

Blood on Hands

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[0:00] Ezekiel 3.17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel.

! Therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Yet if thou warn the wicked, and in turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your word, for our gathering together, that you would be glorified in this message we ask, Lord, that you would minister by your Spirit, that you would have your way in every life.

For your glory we ask it, Jesus. Amen. Blood on hands. Blood on hands.

[1:23] A gruesome graphic picture, isn't it? It's a telling picture. It's a shocking sight. Blood on hands. Ancient cities had a watchman on the walls of their city.

The watchman looked and scoured the horizon for danger coming. To warn of approaching danger. And the Lord had appointed Ezekiel to be a spiritual watchman.

Someone watching for danger. Someone watching. Someone appointed to warn of danger. Ezekiel was this watchman on the wall.

He was to watch for that which would come and destroy the city. To give warning to the citizens of the city. If he saw the danger coming, he had to lift up his voice and warn of that danger.

To warn the residents, the citizens, that their life was in danger. That death was coming. That danger was coming.

[2:30] And those people, when warned, could flee for safety. They could take refuge. Or they could do nothing.

And suffer for it. They could risk it all by doing nothing. Or they could run for safety. For refuge. But if the watchman did not warn the city.

If the watchman was neglectful. If the watchman failed to warn the city of the impending danger.

Their destruction would be upon his own head. Blood would be upon his hands.

Blood would be upon his hands. It prompts us to think, brothers and sisters, this passage. We could consider it in the context of how we are to be watchmen.

I believe we could scripturally think of it for ourselves. In the sense of being watchmen. Of being watching people.

[3:38] On the walls of our city. And firstly, I put it to you today. That it speaks to us of responsibility. Responsibility.

You have a responsibility. Every one of you has a responsibility. To preach the gospel. Every one of you. Every one of us.

He says, go ye into all the world. And preach the gospel. It's not for a select few. It's not for an ordained. Or a select number.

Or someone who's given some kind of ceremony over them. To be a preacher of the gospel. But every one of us. He says, go ye. And preach the gospel.

Every one of you. As saved people. Has a responsibility to preach the gospel. To every sinner. And God has set us as watchmen. He's given us that clear vision.

[4:35] Of the danger. Of the disaster that's about to strike. The wrath of God. It's about to fall. The judgment of God. On planet earth. It's impending. Impending. It's imminent.

It's around the corner. The judgment of God. Against our nation. Against planet earth. Against sinful man. The wrath of God.

God's wrath is about to strike. And we must. We must lift up our voices. God's wrath is being stored against the wicked. And it's about ready to be poured out.

The day of the Lord is near. It's nearing. Day by day. It's nearer. And the Lord Jesus. He is coming back. He's coming back. Are we ready?

Are those we care about ready? We are responsible to give them warning. We are responsible for that. If we know that judgment is coming. And we say nothing.

[5:33] We are responsible for our neglect. If we know that judgment is coming. We must warn them. If we do not warn them. Then their blood will be required at our hands.

That's a graphic sight, isn't it? A graphic thought. We are responsible to tell people the truth. And if we fail to discharge our God-given call. That God-given responsibility to speak out.

To speak up. The blood of eternal souls is on our hands. That's a pretty stern thought, isn't it? And yet we have a commission.

We have a commission. Are we neglectful of that commission? From the very highest authority. Much higher than Julia Gillard. Much higher than Barack Obama. Now this is from the highest authority.

In the universe. Who says to us, Go ye. Go ye. All of you. Go. A commission from the very highest authority. A vital message.

[6:36] The living word of God to proclaim. The living God is appealing to man. That word of reconciliation. A vital message. And a stern warning to declare.

Because the sun toying on the brink of eternity. The sun toying on the edge of the chasm. On the edge of that precipice. About to descend into eternal flame.

And we are the ones who are his voice. He's got no other voice. He's got no other voice but yours and mine. And we must take action.

Think of it. If it were a burning building. And you had someone you cared about in that burning building asleep. What would you do? You'd yell and scream and shout.

And try to climb in or break down doors or raise the alarm. You'd want to lift up your voice like a trumpet. You'd want to call out and plead and plead.

[7:34] That they would be saved. That they would be saved. That they would be rescued. But we have a duty too. Because there is a burning hell to flee from. There's God's burning anger to flee from.

And there is real danger. This is not just picturesque language. This is not just some kind of mythical, mystical, imaginary thing. There is a real eternal fiery burning hell for those who trust him not.

There is a burning hell for those who reject his love, his message, his cross, his blood. Who do nothing about their soul. There is a plague. There is a pestilence.

There is a judgment. There is a peril to come. And you have the cure. You have the antidote. You have the reason that they can find eternal rescue.

You have on your lips that message that can save their soul if they will but listen. And friends, we are commanded to tell. We are commanded to tell.

[8:33] To lift up our voice. To be heard. To speak up. To appeal. We are called to win the lost at any cost. To be seen to exhort.

To constrain. To compel. And Paul followed those instructions. You know, we could say, well, that's Old Testament. You know, we could kind of discount that or brush it aside.

But you could see in Paul's actions that he was a watchman. As we read in Acts 20, for example. He tells the folk there. Acts 20. I think it's in Ephesus.

And from verse 26, he says, Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. Now picture it blood again. Why?

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Paul wasn't ashamed. Paul wasn't afraid to speak all the counsel of God. He says, Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.

[9:35] To feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Wolves slaving and slobbering about to devour. Is the picture there. To devour these sheep, these lambs. And he says also of your own self shall have been awry, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn. To warn everyone night and day with tears.

He was a watchman. And he was not ashamed. He was not afraid to speak out. To warn everyone night and day with tears.

It's not just once a Sunday. It was every day and night with tears. He took his call seriously. He shunned not to declare all the counsel of God.

[10:38] And he was pure from the blood of all men. That picture of blood. In Paul's case he said he was pure from it. Because he was not ashamed to declare the counsel.

All the counsel of God. I know for myself sometimes. I'm sometimes guarded in what I say. We've got people with all kinds of doctrines here in this church. And we've got people with all kinds of viewpoints and thoughts about things.

That I must declare unto you all the counsel of God. As soundly and as strongly as I can. That error will be corrected. That truth will be advanced.

That Christ will be proclaimed. It's vital. It's essential. If I do less than that. I fail him. And I have blood on my hands. If I warn you not. You know the son. Dear ones.

That come and watch TV preachers. That I would not have a bar of. Not have a bar of. And I would exhort you against those ones. I would exhort you to the Bible.

[11:40] To faith in Christ. I would exhort you to obedience. To holiness. To truth. I would exhort against those that nest with the world. And think they can have a foot in both camps.

If I fail to do that. I have your blood on my hands. God forbid. I'd rather offend you. Than offend him. I must. And it's not. That I want to hurt you.

Or offend you. But there's times that I do. And it's not. Because I don't love you. It's because I love you. That I cease not to warn. Everyone night and day with tears. And I need to do that more strongly.

And more soundly. And more sternly. That the word would be declared. I must. We must. Exhort me too. I'm not without fault.

And can we grasp the reality tonight. Of never dying souls. And of our neglect. Of responsibility. That we are responsible. And we will be held responsible.

[12:37] For the souls of others. Now I'm not saying. That you're going to lose your salvation. Because I don't think. That such a thing can happen. For. Failing in that regard.

But there will be. A loss. At the judgment seat of Christ. It says there will be a loss. At the judgment seat. You'll just have wood, hay and stubble.

It'll be a pile of ashes in your hand. But you're saved by his blood. By his grace. By his mercy. Friends. But don't. Don't make the mistake. Of being neglectful. Of that responsibility.

Of that duty. Of that commission. That responsibility. It must be taken seriously. So let this responsibility move you. Let this responsibility move you. And prompt that responsiveness.

A responsiveness. A readiness. As Paul writes in Romans 1.15. He says so much as in me is. I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

[13:33] We heard from our brother Forbes of late. He said he was ready. And he's out there doing it now. I hear some reports from the mission front. Over there in Victoria. What Forbes is up to.

And it's a challenge. He's in a challenging field. As he's out there in the sticks. In the rural part of Victoria. In very staid. And stodgy.

Dusty old churches. And dusty old people. It would seem. Yet there's still the gospel. And they need it. They need it just as much as anyone else does. And he's out there ready to preach the gospel.

And thank God for it. Readiness. We need a readiness to preach the gospel. We need a readiness. As Peter writes in 1 Peter 3.15. He says. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.

And be ready. Always. To give an answer to them. That asketh a reason of the hope that is in you. With meekness and fear. Be ready. Always. To give an answer.

[14:30] For the hope that is in you. We need to be responsive. Not just responsible. But responsive. Be ready. To act on that responsibility. Friends. You could take this message and think.

Oh okay. I need to do some more witnessing. And not really take it seriously. Not take action. And we can all hear messages. And I can give messages without taking action myself. And why would it be me?

I need to be. Friends. Take action. What I say is useless to you. Unless you put it into action. Like James says. Be a doer. Not a hearer only.

Be a doer of the word. Put it into action. Judgment is menacing. And it's sure. Friends. This is not just some kind of 2012. Or whatever it is. The latest Armageddon.

Or whatever movie that's coming up. The same as the end of the world. This is God's message. There is the end of the world. There is judgment to come. And there is damnation for those who know him not.

[15:25] And judgment is sure. Friends. This is reality. If you're without Christ tonight. You're in great peril. You're in great danger. Friends. Trust him. Trust him. Don't think.

Oh. I prayed a prayer one day. And nothing really happened. On the inside of you. You weren't truly converted. Friends. Don't make that mistake. You're not saved. If you haven't trusted him.

For time and eternity. If you haven't laid your heart. On the altar. And said. Have all of me. Friends. Don't kid yourself. If you're not saved tonight. Please don't leave here.

Without trusting Christ. For time and eternity. Judgment is sure. And friends. If you're a saved man. A saved woman. Or you profess to be. Don't clam up.

Don't clam up. Open that mouth. It's the only one. That he can speak through. Don't clam up. Be obedient to him. Even the. Great apostle Paul.

[16:21] Had to say. He had to admit. The good that I would. I do not. He didn't just talk about. The bad that I do. That I shouldn't. But the good that I would.

I do not. You know. There's opportunity. To witness. I know someone was asking. Of this church. What do you do. To evangelize. And I had to. Be honest.

And really saying. In many ways. We don't do enough. We do not do enough. Although then. Julie mentioned. Well. The Sunday schools. And outreach. The youth groups.

The youth meetings. The. The. The. The various. Leaflets. That we give out. But there's more. That could be done.

There's more. That could be done. There's always more. That can be done. And. Are you ready. To preach the gospel. Are you ready. To give it. And. I guess that takes training too.

[17:15] And I know. There's someone here. I know. Brother Leon's very keen. In helping people learn. To train. To study. To be a witness. And we've had. My dad David. Gives. Similar.

Instruction. And I know. Pablo's out there. Doing it. Friends. We need to be encouraged. Every one of us. To exhort one another. I know. Our brother Reg. Goes overseas. With the gospel. You know. There's many people here today. Who love to share Christ. And maybe you're a Christian. And you think. Who am I? I'm just an average Joe. I don't really know what to say. Or do.

Ask someone who knows. Ask them to train you. To help you. To learn. How to witness. It's not really that. It's not rocket science really. Is it? It's. Simple.

A.B.C. Gospel. Truth. And every one of you. Every one of us. Young. And old. Every one of us. Can be a witness. The good that I would. I do not.

[18:11] What for you? What will it be for you? Are you one of these? That will have just ashes. Word. Hay. And stubble. Nothing much to show. For your Christian life.

Or will you dare. To speak. Dare. To have compassion. To speak. When I see the street preachers. In the city of Adelaide.

They're mocked. And scorned. And vilified. Imprisoned. They have been. Yet. What? A message. That is the message that we need to give. That is the message that our world needs to hear. A message that's forthright. And challenging. That hits between the eyes. Because people need to be woken up.

They're on the brink of a precipice. Over a burning hellfire. For eternity. And they'll be lost forever without Christ. And we must in love reach out to them. It's not that we're going there.

[19:11] Wanting to make a fool of ourselves. Or wanting to condemn a badge of people. That's because the love of Christ. It constrains us.

We must. We must tell them. Even though they spit in our face. We must tell them. That must be the readiness that we have. We must dare to tell. We must have that mandate.

And live it. The message must be delivered. And you are his messenger. You are the watchman. Will there be blood on your hands? Will there be blood on your hands? Because you've done nothing.

It's vital. It's essential. It's needful. It's vital. It's essential. It's needful. It's just not some easy breezy kind of message.

Blood on your hands. God forbid. Will you be like a pilot trying to wash it off? God forbid. The word has been given to you to declare. To give.

[20:05] You have a responsibility. You are a watchman. For your street. For your suburb. For your neighbourhood. You have a responsibility. Have you that readiness?

And friends, what is the message? The message is reconciliation. Reconciliation. The most vital message. Reconciliation. That my soul can be reconciled to God.

That my sinful, foul and ugly soul can be saved and washed and cleansed and made new again.

That Christ in mercy and grace can receive me to be his.

And others too can know that. And it's not to say one person is more sinful than another. We're just in the same boat. I'm just as sinful and vile as the foulest.

None of us is any more worthy or deserving of heaven. But we have a message. And it's the message of reconciliation. That we can be saved. And that others can. Reconciliation.

[21:08] Paul writes of it in 2 Corinthians 5 from verse 18. Of God who had reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5.18 God.

Has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. And hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

Not imputing their trespasses against them. And have committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then. We are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did besiege you by us.

We pray you in Christ's stead. Be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us. Who knew no sin. That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

He has made us to be ambassadors. He has made us to be ambassadors with the most important message for mankind. What more important message can we give?

[22:12] If you knew someone dying of cancer and you had the antidote in your hand. Wouldn't you want to give it to them? Or wouldn't we be moved for our world with compassion.

With Christ's constraining love. To be pressed by that love. To reach the lost. To be his ambassadors to them. As God uses our mouths. Your mouth.

Your mouth. Your mouth. To speak to them. To take the gospel. This ministry of reconciliation.

Reconciliation. Reconciliation. What a picture.

What a beautiful picture. And we don't need to impress the world to urge them that way. If anything we need to offend the world. And crucify the world. And damn the self esteem.

And see Christ made alive in them. The message of reconciliation. Of repentance. Of warning. Of alarm. The reality of blood guilt.

[23:12] The reality of blood guilt. It speaks against the careless living. Christians tonight. Careless living. Damaged testimonies. What kind of a testimony.

Are you to Christ. What kind of a witness. Are you to him. By how you live. By how you speak. By how you act. By how you live. When they see you. You are Christ.

To them. You are the Christian. In their. Sphere of influence. You are the Christian. That they measure Christ by. When you mess up.

When you curse. When you foul up. They think. Huh. That's a Christian. I'm better than they are. That's what the world would think. We need to measure up to his expectations. Not our own. Will we have blood on our hands. Because of the damaged testimony. Because of the lack of obedience.

[24:08] Because of our downright disobedience. Or because of fear.

Perhaps it's fear that's stopping you tonight. Perhaps you're afraid. You're afraid. What will they say? I'm going to get my feelings hurt.

They're going to attack me. They're not going to listen. They're going to laugh at me. I'm going to lose my mates. You know. I become a Christian at 15.

It didn't take long. For me to lose my best friends at school. You know. Because I told them. Of Christ. I told them of Christ. And they washed their hands of me.

And if you've got worldly friends. Tell them. Tell them. If they. If you lose them. At least you won't have their blood on your hands. Fear.

Causes Christians to clam up. Fear causes Christians to shut up their testimony. When they ought to speak up. Jeremiah 1.8 verse 9.

[25:03] It says. Be not afraid of their faces. For I am with thee to deliver thee. Saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand. And touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me.

Behold. I have put my words into thy mouth. Does the fear of man stop you? Why are you not? Why? Serving him more.

Why am I not doing more? Perhaps it's the fear of man. The love of comfort. The love of ease. The love of the comfort level.

The comfort barrier. We don't have to step outside of it. The comfort zone. Friends. I don't want to condemn anyone tonight. I just want to give you. Straight and sure. What I believe God would say to us.

Don't let the fear of man stop you. Don't let the fear of man stop you. Whatever happens to the fear of God. Shouldn't that move us more? Shouldn't that move us more?

[26:00] Will we suffer the shame of neglect? Of blood guilt? Of the loss of the reproach? At the judgment seat of Christ? You know. There's a popular quote of a letter from hell.

You know. A letter from my friend. I don't have that here. But I've got a friend writing. And you never told me. You never told me. How will you answer for the opportunities lost?

It's not saying you need to go and stand on the street corner necessarily. There's different ways you can minister. There's different ways you can witness. Most of all by your life. That you'll be a light. That your light won't be dark. That it won't be dim. That you'll be a burning and shining light.

Friends. How will you answer for opportunities lost?

How will you answer for resources squandered? How will you answer for time wasted? Will you remember with regret what could it be? What could it be of my life? Instead of being self-obsessed or obsessed with whatever else might occupy your mind.

[27:13] You can turn it around tonight. You can make today the day of decision. The day of change. Will our hands be stained with blood? For those we haven't told.

Do you really love them? If you'll love them you'll tell them. Is it indifference that you have towards them? Maybe you just think someone else will tell them.

Or is it because you don't really care? Or because you don't really obey the Lord? The reality of blood on our hands. Friends think of it. One day will you look down at your hands and there'll be blood there.

At judgement time. I urge you tonight. To be a watchman. To think. To scour the horizon. And this speaks also of warning.

Of all kinds of warning. You know there's warning of warning to the lost. There's warning to the saved. When they're into false doctrine. There's warnings that we must give.

[28:14] In love. Because we care. And anything short of total commitment to this vital duty. Is not enough. It's not good enough. Friends to close.

You have a responsibility. We have a responsibility. All of us. It's not just a certain number. Or certain qualified people. Or trained people.
Select people. It's all of you. All of us. Here tonight. If you're a born again Christian. If you profess to be. Then you have a saviour.
Who says to you. I've given you the message. The ministry of reconciliation. I've given you that message to declare. You have a responsibility to declare it. You have been sent.
You don't need someone to commission you. To lay hands on you. To formalise you. In any capacity. You have his mandate. You have his authority.
[29:09] It's like. I've heard the street preachers say. You know. What authority have you got? We've got no hire. Amen. The street preachers. Whoever witnesses for Christ.
We're higher than the law of the land. Because we have the highest authority. That's equipping us. That's sending us. That's authorising us. That's empowering us. So friends.
To close. What kind of a witness are you? Every one of you. You can be his witness. You are his witness. You're his witness. Whether you like it or not. And sometimes.
You're a good witness. Sometimes. You're a bad witness. Sometimes. I'm shocked. By. What professing Christians do. And say. Because people are watching. Friends.
Blood on your hands. Be wise. What kind of a witness are you? Pray for a responsiveness. Pray for a readiness. And pray that that word of reconciliation. Will be on your lips.
[30:03] And you'll give it. You'll not be silent. You'll not keep quiet. You'll be moved to action. And you'll be a messenger. Of reconciliation. What more beautiful picture. That.
By his grace. You might see someone. Of course we know. As many told. And few. Respond. But that should not stop you. Because.
Maybe. Maybe it's just one. It's like it's been said. What can you take to heaven? You can't take all of that money. Or all of that.
Fame. Or whatever. Razumatars of life. That you acquire. And amass for yourself. Or whatever. Credit or status in life. That you might make.
For yourself. Down here. You can take nothing of it there. You'll go naked. Into his presence. You'll be naked. With nothing in your hands. That you can bring. But yet.
[30:58] It's been said. That you can take souls with you. They can be souls. That you can take with you. They'll be like jewels. In your crown. As it were. As you've been obedient to him. In declaring the message.
That you can see. Loved ones. You can see. Souls saved. Not because of any. Persuasive ability of your own.
But because you've been an instrument. In God's hand. I love to tell your story. Of hunting things above.