

***Being Strengthened to Stand without Compromise (Lk. 21:34-36)***

*(This is an edited transcript from a message given by Mike Bickle in November 2015)*

In Luke 21, Jesus spoke as a prophet, making declarations about one generation—the generation in which He returns. He also spoke as a tender pastor-shepherd showing His care and zeal for this one very important generation. The Bible speaks more about this generation than any other generation. Jesus tenderly warned His people about the danger of their hearts being weighed down, making them vulnerable to being overcome with fear and sin.

God’s strength has been freely made available in the grace of God to stand fast, but many do not personally access it. They do not make growing in grace a priority in their daily life. We must be intentional about growing in grace to strengthen our walk with God.

**I. JESUS SPOKE AS A PROPHET AND PASTOR ABOUT OVERCOMING IN THE END TIMES**

- A. Jesus prophesied that negative events related to His return will come like a snare to test everyone (v. 25, 35). He called His people to be strengthened to escape the snare of sin and fear so as to stand in victory (v. 36) and warned them not to allow their hearts to be weighed down (v. 34). He gave pastoral exhortations—to *take heed to themselves* (v. 34) and to *watch and pray* (v. 36).

<sup>25</sup>“*There will be...on the earth distress of nations...<sup>26</sup>men’s hearts failing them from fear...<sup>28</sup>When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near...<sup>32</sup>this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place...<sup>34</sup>But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.<sup>35</sup>For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on...the whole earth.<sup>36</sup>Watch...pray always that you may be counted worthy [have strength] to escape all these things...to stand before the Son of Man.” (Lk. 21:25-36)*

- B. ***Distress of nations***: The intensity of the distress will continue to increase until the end. People will respond differently—some will *faint with fear* (v. 26), yet others will be *filled with faith*, “looking up” to King Jesus instead of only “looking out” at the growing distress (v. 28). The distress will include financial crisis, terrorism, racial clashes, violent weather, persecution, etc.
- <sup>48</sup>[Jesus said], “...to whom much is given, from him much will be required...” (Lk. 12:48)

Jesus makes a bold declaration (21:25), “*there will be on the earth distress of nations.*” It will be so intense that many hearts will fail for fear—emotionally, spiritually, and even physically.

Jesus prophesied *distress in the nation* that will be unique to this generation. This speaks of a timeframe where distress will **continually increase**. Things will never go back to the way they were. We will not revert back to the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s. Throughout history, unusual distress comes in cycles and then has reprieves. But we are now in time frame where it will **continually increase**. The nations have always experienced some distress. But Jesus is referring to unique, unprecedented distress. It will be a measure of distress that will be recognizable as distinct from any other generation. Jesus desires that His people respond in faith instead of fear. His people are to look up and lift up their heads with faith, confidence, and hope because their redemption or salvation is drawing near.

In Luke 21, Jesus highlighted mostly the negative. The escalating distress in the nations includes a great increase of demonic activity, violence, and moral darkness. He wanted to create urgency about the negative so

that people would take seriously the need to prioritize strengthening their hearts. As a shepherd He warns us of this so that we will respond in a right way by being intentional about being spiritually prepared in our understanding, heart responses, and kingdom connections to others.

In other passages, it is clear that this will also be the time of the great harvest, the outpouring of the Spirit in full measure in all nations where the Church will walk in unity, purity, and power even beyond the book of Acts.

I believe it is the beginning of a timeframe where there are seismic shifts happening in the culture. God is creating the optimum environment, using the distress and outpouring of the Spirit, for the most people to grow at the deepest level of love. The shift did not begin in 2015, but 2015 is a watershed year of negativity increasing in the globe. Here is a quick review of a few of these events:

June 26, 2015 was an historic day in America—the day the *Supreme Court legalized gay marriage*. Our focus is not on what people do in the privacy of their home, but that this one law institutionalized and normalized immorality, causing it to be systematically presented in the school systems in the days to come and making it a hate crime to speak out on portions of God’s word that identify it as sinful.

Recently the Department of Justice began a new initiative called the *Domestic Terrorism Counsel*. It will help prosecute terrorists in America who disrupt the tranquility, peace, and goodwill of others. At the very center of this initiative one finds the hate crime prosecution that will one day discriminate against those that are bold and strong publicly for biblical values. Soon people who are bold about what the Bible says about the sanctity of life, marriage, and sex will be considered domestic terrorists. There is an acceleration of hate crime legislation.

The *pornification of the Western culture* is increasing with more immorality, perversion, human trafficking etc.

The *Iran nuclear deal* was passed in 2015. This will cause a Middle East arms race to accelerate and a number of nations to obtain nuclear weapons. It will be tragic for Islamic terrorists to obtain nuclear weapons, which would force Israel into a corner where they will have no alternative but to make a preemptive strike to stop the nations wanting to drive them into the sea. Then the global narrative will present Israel as the initiator of a global war. This trajectory has been set in motion.

The *global economic crisis* continues. Many think that the bankruptcy of Greece was a catalytic moment in increasing economic pressures. The global economy is deeply connected. The rubber band has been pulled so tight that one more big hiccup might send things into much greater pressure. The economy in China is under great pressure. A number of states in US are on the verge of bankruptcy. They cannot pay their bills within their own states, and that number is increasing. In the US, about fifty percent of Americans are receiving regular government entitlements. The math does not work on this. Economy pressures will cause entitlements to be withheld—this will lead to significant social unrest in the nations.

There was the *Paris attacks* by terrorists on November 13, killing well over 100 people. This aroused France and other European nations to stand against ISIS in a much greater way. The leaders of the Western nations have tried to work out the problems through diplomacy, but they are growing weary and wary of the attempt. Many political analysts have said that by the president of France declaring what ISIS did to be an act of war many other nations would stand with France. Declaring war openly on a global level is a very different posture.

Indeed, many Western nations are standing in solidarity with France. There will be more aggressive military reprisals against ISIS. This is actually what some of the leaders of ISIS want. They have been picking a fight for years against Western culture and Western nations and want open conflict. In the context of violence “against them,” they will be able to recruit far more people and raise far more money as radical Islam proclaims the nobility of martyrdom, and they will dominate the global conversation in a more prominent way.

Pope Francis has associated the Paris attacks with the *beginning of World War III*, as have a few other world and national leaders. It may take a while before it builds up like in other wars—just as the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I (June 28, 1919) was a catalytic event that took twenty years to ignite World War II. The next world war will not likely be fought within certain national boundary lines as in Europe and Asia during World War II. It will be fought in many Western nations in more of a guerilla-warfare fashion with small, independent terrorist cells engaging in violence, bombing shopping malls, universities, train stations, elementary schools. It will also be fought with technology, attempting to disrupt our technology, power grid, automated banking and financial transactions, etc. and cause chaos.

Jihadist Islam or radical Islam is at war with Western culture and its values. It is not primarily as a war for territory like Hitler who sought to dominate Europe in the 1940s. Yes, they have some territorial demands, but it is a war of ideology. They want their values, law, and religious practice to be enforced across the whole earth. Their main focus now is the Western world. Their number one enemy is America, whom they see as big Satan, and Israel, whom they see as little Satan. One ultimate goal is to take over Jerusalem and dominate the land of Israel to bring it under Allah, under the influence of the teachings of the prophet Mohammed according to their dogma and interpretation. Since they cannot be victorious in Israel as long as America is a global power, their focus is America in order to take Israel. As Western nations strike back in a more aggressive way, it will give them the motivational boost that they need to for recruitment and fund raising.

Then there is the *crisis in Syria* which has resulted in nearly ten million people being displaced, five million inside of the land and nearly five million outside the land as refugees, mostly in Europe. Radical Islamist terrorists want to piggyback on this crisis to come undetected into America and other nations in order to infiltrate in a far greater way.

I have sat in meetings with several groups of people who interact with the White House and/or top US military leaders on a regular basis. They are convinced of plans for a much great invasion of America by radical Islamists. Though most Muslims are normal people who disdain violence, and the number of radical terrorists is a very small percent, the number is growing substantially. We must remember that moderate Islam and jihadist Islam are not one and the same; it is a horrible mistake to see them as one.

ISIS is a demonically-inspired evil that the Lord is using to discipline the Western nations. They want to destroy the Western culture and the Western nations. God wants to restore people and heal them. In the Scripture, the Lord has used evil rulers and empires to discipline His people, then He destroys the evil leader and empire. For the last 2,000 years no part of the earth has been more blessed than the Western nations. God has raised up many messengers of the gospel with financial backing from the West, and seasons of revivals have happened in the Western nations. Now, at such a time as this, Western nations are raising their fist toward God and His Word. They do not want His leadership or morality. There is an evil, demonic company of people that are declaring war on the Western culture. The Lord is allowing this discipline to wake up the West.

What the devil means for evil, God means for good (Gen. 50:20). He loves the Western nations and has not given up on them, but will heal and restore them after He first wakes them in context to disciplining them. The evil Jihadist war against the Western culture is energized by demonic powers. But the Lord will use it. Remember Jesus said that to him that is given much much is required. The Lord has given Western nations much—some of most powerful preachers of the gospel, the greatest revivals—yet after centuries of blessing they are answering God with rebellion and rejection of His Word.

He requires a different response at this hour of history. I am encouraged because He will restore and heal hearts and nations. The coming great revival will begin in context to crisis and the Lord's discipline on many nations.

- C. **Your redemption:** God’s power will be manifested in an ever-increasing measure unto Jesus’ return. It will be the *optimum context* for the most people to grow to the deepest levels of love.

**<sup>3</sup>He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. (Ps. 91:3)**

There will be two responses to pressure and crisis that are diametrically opposite—*fear with despair* or *faith with hope*. There is good news: when we see these things “begin” to happen, we are to lift up our heads because our redemption or salvation or the breakthrough of God’s power is coming soon. We are to look up and rejoice, knowing we will see what we have prayed for over the years.

The ultimate breakthrough is a Jewish Man with a resurrected physical body coming back in the clouds with a trumpet. He will drive Satan and all evil off of the planet (Rev. 20:1-3) and will fill the earth with His glory. That which He will do in fullness on that day He will do in part now and in an increasing measure leading up to that day. There will be an increase of the power and glory of God even as the darkness increases.

We do not have to be overcome by fear, hopelessness, and despair like many in the nations will. We have the King of kings, not just as information, but as our Bridegroom King. We are in His family forever. So it is important not to get weighed down so we can’t respond to Him. We do not need to be preoccupied with pain, fear, bitterness, perversion, drunkenness or other expressions of darkness.

Take heed. Pay close attention to your heart. Is your heart growing in God’s strength? God’s strength is available to everyone who wants it. Many do not prioritize growing in it.

- D. **Begin:** Believers are to recognize when these things *begin* in the generation of His return (v. 28, 32). The end-time distress of nations will have a recognizable beginning—increasing in intensity over a generation culminating at His return. A generation may last 100 years (Gen. 15:13-16).

As we see the distress begin to increase, then He will give more understanding to see what is happening. There is a time when the trend will “begin” in a discernable way and then escalate and come to fullness in one generation (v. 28). You will understand what is happening and will not be surprised like many in the nations will be. You will understand that this is serving God’s redemptive plan. You will not be taken captive in the snare of bitterness, drunkenness or immorality looking to escape with quick relief.

What is a generation? Jesus told us, “When these things begin, look up...your redemption draws near... because this generation will not pass away.” The length of a generation was first defined in the Scripture by God as lasting 100 years (Gen. 15:13-16).

**<sup>13</sup>He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land...they will afflict them four hundred years...<sup>16</sup>But in the fourth generation they shall return here....” (Gen. 15:13-16)**

- E. **Unexpected:** People surprised by the increasing distress will be more vulnerable to fear (v. 34).

The intensity of the distress and the development of negative things will come unexpectedly, surprising multitudes. Even some of the most astute political analysts and social forecasters will be surprised with the manner and intensity of what will take place. The great Shepherd gave His people reliable insider information 2,000 years in advance so they would not be surprised. Yes, there will be many details and nuances that we will not know, but we will know the main trends occurring in that hour. God’s people will be braced for them and able to interpret them in a redemptive way knowing that Jesus is leading history to a time when God’s glory and love will cover the earth.

We are to take heed to ourselves lest these things come unexpected and surprise us. There is only one people in the earth who need not be surprised; that is the praying Church who believes the Bible. This includes millions of believers across the earth. The increase of distress related to “that Day” need not surprise them. God’s people are to beware, or “be aware,” because “that Day” will come unexpectedly (Lk. 21:34). “That Day” includes the actual day of His appearing as well as the events and trends associated with and leading up to that day. We know where it is going and how it ends in fulfilling God’s redemptive purposes.

Jesus gave this biblical information 2,000 years in advance so that no one can dismiss it as if it came from modern-day social forecasters in the aftermath of a global crisis, simply interpreting the political, military, economic or social landscape of their day and then predicting the increasing distress of the nations. In other words, He said this long before there was a global economy in crisis. His information can be trusted because it was given before this growing global crisis, not in the aftermath. The only people on the earth who have understanding of what will happen is the praying church because they believe the Bible. On social media, many are asking, “What is going on? Where is this going?” The smartest social forecasters and political analysts only offer speculation at best. They do not have the insider information.

Jesus said if you are not paying attention, the distress will catch you unaware and you will be overcome with fear like others who don’t have a connection with the King of the universe. He has made known His plans; we know where history is going. We are connected to the Man who has the power and the plans. Jesus does not want His people to be surprised by the distress that comes upon the nations unexpectedly, because if people are shocked, they will be far more vulnerable to being offended at His leadership and seeking temporary comfort in immorality, drunkenness, and other addictions. In that way many would be unresponsive to Him in the most powerful hour of human history as the greatest revival is released in the nations. God’s people do not need to be surprised because their understanding and connectedness to Jesus will increase as the distress increases. We do not need to “self-medicate” with drunkenness, immorality, or bitterness. You do not have to try to find relief nor be overwhelmed with fear.

Only one Man, the architect of history, the creator of the nations, calls us to connect with Him and live without fear this hour. He is the King of all kings and possesses all power. He is filled with beauty, and His plans are rooted in love. He will fill the earth with the glory and love of God. He gives us such great hope. So why is He going to allow such distress? He wants people to choose **voluntarily** to love Him in the face of real options and resistance so that their love will be proven as it grows deep. He will bring forth the greatest number of people at the deepest level of love in context to the distress of nations and the outpouring of the Spirit combined together. His plan is remarkable.

F. **Snare:** Snares, or traps, were used at that time to capture animals for food. A baited snare was *hidden* to lure its prey into the trap and designed to *hold* its prey, making it difficult to escape.

The negative trends will come upon the whole earth like a snare or trap. The word *snare* is the same word in many Bible translations as *trap*. In the ancient world it was common for people to hunt for and trap their food. They did not have guns or grocery stores to obtain meat so they had to trap an animal to get meat. There is a two-fold nature of trap. Number one, a trap is hidden. An animal will not step into a trap they can see. Number two, a trap captures and holds its prey. Once the animal steps into the trap, it cannot free itself.

Both the increased distress as a snare and the increased glory in response to prayer will come on the whole earth. Some parts of the earth will see a great measure of glory than distress and other parts a greater measure of distress than glory. Joel 2 teaches us to cry out to the Lord and turn to Him with all of our heart that perhaps He will relent from trouble coming to our local area (Joel 2:12-14).

G. Jesus highlighted three emotional snares that will cause people to draw back from Him.

Jesus identified three broad categories of human activity. Each has many “subunits” and many implications. These are three common ways in which people seek to escape the increasing pressures and pains. The distress in the nations will create an environment where fear will overcome many people. When they are overcome with fear many will turn to immorality (carousing), drunkenness, or anxiety that is preoccupied with their provision, protection, position, and the self-pity and bitterness that occurs when things do not work out the way we want them to.

1. **Carousing (dissipation):** This speaks of *over-indulgence* that dissipates or diminishes one’s spiritual strength—through immorality or other pleasures outside of God’s will.

Most Bible translations use the word *dissipation* instead of *carousing*. Jesus used a word that conveys overindulgence that dissipates or diminishes one’s strength. Its primary expression is immorality, but it is not limited to immorality. Carousing is about seeking relief through pleasures that are outside the will of God.

2. **Drunkenness:** Many people seek to escape their pain and pressure—by finding comfort through mind-altering substances instead of seeking it by connecting with Jesus.

Drunkenness in this context speaks of seeking relief from pain and pressure through intoxication or mind-altering substances. There are various ways to do this other than alcohol.

3. **Cares of life:** Many will be overcome with anxiety that results in bitterness towards those who block their goals related to their position, provision, protection, etc. (v. 26, 34).

The cares of life are associated with bitterness occurring when somebody blocks one’s goals—their position, promotion, provision, or protection. They block someone from getting what they feel they deserve. It starts as anxiety and turns into self-pity with bitterness.

Don’t be weighed down in pleasure, seeking to escape the pain, fear, and pressure through food, immorality, alcohol, entertainment etc. If your heart gets weighed down, you will be unable to respond to Jesus.

## II. TWO EXHORTATIONS: TAKE HEED AND WATCH AND PRAY (LK. 21:34, 36)

- A. God’s people must be strengthened to escape the snare of sin and fear to stand in victory (v. 36).

<sup>34</sup>*“Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of life...<sup>36</sup> Watch...and pray always that you may be counted worthy [have strength] to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”*  
(Lk. 21:34-36)

- B. **#1 Take heed to yourselves:** We are to pay close attention that our hearts not be weighed down.

You must prioritize growing your heart in strength. Be aware that the outward distress in the nations is not what will bring the greatest danger to one’s life. Jesus exhorted His people to take heed to themselves. **We must take heed that our heart is growing in strength and our mind is growing in understanding in that day.** The growing distress will not be the most significant challenge to our lives; the greater threat to our lives is to our spiritual lives. Yes, the external situation will be dangerous and troublesome, but the internal battle for our hearts will be even more dangerous. The greatest danger will be having a heart that is weighed down because it did not access the power of grace and thus does not respond to Jesus’ leadership. We must be intentional about

making the spiritual condition of our heart our top priority so it does not become weighed down, unresponsive, and dull. Many will be preoccupied with wrong things.

Again, as people connect to Jesus the King, they will have sufficient information, power, and love. If people are not connecting to Jesus, they will be in far more danger than the outward distress in the nations. We can escape the snare or trap of being overcome with fear and seeking to escape or find relief in ways that are outside of the God's will. By being strengthened by grace we will be able to stand in victory and not fall in compromise or fall in sin. This is the call to be an overcomer.

1. ***Have strength***: A vibrant spiritual life leads to courage and zeal for God. The phrase “*be counted worthy*” (v. 36, NKJV) is translated as “*have strength*” in most modern Bible translations. NKJV footnote offers “*to have strength*” as an alternate translation. The idea is to be *strengthened to respond* to the Lord in a way that is “worthy of who He is.”
2. ***Weighed down***: A heart that weighed down with sin and fear is *unresponsive to Jesus*. What we do with our body (immorality, drunkenness, etc.) greatly affects the spiritual condition of our heart—losing godly perspective, courage, and motivation to seek God.

Don't let your heart be weighed down by being swept into fear like the people who are disconnected from Him. He tenderly warned His people about the danger of their hearts in that hour being weighed down to such a degree that they will not be able to respond to Him in an appropriate way. Many things will be happening that will cause many hearts to be weighed down, making them vulnerable to yield to more and to give in to fear.

3. ***To stand***: Believers can *stand in victory* as overcomers, rather than *fall in sin* and compromise.
  4. ***To escape***: This means to escape being entrapped by lust, drunkenness, fear, etc. God's people are to be *prepared spiritually* to escape falling to fear, deception, sin, etc.
- C. ***#2 Watch and pray***: Jesus gave His people practical pastoral counsel in calling them to watch and pray. Nine times in the Scripture Jesus exhorted His people to “watch” related to end-times pressures (Mt. 24:42; 25:13; Mk. 13:9, 33, 34, 35, 37; Lk. 21:36; Rev. 16:15; cf. 1 Thes. 5:6).

Jesus gave a second exhortation, simple yet profound: to watch and pray. He gave this exhortation so that we would have strength to escape being caught in sin and compromise. The wisest man who ever walked on earth—the great shepherd—gave us this information.

1. ***Watch***: This exhortation *focuses on the mind*—to grow in understanding by watching the biblical signs of the times unfold. As our understanding increases, it produces greater urgency in us. By watching what the prophetic scriptures say about the end-time distress in the nations, people can see prophecy progressively unfold before them. As people watch, they inevitably talk more about what is occurring that is in line with the prophetic scriptures. Thus, they connect with more people who have a common urgency and vision.

Watching is more focused on the mind that we might grow in understanding. It leads to breakthrough in our understanding. This is the call that is necessary for forerunner messengers. We watch what God's Word and Spirit say will happen in that generation as the King is expressing His kingship. To watch means to actually watch what Jesus and the prophets in the Bible said would be happening, so you are growing in your understanding of the narrative, and to watch what is happening in the natural so that you are not caught with

surprise or overcome with fear, but you process the information little by little. Know what the prophetic scriptures say about the trends of society so that you are not caught unaware and so that you have been *processing and realigning with the Lord*.

Several things happen when God's people watch the biblical signs of the times. Urgency increases in our hearts as our understanding grows little by little over generations. This causes us to talk to others about what the Bible says, and thus our connectedness and unity with others grows. As people watch, they talk more about what they see and thus connect more with God in prayer and with people in unified purpose and vision. Such corporate understanding and peace is key to overcoming fear. So watching gives people urgency to talk to God, praying to release His power, and watching gives people urgency to talk to people, connecting more in unity of vision.

By watching, we increase in confidence as we see the Lord's leadership and become confident in it. Watching is critical so that we are not surprised and so that we interpret the events in the right way for our own heart and for others. In this way, we will be encouraged and strengthened. As people watch and then talk about what they see, whole communities of believers grow in their connectedness to God and each other and are thus positioned to gain insight into what do when crisis touches their local area.

So understanding what is happening will equip people to resist deception and despair. You get the big picture of where this is going. He lets us know, that He is with us. You grow in understanding and urgency as you watch the prophesied events increase. You connect with people who have the same vision. God's people doing this together will receive God's counsel to touch their neighborhood in the crisis.

2. **Pray:** This exhortation *focuses on the heart*—to grow in strength from connecting with Jesus. Prayer strengthens our heart and releases His resources into the earthly realm. (***Prayers to Strengthen Our Inner Man:*** <http://mikebickle.org/resources/resource/3637>).

Praying is more focused on the heart that we might grow in intimacy with God. It is a breakthrough of the heart. In prayer we will be invigorated by the beauty of the King. By prayer, we stay connected to Jesus' heart and we release His resources. That is, prayer strengthens the heart and it releases His resources into the earthly realm.

To have *understanding in our mind* and *strength in our heart* will position us *to stand and not fall* in that day

3. Some believers *pray*, but do not watch—pay attention to what is happening prophetically in the nations. Others *watch*, but do not pray. Jesus calls us to do both.
- D. **Summary:** We are to position ourselves to receive greater *insight* (by watching) to understand what the Lord is doing and to receive greater *strength* (by prayer) to love well as pressures continued to increase. Those who grow in *understanding and strength* will stand as overcomers.
  - E. Jesus' call to watch and pray is a call to empower believers to love others well. ***Multitudes will need to be helped by those walking in power, courage, and insight into what God is doing.*** People with understanding will be a part of the solution instead of contributing to the confusion

Jesus addressed the topic of the end times several times and so did Paul. The *primary exhortation* that both gave was to *watch and pray*! I read this passage some years ago, and I was perplexed. I was thinking that Jesus was the most brilliant Pastor/Shepherd, yet His primary exhortation was to watch and pray? Really? How about store water? What about guns? What about establishing a communication system with walkie-talkies? What about, what about, what about? When people watch and pray, they grow in understanding of what the Bible



says about unique events occurring in the end times, and their hearts are connected to the Lord and to people with a kindred vision and with the same zeal, urgency, and passion.

God is raising up communities all over the earth who prioritize watching and praying. They are growing in their understanding of the biblical end-time storyline. They are seeing how the signs are increasing with both negative and positive events and trends, and they prioritize connecting to God. They will gain understanding of what to do in practical issues like food, provision, and protection. They will know how to respond in different situations—which will vary greatly.

Remember, He loves us so much that He gave us this information 2,000 years in advance. I encourage you to be **a part of the solution, not the confusion**. If we are connected to Him and to like-minded believers, we will be equipped to overcome and not be ensnared by fear, immorality, drunkenness and bitterness so that we make right decisions in times of crisis.

As for me and my spiritual house, we will serve the Lord by prioritizing watching and praying. I want to be in the midst of a community of people who prioritize watching, praying, and fellowshiping with groups all over the earth with a similar urgency to press into Jesus.

Today many believers are weighed down compared to where they were at in their hearts several years ago. People who seek to love well must not be ensnared in fear, deception or confusion. We must watch so that we understand the narrative and can be part of the solution, not the confusion.

Some of you are called as forerunners. He wants you to prioritize watching, but you have lost sight of watching. I encourage you to recommit to watch. Others need to recommit to praying that you may connect with Jesus more. Some are ensnared by an area of compromise in which you are weighed down. I encourage you to put aside whatever is keeping you from being strengthened to stand and whatever is keeping you from watching and praying.