we forget God, or break His covenant, make covenants with unbelievers, or be drawn away after other gods (Ex. 34:12; Deut. 4:16,23; 6:12). In Mark 8:15, Jesus told the disciples to “**Watch, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.**” **The religious teachings and legalism of the Pharisees was like a spreading infection.** The disciples were to stay away from them. **The “leaven of Herod” was about the gangrenous poison of political alliances.** The attraction of what may appear to be common values or interests, or self-promotion will infect the people of God with a mindset and methodology that will promote a natural goal, instead of the kingdom of God. **In a similar way, we are to avoid materialism.** We are meant to bring light into this dark world. **Our eyes are like lamps for our beings. What we set them on will determine our values. We are to “watch that the light in you may not be darkness”** (Lk. 11:35). Instead, if we focus our eyes on the light, we will come to be like a candle in the dark. Finally, in 2 John 1:8, we are to “**watch yourselves in order that we might not lose what we worked for (accomplished), but instead may receive a full reward.**” It is possible, after living a productive life for the kingdom, to be lured into complacency and foolishness that would damage the impact of our service.

These teachings sound much like Jesus’ warning to “watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation” (Matt. 26:41). It is interesting that virtually all of these examples speak of watchfulness, but there is little mention of prayer in these contexts.

**There are several other examples of when people *prayed* and then *watched* to see what God was doing.** We have the example of **Abraham’s prayer for Sodom and Gomorrah**, and how he got up in the morning and returned to the place of his intercession, and from there he could see the smoke of the cities rising up like the smoke of a furnace, from the destruction of those two cities. That did not *look like* a positive outcome, but, unbeknownst to Abraham, God had, indeed, perceived the *unspoken* concern of his heart, and had rescued his nephew Lot out from the midst of the overthrow (Gen. 18,19). God was faithful, and heard Abraham’s concern, though it did not look like it. We see **Elijah praying for rain, on the top of Mount Carmel** (1 Kg. 18:42-45). As he interceded intensely, with his head between his knees, he sent his servant on seven occasions to look to see if anything was happening. The first six times, there

was nothing, but on the seventh time, the servant reported, “Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea.” When it could be seen that *something* was happening, Elijah knew that he had *prayed through*. God was answering his prayer. He sent word to king Ahab, warning him that he had better get going or the heavy rain would stop him. Elijah was so exuberant with joy, that he outran Ahab's chariot, running through the rain 15 miles. **Interestingly, both of these examples were about importunity or persistence in prayer.** “The inworking entreaty of a righteous person has much power,” observed James, the brother of Jesus (Jas. 5:16). **Such a person prays with determination and watches for the results.**

**In my survey of other examples of where the Bible describes people *praying* and *watching*, I discovered that people were searching for very different things.** In the example of Psalm 5, David rises early in the morning, and prays with intense groaning and cries to God. Here, his concern is about arrogant and boastful people, schemers and liars who would deceitfully lie in wait to plot against him. He is very aware of the tenuousness of his situation. **While David prays for protection, his main focus is for God's favor.** He asks Yahweh to lead him in righteousness, and to make His ways clear and straight for him. He asks for access to God's presence, and for the joy of his relationship with God to be his shelter and confidence. His hope is based upon the belief that *Yahweh will bless the righteous person, and will surround him with favor as with a shield*. Therefore, **he arises early in the morning, bows in reverence to God, arranges his prayer to Him and watches with eagerness for the joy of His graciousness to embrace him.**

**The prophet Micah lived in difficult times.** He also had many enemies, ...even people from his own family were opposed to him, because he spoke and stood for Yahweh. **In such a time of darkness, he cried out to God, and watched expectantly for HIM.** He *prayed* and he *watched*. **He looked to God, ...and had to wait for Him, but he chose to put his trust in Him and watch for His deliverance.** He was confident that God would hear him. He told those who opposed him not to rejoice over the difficulties he may face. He said, “Though I fall I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, Yahweh is a light for me” (Micah 7:8). **“He will bring me out to the light, and I will see His righteousness.** Then *my enemy will see*, and shame will cover the one who said to me, “Where is Yahweh your God?”” (Micah 7:9-10).

**In Psalm 59, David was being opposed by powerful people.** His father-in-law, king Saul, actually sent men to kill him, but he escaped. **He cried out to God to rise up to help him.** These were treacherous people, full of lies and malice. But nothing is too difficult for Yahweh. David even writes, “But you, Yahweh, laugh at them; You even scoff at all the nations!” (vs. 8). **Then he adds, “I will watch for YOU, my strength, because God is my stronghold.”** Because of His faithful-love, David expected Him to come to meet him, and vindicate him. He expected God to enable him to look triumphantly upon his enemies, ...and, in the end, that is what happened. **It is important for us to see that this did not all happen immediately.** David *did* escape that night, but *it was a matter of years* before the full deliverance and vindication took place for him. **David was known as a man after God's heart.** Part of that was because **he continued to pray to God for His help, and he watched eagerly for his deliverance, again and again.**

**Habakkuk 2:1 was the most intriguing example in this study, for me.** The kingdom of Judah had become very corrupt. It was filled with injustice, oppression and false religion. Strife and conflict were escalating in the land. There was both violence and lawlessness. As Habakkuk had prayed about these things, Yahweh had revealed that He was going to send the Babylonians to discipline the Judeans. The thought was shocking to Habakkuk! The Chaldeans were much worse than the Judeans! Moreover, they had no respect for Yahweh at all! The entire book is a dialogue between the prophet and Yahweh, as he asks God how He could use a more evil nation to judge His people. **This was very challenging to Habakkuk's faith and world view.** The Babylonians were fierce, ruthless and terrifying. They would decimate the land, and take the people captive as slaves. The very thought of it was almost too much! **But the prophet was a deep man of faith. He had to press in. He had to find out more.** He had to try to understand the reasoning and justice of God. **So, the praying and watching of Habakkuk was to seek the counsel of Yahweh.** Note that he very purposefully secured a time and a place where he could seek God and tarry before Him. He stood at a place on the wall, where no one else was, and he “kept watch to see what He would say to me”. He brought his inner conviction to God and laid his heart out before Him. He was praying and watching for insight, understanding, for a communication from the Lord. **He was praying and watching with a confused, but believing heart. He was expecting that God would help him to understand. And, in fact, He did.** As Yahweh laid out the corruption of the land, and the fact that His recompense would *also* fall upon the Babylonians, Habakkuk came to see that God was righteous. His ways may not be how *we* might do things, but they *are* upright and just in the end. **This revelation from God was necessary for the prophet to be prepared and at peace with what would soon take place, ...and to continue to trust in Yahweh through it all. No matter what may happen, Habakkuk came to the place where he could say, “I will glory in Yahweh, and rejoice in the God of my salvation. HE is my strength. HE will make my feet as sure-footed as hind's feet, and enable me to walk on the high places.”** Whether they be *precipitous places*, or *places of glory*, I will be secure. WE may need to pray and watch for God's counsel to guide *us* through turbulent times in our own lives. **Pray and watch for God Himself.**