

Remnant Life Church  
September 22, 2013  
**One Year: Vigilant From The Tower**  
Acts 2:42-47

- A study done in 2008 – approx. 4500 churches started – the vast majority denominationally supported
  - In that same time frame - 3,500 to 4,000 churches close
  - After 4 yrs approx. 65% of those started will still be operational
  - 1500 pastors leave the ministry each month
  - Nearly 80% of over 1000 pastors surveyed stated that they had been forced to resign at least once from a church and 63% more than once
1. The second chapter of Acts gives the blueprint of what the focus of the church should be - (READ)
- a. Worship
  - b. Teaching
  - c. Fellowship
  - d. Caring for each other
  - e. Welcoming
- How do we guard this church from becoming a statistic?
    - a. The Bible speaks often of keeping watch, being watchful, alert, on guard – why?
      - i. **1 Peter 5:8** - *Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*
        1. Alert = vigilantly active
        2. Sober = calm
        3. Prowl = make use of opportunity
        4. Devour = swallow up
    - b. The watchtower was the highest point of the city or fortress
      - a. The romans are credited with some of the first
      - b. Someone would be posted there every hour of every day
      - c. WWII tower in Cape May
      - d. While they have been rendered all but obsolete except in prisons and for use by fire spotters it is still an important weapon for the church
2. WHAT ARE WE WATCHING FOR?
- a. Division (cliques)
    - i. Def. – any group that separates itself from the rest of the main body through a singular identity excluding anyone who does not meet their specified criteria.

1. Cliques isolate and separate
2. Can take any form with any group
- ii. **I Cor. 12:24-25** -...but God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.
- iii. **PSALM 133:1** - How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

b. Jealousy

- i. Webster – an unhappy or angry feeling driven by wanting what someone else has
- ii. Jealousy is listed among those things that God cannot abide
  1. **Acts 13:45** - When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him
  2. Paul says in **Galatians 5** that those who embrace this will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven

c. Selfishness

- i. The Bible almost always speaks of this with the word ambition
  1. Paul writes about this in 3 of his letters
  2. **James 3:16** - For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find discord and every evil practice.
- ii. The ambition of the flesh will always be selfish or for its own desires alone
- iii. It also always produces its own fruit

d. Gossip

- i. This alone has destroyed more churches, driven more pastors out of ministry, and been the ruin of more relationships than any other element
- ii. 7 times in the NIV the word gossip is found; 6 of them in the wisdom of Proverbs
  1. **11:13** - A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.
  2. **18:8** - The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts.
  3. **26:20** - Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.
- iii. Christians try and mask when they do this by stating they are telling you so “you can pray better for them.”
  1. If you simply say “pray for so and so” then you are a friend; if you speak in details of the situation then you are a gossip
  2. If you know of someone who is having a hard time YOU pray for them
  3. Satan wants us to gossip so that we will judge one another instead of supporting one another

### 3. HOW DO WE DEFEAT THESE THINGS?

#### a. Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus

i. Desiring His will for this church and our lives over anything else

1. **Heb 12: 1-2** ...*let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

ii. Stay in an attitude of prayer in all things

#### b. Love each other

i. **Prov 10:12** - *Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.*

ii. **I Peter 4:8** - *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*

iii. Paul talks in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of **I Corinthians** about spiritual gifts, prophesy, parts of the church body but then he says to them let me tell you about what is most important - LOVE