

Ezekiel 33 gives us one of Scripture’s most sobering images: the watchman on the wall. It’s a passage that can feel heavy—almost entirely Law. “If you see danger and fail to warn them, their blood I will require at your hand.” We hear things like this and squirm.

But beneath the weight of the warning is a beating heart of mercy. Because before God ever calls Ezekiel to speak, God Himself speaks. Before God ever commands Ezekiel to warn, God warns. Before God ever places Ezekiel on the wall, as it were, God stands watch over His people with a love that refuses to let them wander into destruction.

God says to Ezekiel, “I have made you a watchman.” Not, “Congratulations, you proved yourself worthy,” but “I have made you.” God places Ezekiel where He wants him, equips him with His Word, and gives him a simple task: *If you see something, say something.*

A watchman in the ancient world was essential. His eyes were the city’s early warning system. If he saw danger—an approaching army, a rising threat—he had one responsibility: speak.

I’m linking this task to the signs you see in airports: “If you see something, say something.” It’s simple, but it can save lives. A forgotten bag, a suspicious situation—one word spoken at the right time to the right person can prevent disaster.

That’s Ezekiel’s role. And in a sense, it becomes ours. God places each of us in relationships, families, workplaces, and communities. We see things others don’t. We notice dangers others overlook. And God says, “Speak—not because you’re perfect, but because you care.”

But here’s the key: the watchman’s job is not to make people listen. It’s not to force repentance. It’s not to guarantee results, as if that were possible. The watchman’s calling is simply to be faithful.

That’s freeing. That releases the pressure. Because we often carry burdens God never asked us to carry. We think we must fix people. We think we must change hearts. We think we must produce outcomes. But God says: “You speak. I save.”

Warnings are not pleasant. No one likes to hear hard truth. But in Scripture, warnings are always expressions of love.

Imagine a hiker approaching the edge of a cliff. You shout, “Stop!” Not because you enjoy yelling, not because you want to embarrass them, but because you want them to live. The warning is love in action.

God’s warning to Israel is exactly that. He is not eager to condemn. Later in this same chapter, He says, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way

and live.” That’s the heart of God. Not punishment. Not destruction. Life. Every warning God gives is aimed at life.

And to secure that life for you, He enters the city Himself. He comes down into the danger. He takes on flesh. He bears our sin. He carries our judgment. Jesus is the true Watchman—who not only sees the danger of sin and death, but steps into its path for our sake. On the cross, Jesus takes the very judgment Ezekiel warns about. He absorbs the wrath. He bears the guilt. He becomes the condemned one so that we might become the forgiven ones.

Think of a first responder running into a burning building. Everyone else is running out, but he goes in. Why? To save. To rescue. To stand between danger and the people he loves. Jesus did that for each one of us. He doesn’t just shout warnings; He enters the flames. And because of His resurrection, the warning has turned into invitation: Return home. Return to life. Return to the mercy Jesus secured for you.

Let me be as clear as I can. The invitation of God is not: “Repent so that He might love you.”

The invitation is: “God loves you—so repent, return, and live.”

Ezekiel’s calling has become ours—not in the sense that we stand on literal walls, but in the sense that God places us in moments where our voice matters. We are watchmen when we speak truth in love. We are watchmen when we point people to Christ instead of ourselves. We are watchmen when we refuse to let fear silence the gospel.

Think of a friend who notices you’re struggling and says, “I’m worried about you.” That’s a watchman moment. They saw something—and they said something. Not to shame, but to save. But again, the burden is not on us to change hearts. The burden is simply to be faithful. To speak the Word God has given. To embody the mercy Christ has shown. To trust the Spirit who alone brings life.

And here’s the comfort: God does not judge us by our effectiveness. He does not measure us by results. He does not ask us to carry the weight of the world. He asks us to be faithful—and then He carries the rest. When we speak Christ, Christ works. When we proclaim forgiveness, forgiveness is given. When we announce the gospel, the Spirit moves.

The watchman is not the Savior. The watchman is not the judge. The watchman is not the one who brings life. God is. And that frees us to serve with joy instead of fear, with courage instead of anxiety, with hope instead of despair.

Ezekiel 33 ends with a simple truth: God warns because God wants life. And in Jesus Christ, that desire becomes reality. He is our life. He is our forgiveness. He is our peace. He is our rest.

So today, hear the gospel in Ezekiel’s calling: You are loved. You are forgiven. You are held by the One who watches over you with mercy. And you are sent—not to save the world, but to point to the One who already has.

