**Ezekiel 33:7-9**

“So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. **8**  If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. **9**  But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

**“Warning Sounds Save”**

 To those loved by God and called by baptism to be His saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Hurricanes and wildfires are dangerous, but they certainly do not sneak up on us like the past. Modern radar and satellite imaging give ample warning about what is coming. Even the highest officials come out using the strongest words about what people need to be doing. We always wonder about those who ignore such warnings and what they could be thinking. Let alone, there are also those who neglect to share with their family, friends, and neighbors the seriousness of the threat.

 No wonder after destruction has happened regret presses heavy upon people. The LCMS World Relief and Human Care manual for, “Congregational preparedness & volunteer training” has says these words. “Disaster, like all reminders of sin, calls all to daily repentance. It can be tempting to search for specific sins or people to blame, but Christian care brings the message of Jesus‘ salvation for the entire world and offers hope in spite of such guilt, doubt, and fear” (23). Natural disasters leave a mark about what it means for all to live in a fallen world. At the same time, a greater threat arises not from sinful creation but also when God’s Law is broken. While our way fails to deal with sin, God’s way confronts sin looking to cover any with forgiveness in Christ.

1. **Rather than warning, we are less than responsible with what God says.**
2. Ezekiel came preaching when exiles in Babylon were still not seeing a need to repent.
* The southern kingdom of Judah faced three waves of attack by Babylon over the years taking more and more into exile.
* It was during the second wave that Ezekiel came to live out his life not in the Promised Land, but as a prophet preaching in Babylon.
* Yet, those in exile were still not paying attention to what God’s law said only simply waiting to go home to the glory of Jerusalem.
* They refused to see God’s people as a nation held together by unlawful rulers, a temple ruined with idolatrous priests, and a way of life seeped in wickedness.
1. Our failure to deal with sin proves we are not so responsible with the need to repent.
* Jesus finally shows what is at stake when He graphically talks about lopping off body parts rather than entering into eternal fire.
* We still are sinners, but as Christians, we have no justification to remain in sin as if it is an option that replaces what God commands for life.
* Even acting responsibly can lead anyone into the trap of believing we can fulfill the laws demands of loving our neighbor as our self.
* Are we blind to see repentance is more important than political agendas, repentance more valuable than saving the church, repentance more crucial than conforming life to wickedness?
1. **God sees and is responsible to warn because He cares more than anyone else does.**
2. Nothing changed for Ezekiel who served as a watchman for those who became broken in exile.
* The words that we hear today were not the first time God said them, but now took on a new tone when buying their time did not last.
* A fugitive from Jerusalem came to Ezekiel telling him the sorry state of affairs saying, “The city has fallen” (vs. 21).
* God’s prophet was to speak and nothing changed for, “Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me.”
* It was no longer about Ezekiel being against them, but to see how God cared to, “warn the wicked to turn from his way.”
1. Nothing changes today for we must warn others exiled to the destruction of sin, death, and the Devil.
* Certainly, like the apostles, Christ through the Church sends pastors to preach publicly God’s Word that brings warning sounds of repentance.
* However, Jesus did not keep this from your own life, “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone.”
* People will jump right to, “judge not lets you be judged,” but how much is that an excuse to just mind my own business and not bother with my neighbor?
* As we pray, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” It truly is about warning others so they can join us in repentance.
1. **Warning serves to witness how God cannot wait to forgive repentant children.**
2. Israel in exile was there for a better purpose that the will of God was to save His people.
* Where destruction and judgement was their way, the Lord had His way prepared with forgiveness for a repentant Israel.
* Behind Ezekiel stood God’s promise saying, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live (33:11).”
* The basis for everything that the Lord did whether by warning or rescue was to trust His Word as the authority of love.
* What God did long ago, the church now expands to pray for all nations as St. Paul says, “This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:3-4).
1. The will of the Father is now fully open for all with the gift of redemption by His Son.
* Like the Babylonians, God used the way of Roman crucifixion to punish Jesus Christ as the wrongdoer revealing His exile on the cross to be the ultimate sacrifice.
* Beyond warning the wicked, this love of God has died in our place and more than just “loving your neighbor as yourself” is faithful to save sinners.
* God longs to deliver forgiveness, which means the repentant trust to receive His authority of love as given by Word and Sacrament.
* To cherish His gifts does not make us better than others, but the baptized warn so that forgiveness remains for any in Jesus Christ.

 Even when we can better avoid situations with dangerous weather, no radar or government warns about what we hear today from Ezekiel. Only God has cared enough to deliver sinful humanity from enteral death and judgment. Christ has entrusted that responsibility now to His Church to carry salvation to the ends of the earth. Repairing homes, showing mercy, and extending help is good for a time. Yet, the baptized in that goodness calls out with a word of repentance to turn any to the eternal Gospel. Exile is not the end, but a new kingdom comes, a more glorious way in Christ, and victory promised by God’s Word. While our way fails to deal with sin, God’s way confronts sin looking to cover any with forgiveness in Christ. Amen. Now may the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.