

# LWML SUNDAY

OCTOBER 6, 2013

## WATCHMAN ON THE LONG WALL

Pastor Jim Dunn

### Isaiah 62:1-7

#### Zion's Coming Salvation

**62** For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be  
quiet,  
until her righteousness goes forth as  
brightness,  
and her salvation as a burning torch.

**2** The nations shall see your  
righteousness,  
and all the kings your glory,  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the Lord will give.

**3** You shall be a crown of beauty in the  
hand of the Lord,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of  
your God.

**4** You shall no more be termed Forsaken,  
and your land shall no more be  
termed Desolate,  
but you shall be called My Delight Is in

Her,  
and your land Married;  
for the Lord delights in you,  
and your land shall be married.

**5** For as a young man marries a young  
woman,  
so shall your sons marry you,  
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the  
bride,  
so shall your God rejoice over you.

**6** On your walls, O Jerusalem,  
I have set watchmen;  
all the day and all the night  
they shall never be silent.

You who put the Lord in remembrance,  
take no rest,

**7** and give him no rest  
until he establishes Jerusalem  
and makes it a praise in the earth.

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In those terrible floods in Colorado a few weeks ago, several people died. You wonder what kind of idiot lets himself get caught out in the open in such terrible weather. Well, an idiot like Gerry Boland.

Gerry was an 80-year-old retired math teacher and basketball coach. Married to his wife, Cheron, for 54 years. Well, one night during the flooding, Gerry and Cheron received the order to evacuate their home. They decided to head to the local shelter, the very school where Gerry had taught for 30 years. And they decided to take both her car and his truck. Well, somehow on the way to the shelter, the two cars got separated. Which was understandable, since all of the roadways were flooded that night. The family believes that Gerry made it to the school, but when he got there, he did not see Cheron, because it took her quite a while to get to the school. So, he went back towards home to look for her. Well, she eventually made it to the school. But his truck was later found near their home. Apparently stalled out and abandoned due to the floodwaters, and his body was found elsewhere, one of several victims of that terrible flood.

So, that's the kind of idiot who drowned in those Colorado floods. The kind who loved his wife so much he went looking for her when he thought she was lost. It's a tragic story. But there isn't one husband here who doesn't hope he would do the same for his wife: risk his life to go out and look for her if she became lost.

But what would we risk for those who are lost from the Lord? Would we risk what Gerry did for his bride, Cheron?

Or, what the Lord risked for His bride, the city of Jerusalem? Jerusalem was lost from the Lord. Her people were worshiping false gods. As punishment from the Lord, her people would be captured and carried off into Babylonian exile. Leaving the city deserted and empty. Still the Lord would go looking for her people like Gerry went looking for his bride, Cheron. The Lord would go looking for the people of Jerusalem to find and rescue them, to bring them home again.

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He said of Jerusalem: "People will not call you Deserted anymore. They will no longer name your land Empty. Instead, you will be called The One The Lord Delights In. Your land will be named The Married One. I will take delight in you. And your land will be like a bride. As a young man gets married to a young woman, your people will marry you. *As a groom is happy with his bride, I will be full of joy over you, says the Lord.*" (Isaiah 62:4-5)

Sounds like Gerry and how he felt about his bride, Cheron. What would we risk for those who are lost from the Lord? The Lord needs watchmen to stand on the walls. The Lord says, "Jerusalem, I have stationed guards on your walls. They must *never* be silent day or night."

The Lord has need of watchmen "standing high on Zion's wall, pointing out the path to heaven." The Lord needs watchmen to stand on the wall. Not to keep people out, nor to keep people in... but to urge the lost to go. "Go out through your gates, people of Jerusalem! Go out!" Jesus has opened the locked gates of guilt and despair and eternal death. You're free! Go out! Go in peace! You are free! The Lord needs watchmen to proclaim that message, never being silent, standing ever vigilant on the walls.

But oh how far those walls go. Those walls meander into faraway countries. Those walls descend into places of deep poverty. Those walls zigzag into cultures different from our own, even right here in our own backyard. How far must we go to be watchmen on those walls? How far must we go for the lost to be able to hear our words of rescue? How much must we risk for the lost? The mission dollars given by the women of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League make mission work possible in every corner of this world. Yet, in our own corner of the earth, here in Midtown Kansas City, how far must we go for the lost to hear our words about Jesus and His love? How far out on the edge on the wall must we go? Toe-tapping music? Lifting our hands in prayer? How far must we go financially? How much must we risk? How far must we go, we ask, in our weariness?

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Can the lost even be found? Did that thought cross Gerry's mind as he prepared to go back out into the flood for the sake of his bride, Cheron?

A lost college graduation ring was found in an underwater cave off the east coast of Africa. There was no name on it, only the name of the college. So, an article was placed in the alumni newsletter about the ring. No one came forward to claim the ring. Then, an unrelated story turned up a classmate who enjoyed water sports and had gone on a dive in the Indian Ocean in 1985. Wearing her class ring. Which slipped off her finger while on the dive. And which she had given up ever finding. "*There was no way it was going to be found,*" she said when the ring was returned to her. Is that what we're tempted, in our weariness, to think about the lost? In the end, when we look back, will it be worth the price we paid for the lost?

It is this weariness that makes the words of Jesus so compelling. "Come to Me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." The Lord speaks of rest here in Isaiah 62. He says that the watchmen on the wall are not to give Him any rest. They are to keep praying that *the Lord* will rescue the lost. Because He never needs any rest. But He knows that we do. He knows that watchmen on the walls need rest. "Come to Me all you who are weary, and I will give you rest."

He held no political office or had any powerful political connections that could help us. He didn't write a Christian bestseller offering tips on how to have success in the church. Yet, He dares to look into your face and mine, the faces of schoolteachers and managers, administrators, nurses, students, and accountants, and a preacher or two and make this bold promise: "Come to Me all you who are weary, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28-29)

And the people came...out of the gates of Jerusalem, out of the cul-de-sacs and business parks, out of the 'hood and the high schools. They brought Jesus their burdens too heavy to carry, and He gave them not religion but rest.

As a result they called Him Lord and they called Him Savior. Not just because of what Jesus said but also because of what He did for them on a cross. He put their sins and guilt and failures to rest. And their appointment with eternal death was laid to eternal rest in Jesus' yawning tomb.

They were free. Free to prepare the way for others to be found. Free to prepare the way for others to return to the Lord. They were free from the locked gates of weariness and fear and skepticism. They were free to stand as watchmen on the walls.

Amen