

Be Sober, Watch, Pray—Love

#0853

Study given by W. D. Frazee—December 16, 1960

Someone was telling me that if you visit a battleship in the United States Navy you will find the sailors out polishing the brass railing. They keep the ship scrubbed and everything looking fine. And that brass railing is kept well polished all around the deck.

When war breaks, the message is flashed immediately to all the ships on the seven seas. And as soon as the message is received that the nation is at war, do you know what they do? They take all that brass railing they have been polishing for weeks and months and years and dump it in the ocean. Why? They have something else to do, and that brass railing must not get in the way.

I wonder if we have heard the broadcast from headquarters that we are at war? We will show it by how much time we spend on brass railing.

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" 1 Peter 4:7-11.

The end of all things is at hand. There are a lot of things that aren't bad that don't belong to this hour. And if that was true a year ago, it is five times more true now as the events which prophecy has long foretold are taking place right before our eyes.

When the church was filled with the power of the Spirit of God in the Apostolic Age, the thing that characterized the Christians was their great love. Jesus has said that "by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one for another." And it was so. Even the heathen Romans said, Behold how these Christians love one another. The world had never seen anything like it. And it is that revelation of God's love in the remnant church which will lighten the earth with its glory in the coming loud cry into which even now we must be entering.

Oh friends, above all things have love, fervent love, warm love, burning love among yourselves, for love shall cover a multitude of sins. That doesn't mean that if we love folks enough it will make up for all our sins. It means that if we love our brethren enough we can cover their sins. So if we find that our brothers have done

something that we can't cover, it may be that what we need is a bigger amount of love. Can we get it?

If we will do what verse seven says we will be able to do what verse eight says. If we will seek the Lord in fervent prayer, we will have this fervent love. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging." In other words, when you do something for someone, do it cheerfully, gladly, joyously, so that they know it makes you happy whether you give them a meal or a bed or some socks, or whatever.

There was a rich man that Jesus said was very foolish. He had the idea that if God showered him with everything, his business was to get more and more barns so he could put away more and more material. That's what he thought was the plan. Was it? No. God wanted him to share it with others. You will probably find some people that need some of that surplus. I hope the moths don't get it.

What do you have? Probably not a barrel of socks, but you have something. Some have money. All have time. Most of us have some strength. We have talents and material possessions. As every one has received the gift, even so "minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"
1 Peter 4:11.

I have read that verse a good many times, but somehow it has impressed me in a new way. It has impressed me so much that I looked it up in the various translations to see if it meant just what it says. Yes. It means just what it says. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

I will paraphrase that and state it in another way. Unless you can speak as the oracles of God, don't speak. Keep still. If we say something and are asked if that is something that God gave us to speak, we might pause and think, Well, I don't know if it was or not. We had better find out.

Over in Greece the heathen people had temples, and people who wanted to know something came to the temple and heard the oracle speak. Of course, you and I know who was speaking. It was the Devil. Just like the spirits that talk in these secret chambers. But Peter is careful to say that if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. When Stephen was before the Sanhedrin (Acts chapter 7) he called the ten commandments that God spoke from Sinai the living oracles. The ten commandments are the living oracles. God Himself spoke them from Sinai. Peter says if you speak, speak as the oracles of God. My, what a thought. Well, that is reasonable.

We have an ambassador over in Moscow tonight. His business is to speak for the government of the United States. If he is asked something by the Russian government, what do you suppose he does? He consults his government. He is an important man. He has important messages to deliver. You and I are ambassadors for Christ. That is what Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5:20. An ambassador's business is to consult his government before he speaks.

Ah friends, what a world of problems would be solved as various questions come up if people would find out what God says before they say something. Man's words, if of any value, echo the words of God. I make this very personal and very practical. Things are crowding in upon us in these closing moments of history. Things are happening rapidly in the world and in the church. Many things are being discussed.

You and I need to cultivate a holy caution. We need to be careful lest we drop some word of condemnation which does not reflect the mind of God. We need to be careful lest we condemn something that God is about to use. And we need to be just as careful lest we applaud something that God has nothing in this world to do with. The world is full of things that creep into the church that seem to be good, but that are really the work of the enemy.

Years ago the servant of the Lord wrote a message to our ministry warning them against giving counsel based on their own opinions to people who were thinking of moving out of the cities into the country lest those people make rash, haphazard moves. You say anyone ought to know to move out of the cities. Read *Country Living*. Read the caution that came to the church at Battle Creek when a large number were preparing to move out. The servant of the Lord warned our ministers and teachers, especially those who might not have experience in practical life. She said:

"Therefore let all be careful what they say. If they know not the mind of God on some matters let them plainly say so, and let the individual rely wholly on God"
Country Living, page 26

Sometimes I fear that the ease with which we express our opinions is in direct proportion to our ignorance. Oh, that we may be wise and show wisdom on many subjects by saying to people, Brother, sister, I do not know what you ought to do about this thing. If I knew I would tell you. I can pray with you. We can read God's instructions together. But brother, sister, seek God with all your heart. Be careful that you don't do the wrong thing. And I will pray for you. I say, let us bring it right down to practical life.

People are asking advice today right and left, and I find it is true that people quite often ask advice until they get the advice they want. God pity the man or the woman who has responded to those desires, and has given the counsel that people want because they wanted it. God pity the man or the woman who is afraid to face the disfavor of others if they plainly state what they know is the will of God, or at least by declining to express themselves in favor of something that is questionable. God pity them in the day of judgment.

If you are seeking counsel, be not too ready to think that merely because you get counsel from this one and that one it means God is leading. There are oracles that are not the oracles of God. There are those who may speak with favor of things that God is not in favor of at all.

That brings us back to what Peter was talking about in the seventh verse. The only way we can speak as the oracles of God is to go to God in prayer and get some answers. That's the thing. Even when these heathen mediums have questions they go to the Devil to get an answer. Poor human beings will glibly grind out answers to a thousand questions without too much help from either God or man or the Devil. Just grind them out. I am afraid that the Devil is standing by to help with that sort of wholesale manufacturing of ideas. Don't you think so?

In the secret place of prayer, alone with God, you and I can get the answers we need for ourselves, and whatever answers we need for others. The end of all things is at hand. As the thrilling scenes, the stirring scenes, the danger scenes of the loud cry break upon us, we shall need men and women that know what Israel ought to do.

We shall have to have an experience which comes from being alone with God, and refraining from ventilating our own opinions. We shall fear to trust our own wisdom or the wisdom of other men. We shall want to know with assurance what God says, and we shall rest with nothing less than divine certainty.

I know that if we speak as the oracles of God it will be because we have listened. Someone has wisely observed that the Lord gave us one mouth and two ears. The Psalmist says, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak." Let's listen.

If we will listen, we will hear. And if we hear what He says, then we can speak as the oracles of God.

Thank God for His wonderful love and for the privilege of knowing His voice and following it.

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