

WATCHING AND PRAYING

TEXT: MATTHEW 26:40-46

Introduction:

1. I would like your attention to our Lord's words in Matthew 26:41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
2. The Bible has much to say about watching and praying (cf. Mark 13:31-37).
3. Our Lord said in Luke 21:36, "Watch ye therefore, and pray always."
4. The apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 4:2, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."
5. The apostle Peter wrote in I Peter 4:7, "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."
6. Our Lord said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation..." (Matt. 26:41). The word "enter" suggests an area of temptation to be especially avoided – a dangerous place "where the force of allurements to sin is particularly felt, and where the flesh is peculiarly weak" (AT Pierson).
7. Our Lord taught us to pray, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:13).
8. It is not enough to watch. We must "watch and pray" (Matt. 26:41).
9. Our Lord said, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
10. We will have problems with the flesh to the very end. We can be sure of that. Carnality is a big problem in most churches.
11. But it is not just the flesh that causes us trouble. There is also the world, and there is the devil.
12. Look at our text. Right after our Lord finished praying, Judas Iscariot showed up (Matt. 26:44-47).
13. We know from Luke 22:3 and John 13:27 that Satan entered into Judas.
14. This morning let us consider our Lord's words from Matthew 26:41, and we will give special attention to our three great enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil.

I. WATCH OUT FOR THE WORLD

1. The world emphasizes the visible and the temporal. God's Word emphasizes the unseen and the eternal.
2. Our Lord warned of "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in," which "choke the word" (Mark 4:19).

3. Our Lord said to His disciples, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19).
4. Once a man gets caught up in the things of this world, he forgets all about eternity. This can happen to a Christian as well as an unsaved person.
5. Paul wrote to Timothy, “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (II Tim. 4:10).
6. The Bible says, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (I John 2:15-17).
7. James 4:4 says, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
8. Spurgeon defined “worldliness” as, “a care for carnal things, and a carelessness about spiritual things; having enough grace just to make us hope that you are a Christian, but not enough to prove you are; bearing a shriveled apple here and there on the topmost bough, but not much fruit; this I mean, this 'partial barrenness' – not complete enough to condemn, yet complete enough to restrain the blessing, this robs the treasure of the church, and hinders her progress” (“Travailing For Souls”).

II. WATCH OUT FOR THE FLESH

1. Our Lord has warned us, “The flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41). But too many Christians pamper the flesh, and yield to the flesh.
2. There are many, many churches which cater to the flesh.
3. AT Pierson said, “The watchful man sees in the flesh a power that, once becoming master, seldom releases the slave... The flesh feeds appetite and sensual indulgence; there is a fire in the blood which may be fanned into a flame that consumes the whole being. Imagination and memory feed it with fuel, and the conscience and will are burned up in its fires.”
4. First Peter 2:11 says, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”
5. Romans 13:14 says, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”
6. There can be no compromise with the flesh. The Bible condemns carnality. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God” (Romans 8:7).
7. “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8).

III. WATCH OUT FOR THE DEVIL

1. The devil is our great adversary. In fact the name *Satan* is the Hebrew word for “adversary.”
2. Second Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith.”
3. “Resist stedfast in the faith,” not yield, or compromise.
4. James 4:7 says, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
5. The devil works on people’s minds. Ephesians 6:16 says to take “the shield of faith,” so we “shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”
6. Satan’s fiery darts come in various forms. He is a master of deception. Revelation 12:9 says, he “deceiveth the whole world.”
7. Satan is a liar. Our Lord said in John 8:44, that Satan “abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”
8. Lying is from the devil because “he is a liar, and the father of it.”
9. God hates lying (cf. Proverbs 6:16-19).
10. AT Pierson wrote, “Where conscience is not sensitive and dominant, memory and imagination will become so confused that facts and fancies will fail to be separated. The imagination will be so allowed to invest events and experiences with either a halo of glory or a cloud of prejudice that the narrator will constantly tell, not what he clearly sees written in the book of his remembrance, but what he beholds painted upon the canvas of his own imagination. Accuracy will be, half unconsciously perhaps, sacrificed to his own imaginings, he will exaggerate or depreciate – as his own impulses lead him; and a man who would not deliberately lie may thus be habitually untrustworthy: you cannot tell, and often he cannot tell, what the exact truth would be when all the unreality with which it has thus been invested is dissipated like the purple and golden cloud about a mountain, leaving the bare crag of naked rock to be seen, just as it is; in itself.”
11. The devil suggests evil thoughts and desires. There is not a Christian in this world who is safe from Satan’s attacks.
12. Our Lord warned Peter, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat” (Luke 22:31).
13. But then our Lord added, “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not...” (22:32).
14. That is why we must watch and pray. When we watch we are looking out for danger; and we are avoiding danger; and we are warning others of danger.

15. RA Torrey said, the devil “is cunning, he is mighty, he never rests, he is ever plotting the downfall of the child of God; and if the child of God relaxes in prayer, the devil will succeed in ensnaring him.”
16. When we pray we are asking God to keep us from danger, and to help us and guide us.
17. Ephesians 6:11 says, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”
18. The devil uses deceitful and unscrupulous people to deceive others. The LORD warned Moses about the Midianites. The LORD said, “For they vex you with their wiles, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor” (Num. 25:18).
19. There are a lot of modern-day “Midianites” around today. They get into churches and sow discord.
20. In the Bible, the devil is referred to as “the tempter” (Matt. 4:3; I Thess. 3:5).
21. He is also the hinderer. In I Thessalonians 2:18, Paul says, “Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.”
22. On at least two occasions, the devil hindered the apostle Paul from going to Thessalonica. AT Robertson says the word “hindered” here means to make a cut (like a trench) in a road, thereby making the road impassable.
23. The devil hinders and obstructs and misleads. He sets up roadblocks. He blinds people’s minds from the truth (II Cor. 4:3, 4).
24. The devil is very religious. “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (II Cor. 11:14).

CONCLUSION:

1. A pastor saw a marble cutter working on his knees with his chisel and hammer, changing a big piece of hard stone into a beautiful statue.
2. The preacher said to the workman, “I wish I could deal such clanging blows on stony hearts.”
3. The workman replied, “Maybe you could, if you worked like me – upon your knees.”
4. Jesus said, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41).