

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org).

**Date:** February 7, 2010

**Title:** “Act like Men”

**Text:** 1 Corinthians 16:13; Ezek. 22:28-31

**Theme:** The men are guardians and sentinels who are to watch for the enemy’s attack, make strong the walls, rebuild the broken and stand in the gap when the walls are breached.

**Author:** Patrick J. Griffiths ©2010

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

Date: February 7, 2010  
 Title: "Act like Men"  
 Text: 1 Corinthians 16:13; Ezek. 22:28-31  
 Theme: The men are guardians and sentinels who are to watch for the enemy's attack, make strong the walls, rebuild the broken and stand in the gap when the walls are breached.

**Introduction:**

What an incredible statement; simple and direct, why? Were they failing in this regard? Did they know what "acting like men" meant? Was there something out "there" defining manhood and its resultant responsibilities, roles and obligations? Was this only for married men or was it generic enough to encompass all men regardless as to status? What about our sisters-in-arms? Are they not equally in the battle for the souls of our children and families? Most assuredly they are. There are many women in this community of faith, who I will gladly serve alongside to beat back the devil's assaults, but my primary call is to the men of this fellowship to accept the role and responsibility of guarding the souls of our women and children. I mean no slight to women by speaking to men, nor do I lessen the intense battle you fight everyday for the souls of your children. Much of what I say is equally, and perhaps doubly true of our fellow female warriors. But my intent is to note the admonition that is directed at men specifically. Let us consider such a thought.

While reading through the Prophets (both major and minor) I found myself attracted to the resilient spirit embodied in both Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Both men were contemporaries of one another. Both ministered to the people of Judah during the dark days of their national demise by the Babylonian empire. Both had ministries lasting decades, and both were tried severely by their community.

What impressed me were two passages that appear to compliment each other. The one I've been familiar with since my college days when inspired to pick up the ministry mantle and follow the Lord to the hard place. The other I am not as friendly with but I am an acquaintance of the idea.

**The Storyline:**

God has written into His Story guardians, soldiers, sentinels who are to function as watchmen who protect the souls of the people and beat back the enemy's assaults. They are there to protect the woman's seed. If, and when, their life is demanded in the midst of the fray they with resolve place themselves in harm's way, and with conviction sacrifice their very lives so that others might live. This is God's Story and we are a part of it.

**The Problem:**

The devil, the world and the flesh have assaulted this responsibility through the unimaginable horror of oppressive chauvinism and the equally tragic godless feminism. In both cases, men are desensitized or so feminized that neither one is fulfilling their design. The devil has so neutered our respective genders that we have no idea what we are about or to be doing. We have women who act like men and men who act like women. The dismay is unspeakable

when it comes to society's mugging of the biblical view of what constitutes marriage and family.

TIME Magazine, "Gay Marriage Trial Rests, and a Key Ruling Awaits," By Michael A. Lindenberger Friday, Jan. 29, 2010

The federal trial over gay marriage has rested, and we won't know who won until U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker calls the lawyers back to hear closing arguments and issues his ruling. That is likely to take several weeks. **But it's already clear that the verdict itself will be only a beginning, as all sides shift their focus from testimony to the real task of convincing federal appellate judges, and ultimately the U.S. Supreme Court, to rule their way.** What's equally clear now, after nearly three weeks of evidence, is that no matter what happens, the debate over gay marriage will never again be the same. By bringing this case, legal powerhouses David Boies and Ted Olson – have **managed to make mainstream the notion of gay marriage in a way that not even years of campaigning by gay-rights groups had been able to.** <sup>1</sup>

We must not discriminate against those whose rejection of God is blatant, but neither must we accommodate and encourage their sin. We cannot justify, accommodate nor entertain the devil's attempt to destroy and rewrite the biblical narrative. Although my time is limited, there is a more fundamental reason as to why we see this decay and hostile takeover. Today we are answering this charge and challenge.

I am not speaking of whether or not mothers should work outside the home during their parenting years or whether or not men should change diapers and do dishes. Those ideas become apparent when we see and accept the greater truth of protecting the home and the church. We will do what we must in the carrying out of God's Story.

The Bible speaks to this idea so consistently and prevalently that we are able only to handle but a few of the many passages. My call this morning is for us as men to lead our home and church, and where this is lacking to step into the gap and guard the greater good against the enemy's assault.

### Questions:

1. What has God placed into the Story to guard the woman's seed from the assault by Satan's seed?
2. Why does the Scripture call us to "act like men"?
3. How does 1 Corinthians 16:13 describe manhood?
4. To what task have the men been called?
5. How does this play out in the home?
6. How does this play out in the church?
7. What happens when the men abandon their role and run in the face of battle?
8. What might this abandonment look like?
9. Is standing in the gap with peril?
10. Is it possible to be a watchman even while you work?
11. What is the outcome of watchmen doing their "job"?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

**To Know:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to know who you are and what your role is in the Story of God.

**To Choose:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to see and accept the call to “act like men.”

**To Feel:** The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of standing strong in the faith.

**Outline:**

I. The clear call to be a man (1 Cor. 16:13; Ezek. 22:30)

I would like to lead with a passage that represents the Story well. The command, call or invitation assumes we know what this means and implies. It does not say, “Act like women.” It says, “Act like men.” The Scripture is not sexist. I will comment on this idea later in the study. The Scripture does however give men the responsibility to be watchmen of the city.

“Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, **act like men**, be strong” (1 Cor. 16:13).

In 1 Corinthians, the various commands are working synonyms. They are essentially saying the same thing. Acting like men is staying alert, standing firm and being strong. I believe they all center around “the faith.” Within the context of the church, guard against the anarchy that exists. Follow those who lead and celebrate the diversity without polarizing around personalities. However, let us consider the thought by unpacking Paul’s words.

A. The way or manner of men

a. The call to stay alert.

The call to stay awake or be on the alert communicates a graphic idea. It is the word our Lord Christ uses in His sermon on the Mt. of Olives to call His people to attentiveness as to His coming (Matt. 24:42, 43; 25:13; Luke 12:37, 39 [Paul uses the word in the same way in 1 Thessalonians 5:6; John likewise uses the same word as coming from the lips of our Lord; Rev. 3:2, 3; 16:15]) He uses it to describe the watchman who is to guard the city against the enemy’s assault (Mark 13:34, 35, 37). Since we do not know when the assault will come we must be ever vigilant. It is the same word He uses when asking His disciples to “watch and pray” while He wrestles in prayer (Matt. 26:38, 40, 41; Mark 14:34, 37, 38). In both cases it is contrasted with lethargy and apathy. Temptation is the rebel’s assault. We must be alert at all times.

It is the word Paul uses when he appeals to the Elders of Ephesus to attentiveness over the flock of God (Acts 20:31). It is the same word he uses concerning prayer (Col. 4:2). Peter uses the word to call his audience to vigilance in light of Satan’s persistent attack (1 Pet. 5:8). The call is to attentiveness in light of imminent danger. To be caught off guard will prove harmful.

b. The call to stand firm.

It is used literally of one “standing” (Mark 11:25). It is used figuratively of one who passes the test (Rom. 14:4). **It speaks of endurance, of being unmovable** (Gal. 5:1; Phil. 1:27; 4:1; 1 Thess. 3:8; 2 Thess. 2:15). Apart from Mark 11:25, it is used only by Paul.

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; **therefore keep standing firm** and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1).

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are **standing firm in one spirit**, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27).

“Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, **in this way stand firm in the Lord**, my beloved” (Phil. 4:1).

“for now we really live, **if you stand firm in the Lord**” (1 Thess. 3:8).

“So then, brethren, **stand firm and hold to** the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us” (2 Thess. 2:15).

The call is for us **NOT TO GIVE UP OR IN.** Do not check out or walk out on your responsibilities. When you give up the gate, the enemy will flood in and rape and pillage the sacred trust.

c. The call to be strong.

The word means, “To empower, to increase in vigor.” Instead of wearing out, you buckle down and man up. It is the word used to describe John the Baptist and our Lord’s childhood and adolescence (Luke 1:80; 2:40). It is also the word used in prayer for His people “to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16).

All of these convey a singular idea and that is to stay the course, and if you have not been in the fight, then get in their and start swinging.

The second text is Ezekiel 22:30.

**“I searched for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one”** (Ezek. 22:30).

B. The work or mission of men (Ezek. 22:30).

Ezekiel speaks of a wall breached and in need of repair. Someone needs to rebuild and until then stand in the gap. If we do not rebuild and stand until it is rebuilt, we will experience destruction. The appeal for anyone is broad.

“Any one among princes, prophets, priests, or people, to repair the breach” [and stand in the gap, but I found no one]. (John Wesley on Ezekiel 22:30).

Let us consider the admonition.

a. We are to build up the wall

The Hebrew word comes from “a primitive root and means to wall in or around:--close up, fence up, hedge, enclose, make up (a wall), mason, repairer.” We are going to come back to this idea later, but for now note the idea of a mason or one who builds the hedge of protection.

b. We are to stand in the gap

This is what Abraham did for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18:23-32. He sought to stand in the gap. Building and rebuilding the wall in a time of peace is the best time to put your hand to this labor. Once the wall is breached either through neglect or assault, the rebuilding becomes precarious as to personal safety. Standing in the gap when the enemy attacks is really perilous; but someone must accept the call and place themselves in harm’s way for the greater good.

c. With the result that they would not be destroyed

“I saw that there was a grievous breach made in the moral state and feeling of the people, and I sought for a man that would stand in the gap; that would faithfully exhort, reprove and counsel, with all long-suffering and doctrine. But none was to be found!”<sup>2</sup>

Notice the parallel language of his peer Jeremiah.

<sup>5</sup> “So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. <sup>6</sup> On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. <sup>7</sup> **Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war fled and went forth from the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls which was by the king's garden,** though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah. <sup>8</sup> But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him. <sup>9</sup> Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him” (Jer. 52:5-9).

As noted earlier, the context for both passages is a nation under siege by her enemies. It is true that they “deserved the severe judgment befalling them,” but regardless as to the context they were still to stand fast. Ezekiel speaks to this idea of someone standing between the people and the judgment of God in the form of the enemy’s onslaught. This same idea is echoed elsewhere.

“Therefore He said that He would destroy them, **Had not Moses His chosen one stood in the breach before Him**, To turn away His wrath from destroying them” (Ps. 106:23).

“Roam to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, And look now and take note. And seek in her open squares, **If you can find a man**, If there is one who does justice, who seeks truth, Then I will pardon her” (Jer. 5:1).

“**You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall** around the house of Israel to stand in the battle on the day of the LORD” (Ezek. 13:5) (same Hebrew word used in Ezek. 22:30).

God was seeking and fully expecting to find someone who would stand in the gap in order to stay the coming judgment. Jeremiah speaks to the idea that the city was under siege and a breach was made in the walls and the men of war fled at night. Those who were responsible for keeping the city safe fled under cover of night. They fled in fear. They gave up the fight. These men of war failed to stand in the gap before God in order that judgment might be stayed.

Place yourself in their situation. Your enemies are outside the gate. Their intent is to rape and murder your wives and daughters. Those who are pregnant will have their children forcefully aborted. Your young men will be taken into bondage in a foreign land. The options are two-fold: stay and fight knowing you will probably die or flee to save your own life knowing the inevitable outcome for those left behind. What choice do you have? Is there really a choice? What if your family was being attacked? What if someone threatened your daughter and sought to forcefully take her moral purity? What if someone was forcefully taking your male children or grandchildren into slavery without any chance of seeing them again? **Would you let them go freely, would you flee in order to save your own life, or would you stay and fight until your last breath was removed from you?** I am not what I once was physically, but I would die defending my family from physical harm, and I am resolved to equally stand against the enemies of their soul who would do them spiritual harm. What if you were under attack by your enemies? Would you fight or would you surrender or would you run away in order to save yourself; shame on you if you abandon the fight when life is threatened. Perhaps you are a single mother seeking to raise your children. I would guarantee you there is no fury like a mother’s fury if anyone sought to harm and destroy your children physically, and this is no less true spiritually. As a community of faith we are called to protect all the families who are a part of this flock.

Friend, when we are confronted by an enemy that is tangible, the answer always seems more apparent. Yet we are under attack. Our homes and churches are under siege by the relentless adversary. The world, fallen flesh and the adversary of man’s soul is seeking to rape, pillage and destroy all that we count dear. They are after you, but more significantly they are after your children and grandchildren. They might not be able to break you, but they will be able to indoctrinate your children to reject God, abandon His relationship and rebel against His rule.

How can we imagine that this onslaught of evil is any less true for us? The world, the flesh and the devil are in an unholy war against God. They are besieging the city of God, and the men of war are called upon to stand in the gap before God so that evil will be kept at bay. Gentlemen, it is time we “belly up” to the table and throw our chips into the pot (there are other ways of saying this, but I’ll leave that to your own imagination). How can we allow our women and children to be pillaged by the pagan hordes of Satan’s brand? Does not the Scripture warn us of Satan’s relentless pursuit?

<sup>8</sup> “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, **prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.** <sup>9</sup> But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world” (1 Pet. 5:8, 9).

We are not only responsible for our own immediate family, but the family of families that make up our community of faith. The call to arms and the trumpet of war has blasted long and loud. It is now time to awaken and stand in the gap.

## II. The imminent peril of standing in the gap

### a. It is marked by selflessness

The resolve of some fails. They were so busy focusing on their career that they failed to respond to the call and lost the battle for the souls of their families. They lost their contentment in God and sought the proverbial “greener pasture.” They became discontent and disconnected by others at work and gave up the fight. They no longer gave their time and effort to their children simply because it was too much work.

### b. It is marked by sacrifice

It very well might cost you your life. In fact, it will cost you your life. You might say you didn’t sign up for this, but it’s the price of being a man.

## III. The great cloud of witnesses who have gone before (Neh. 4:17-23; Num. 16:47-50)

There is a plague in our land and it is killing our people. God is looking for someone who will stand in the gap and be that person who stays the dying. Like Aaron of old “we must take our stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague might be checked.”

<sup>47</sup> “Then Aaron took it as Moses had spoken, and ran into the midst of the assembly, for behold, the plague had begun among the people. So he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. <sup>48</sup> **He took his stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague was checked.** <sup>49</sup> But those who died by the plague were 14,700, besides those who died on account of Korah. <sup>50</sup> Then Aaron returned to Moses at the doorway of the tent of meeting, for the plague had been checked” (Num. 16:47-50).

This same scenario came again and it was Phinehas the son of Eleazar who stood in the gap and stayed the assaults of Satan's seed against that of the woman's.

<sup>6</sup> "Then behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>7</sup> When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, **he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand,** <sup>8</sup> **and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body.** So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked. <sup>9</sup> Those who died by the plague were 24,000. <sup>10</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>11</sup> 'Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away My wrath from the sons of Israel in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in My jealousy. <sup>12</sup> Therefore say, 'Behold, I give him My covenant of peace; <sup>13</sup> and it shall be for him and his descendants after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the sons of Israel'" (Num. 25:6-13).

Are you "jealous for your God"?

Listen to how this person is described in Isaiah 58:1-14. Especially note verses 6-12 and especially note verse 12.

"Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age-old foundations; And **you will be called the repairer of the breach,** The restorer of the streets in which to dwell" (Isa. 58:12).

This is the same Hebrew word used in Ezek. 22:30. God was looking for this type of individual and you can be the one who goes down as "the repairer of the breach." Wow, O God may this be true of me. May my voice never quiver or my stand quake, but may I with steadfast resolve answer your call to "act like men". This is the heritage you can leave those who follow in your wake.

Let us for a moment consider the great statesman Nehemiah who ministered to a people overwhelmed by the call.

<sup>17</sup> "Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who carried burdens took their load **with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon.** <sup>18</sup> As for the builders, each wore his sword girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter stood near me. <sup>19</sup> I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, 'The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall far from one another. <sup>20</sup> **At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.**' <sup>21</sup> So we carried on the work with half of them holding spears from dawn until the stars appeared. <sup>22</sup> At that time I also said to the people, 'Let each man with his servant spend the night within Jerusalem so that they may be a guard for us by night and a laborer by day.' <sup>23</sup> **So neither I, my brothers, my servants, nor the men of the guard who**

**followed me, none of us removed our clothes, each took his weapon even to the water**" (Neh. 4:17-23).

Notice the striking balance of work and war. In one hand we go to work and secure the means of maintaining physical life, and on the other hand we keep our weapon ready. The two are not in conflict. Dear God, may we like Nehemiah weep when we see our city in disarray (Neh. 1:3, 4). May we be people of fortitude who will call the people of God to arms and action. May we sound the trumpet and may we rally to the call. May we set our hearts on rebuilding what has been neglected and needy. May we not sleep until the city is secured. May we refuse the comforts and conveniences of our culture so that we might with attentiveness and blood thirst keep our eyes on the Captain of our salvation. When the work demanded a man to stand in the gap before the LORD and against His enemies the men of Nehemiah's day answered the call.

#### IV. The inescapable question facing us all

Will you make the hard choice not only to accept God's invitation, but to make the necessary steps to guard your home and church from the enemy's assaults? Your first priority is the home and then the church. Some of you are perhaps preparing to withdraw from the fight for your homes and the families of this fellowship. Every time we have a "baby dedication" this is the call we make. You accept that challenge when you say, "We do." Now I once more challenge you to accept the invitation to protect those who are under assault and who find themselves simply overwhelmed by the enemy's surge. Friend, stand your ground, if not for yourself, for others.

Listen to the resolve from two notable sources.

Martin Luther

The enforcement of the ban on the 95 Theses fell to the secular authorities. On 18 April 1521, Luther appeared as ordered before the Diet of Worms. Johann Eck, speaking on behalf of the Empire as assistant of the Archbishop of Trier, presented Luther with copies of his writings laid out on a table and asked him if the books were his, and whether he stood by their contents. Luther confirmed he was their author, but requested time to think about the answer to the second question. He prayed, consulted friends, and gave his response the next day:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.

“Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death,” March 23, 1775. By Patrick Henry

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace--but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

O God set our hearts fast. Let us as men, husbands and fathers stand against the onslaughts touching our own souls and those of our families, friends and communities of faith. May we not give in - if (and when) the walls are breached - may we not flee, BUT MAY WE STAND!!

O may God the Holy Spirit quicken us to our holy task. May we awaken us to the spiritual warfare that unfolds all around us and seeks to devour and consume. Father, I beg you to build strong walls around your people. May we receive this sacred trust and protect the walls against the enemies of our souls. May we not fear, but may we fight and when and if the walls are breached may we not run, but stand. May our lines be drawn and may we die before we surrender, Amen.

O watchman what of the night (Ezek. 33:6)?

**“But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand”** (Ezek. 33:6).

**Shepherding the Sheep:** (What’s the NEXT STEP?)

1. Will you stand with me/us? Will you answer the call? The life of your family and those of this fellowship are at stake.
2. Friend, this has been and will continue to be my sacred and holy resolve to my wife and family and to the families of this fellowship, so help me God. Will you stand with me/us? Will you answer the call?

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1957505,00.html?xid=rss-topstories>

<sup>2</sup> *Adam Clarke's Commentary* on Ezekiel 22:30