DAY 8:

A Final Warning

Main Text

The Bible says, "And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he said with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters" **(Revelation 14:6, 7, NASB).**

[NOTE TO PRESENTER: *Well, we have come to the final day of our Week of Prayer focusing on the kingdom of God. This message is a solemn one because it gets to the very core of what the kingdom is all about and challenges us to deliver God's final warning to the world. The good news of salvation is the final message that we must take to the world before Jesus comes (Matthew 24:14). This calling is both solemn, yet exciting, because we get to participate in scenes of God's rescue plan for fallen humanity.]*

Hello, everyone! We have come to the last day of our Junior Youth Week of Prayer. God has taught us many things about His kingdom this week. We learned that Jesus preached tirelessly about it. We learned that He gave the disciples power to deliver the message of the kingdom, while performing some of the same miracles that He performed. We learned that we are called to enlist with God in the work of spreading the gospel. Today we will see that the call to spread the good news of salvation is the last warning that will be given to men and women, boys and girls. Therefore, we must take our responsibility very seriously. But before I begin, please allow me to share the following story with you.

The February 9, 1993 entry of *Today in the Word* featured this very famous illustration of why it's important to pay attention to warnings:

Argentinean race car driver Juan Manuel Fangio had just completed the opening lap of the 1950 Monaco Grand Prix. As he approached a dangerous bend for the second time, Fangio noticed that something was wrong. The faces of the spectators, which he usually saw as a whitish blur as he drove by, were all turned away from him.

"If they are not looking at me," Fangio thought, "they must be looking at something more interesting around the corner." So he braked hard and carefully rounded the bend, where he saw that his split second assessment had been accurate. The road was blocked by a massive pileup. If he had not paid attention, Fangio could have lost his life.

I am a bit haunted by the thought that skipped through Juan Manuel Fangio's mind: "If they are not looking at me, they must be looking at something more interesting around the corner." This line started me thinking about all the people I come across from day to day. Everyone's on some mobile device—head down, typing way—while dashing through life.

Those who are not texting, typing, or tweeting have their earbuds firmly in place, listening to something. I had to ask myself the question: If I were to talk about Jesus, would anyone stop to listen to what I have to say? Have you ever wondered if the gospel you have to share is compelling enough to take people's eyes away from the things that preoccupy us today?

No Distractions

In those few fleeting moments when human beings are not being distracted by technology or anything else, God can speak very powerfully to us. That's what He did for the prophet John during the time when he was sent into exile on a small Mediterranean Island called Patmos. Incidentally, you can visit that Isle today and see the cave where John lived, the place where God opened Hheaven to him and showed him the future.

Three Messages

Among the many messages God spoke to John are the three found in Revelation 14. These messages are delivered by very loud angels who are sharing a very, very serious message. These serious messages are placed in the context of the everlasting gospel. The angels say that this is the everlasting good news that Jesus brought to the world; however, the angels also confront the world with the eternal implications of not embracing the good news of God. They are warning the world of impending doom and disaster unless they pay close attention to the warnings and do what is asked.

What are these 'good news' and challenging messages? I'm glad you asked. The first angel carries the everlasting, or eternal, gospel and he calls all human beings to: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" (verses 6-7). The first angel "calls for the restoration of the true worship of God as Creator because the judgment hour has come" (*Seventh-Day Adventists Believe*, p. 166).

The second angel warns us "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great,' which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries" (verse 8). The Babylon spoken of here is a symbol of defiance against God. In Genesis 11:1-9, the Babel builders erected a tower after God had explicitly told them not to do so. Throughout the Bible, Babylon (Satan's city) and Jerusalem (God's city) are in open opposition. There is more to this Babylon, but you get the picture. The second angel wants us to avoid "all humanly-originated forms of worship" (*Seventh-Day Adventists Believe*, p. 166).

The third angel says: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives its mark on their forehead or on their hand, they, too, will drink the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever. There will be no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or for anyone who receives the mark of its name" (verses 9-11). "The third angel proclaims God's most solemn warning against worshipping the beast and his image—which all who reject the gospel of righteousness by faith will ultimately do" (*Seventh-Day Adventists Believe*, p. 167).

Notice that last statement very carefully. Those who reject the gospel of righteousness by faith in Jesus ultimately wind up in some kind of false worship, which eventually leads to their destruction. Based on what we've studied this week, can you see now why it is so important that we share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the world? Do you see why the kingdom message Jesus came to give was so important? Many lives are at stake if we fail to give this message!

God's Mercy

God is so merciful that He will not destroy anyone until they have had an opportunity to respond to His call. Consider this statement by Ellen G. White about the seriousness of God's final warning to the world:

"But God still has a people in Babylon; and before the visitation of His judgments these faithful ones must be called out, that they partake not of her sins and "receive not of her plagues." Hence the movement symbolized by the angel coming down from heaven, lightening the earth with his glory and crying mightily with a strong voice, announcing the sins of Babylon. In connection with his message the call is heard: 'Come out of her, My people.' These announcements, uniting with the third angel's message, constitute the final warning to be given to the inhabitants of the earth" (*The Great Controversy*, p.604).

You and me, we are God's mouthpieces on earth. We are called to deliver God's final warning to a perishing world. While we must tell our friends about the fearful destruction ahead, this is not the heart of our end-time warning. The heart of our message is Jesus Christ. We must urge everyone we know to accept Him, give their lives to Him, and worship Him. Now is the time to encourage all people to put their faith in Jesus and trust Him to transform them and get them ready for His soon return.

Appeal

Whether we know it or not, God wants to save us, and He wants to save others through us. If the people are not watching us because we have stopped sharing the love of Jesus with them, then shame on us. We have a world to win.

The appeal today is a simple one. It is a simple call to accept and deliver God's final message.

If you accept the responsibility to live the gospel you know and tell others about the Jesus who saved you, then please join me here so we can consecrate our lives to God in prayer.

[Close with a simple prayer, asking God to empower us to deliver His last message of love to the world.]

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does God use fear to get people to change their behavior? Can you give an example for or against based on your answer?

2. How do you feel when someone rejects your offers of help? How are we to take the rejections that are sure to come when we begin to share our faith? (See Matthew 10:14.)

3. Look up the meaning of "remnant" in the dictionary. What do you think it means to be a part of God's remnant church? Could the disciples be considered a type of remnant group?

4. Can we effectively share a message that we do not obey and live? Explain.