

## “Vigilant!”

### I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Missions Card** - Steven & Aryn Caligiuri. (Serve in Spain; cross cultural studies; Gathering place & Art gallery; here today in the info booth)
- B. **Simply Christmas** - 1 of the Crafters yesterday gave all her proceeds to Burma(\$233); *1 of our S.S. Classes* had a bake sale last Sun.; *Jake* is mowing lawns; *Jorie* having a birthday party instead of gifts, donation to Burma; The *Runner family* took the \$ they were going to spend on Christmas Cards & postage & will be donating it to Partners Ministry(email greetings instead); **Many** are saying instead of \$ on a gift for them personally to use that to donate.

### II. **VIGILANT PRAYER!**

- A. **PRAY!** (1-6)
- B. (2) Prayer consists of a **persevering will(earnest)**, an **alert mind (vigilant)**, & a **grateful heart (thanksgiving)**.
  - 1. Pray **continually** with **mental alertness**. And let **thankfulness** be your environment for good informed praying, concerning what God **has done, is doing, & is going to do**.
  - 2. Whatever the attitude of the body, the soul should always be on its knees. (Maclaren)
- C. **Vigilant** - implies alertness, avoiding all drowsiness & sleep. Watchfulness.
  - 1. We are **not** to watch **ourselves** (that would be **depressing**);  
 We are **not** to watch **Satan** (that would be **distracting**);  
 We are **not** to watch **our sins** (that would be **disheartening**);  
 We are to keep our gaze **fixed on Christ**.
- D. (2-4) **Pray also for us!** - Let's move from the *church of Colosse* to the *church of Murrieta*.
- E. **Church Update: Where are we at? Rumors.**
  - 1. Back when we were seeking to develop the **new property** we had a **line of credit** to draw from. We chose instead to **save the interest payments** & use our cash reserves.
  - 2. **Problems:** [1] There was the possibility of **selling our property** by this last fall (fell through) [2] Tap the **line of credit** when we needed it (do to economy, bank withdrew our line of credit)

3. **What now?** We went as long as we could without reducing staff. I talked to senior staff back in August that this year we were going to have a projected shortfall of about \$474,000. *{When our attendance was up we hired to that size; since #'s have come down, we never downsized}*
  - a) Its our boards desire to have the **school & church** both **sustain themselves** & **not** be dependent on the other.
  - b) Our giving is about \$10,000 lower weekly, & so it is only right for us to make both **spending & staff reductions**.
    - (1) Maybe some of you need to be encouraged to participate in your **weekly giving** which is for **you** to pray about; **but** what **WE** need to do is **“Not spend more than what God provides!!!”**
    - (2) **We need to adjust** to what God is providing. If He **provides** less, we need to **spend** less.
4. **Staff Reductions:** Hardest, because we're not a business, but a **family**.
  - a) **Some** were led to **resign**; **others** are feeling the **Lords leading** in other directions; **others** have been **reduced** to 2 days a week, starting Jan 1.
  - b) **Pastor Dan** has helped in this process by voluntarily **cutting back** his days here to 3 days; **Pastor Larry** is picking up those duties.
    - (1) **Dean** is pursuing other employment; **Pastor Bill & Janet** are praying about a possible church plant in the Valley;
    - (2) **Youth Department: Armando** is praying about a church plant in *San Bernardino*; **Dominic** is looking at a couple options, but desires to still lead the Junior High; **Todd** is looking at a few options also.
5. **Results? Volunteerism & Partnership** (**Core Value: Participation, Encouraging all believers to discover & use their unique ministry gifts**)
  - a) **Maybe it was getting to easy** to “get a pastor/staff to do it”?
  - b) We need to get back to a **volunteer run church**, **not staff led**.
  - c) **This is where each of you will be challenged to step up, discover, & use your unique ministry gifts!**
6. I'm very **excited** about what God is going to do for our future; **but** also we as a staff are absolutely sick & emotionally spent regarding these needed changes.
7. **May I ask for your sensitivity** to our staff that will be leaving?
  - a) They have feelings. Worries, fears, & questions about their family & future.
  - b) And for those who have rebuked me (not to my face) for “getting rid of” such top notch guys, **sometimes you have to release some of up your best**.
  - c) **Focus on the Family** had to lay off 149 employees; **CCCM 300**.
  - d) **PRAY for us!**

- F. (3) Paul prayed **not** for an **open prison door**, **but** an **open door of ministry**.
1. We're not seeing the answer as **a big fat check** to meet the needs; we're asking God to **help us get to that place where He wants us** in reference to stewardship.
- G. So vs.2-4 have covered, Be **Prayerful; Watchful; Thankful; & now Fruitful**.
- H. (5) **Watch your walk!** (then, **Watch your mouth!**)
- I. **Walk in wisdom** means to **live a life of conduct** in such a way as to impress & win them that are without.
1. **The Christian is the worlds bible**. They're watching to see whether there is any **reality** in our religion.
- J. **Those who are outside** - The unsaved are **outside** the family of God, & it is our task to **bring them in**.
1. **Effect witness involves walking wisely**. Be alert to every opportunity.
- K. **Redeeming the time** - "**buying up the opportunity**". Letting no opportunity be lost, using every occasion wisely to impress & if possible lead them to Christ.
- L. (6) **Watch your mouth!**
1. Be careful **what** you say & **how** you say it.
  2. Your conversation is to be suited to each person.
    - a) It calls for Christian graciousness & sensitivity to the specific person & situation.
- M. **Seasoned with salt** - it should have such a **spiritual flavor** that it will never be **bland**, **but forceful & telling, wholesome, free from all harm**, & capable of **inspiring others** with moral & spiritual blessing.
1. **:( Bland Christian speech! - spiritual platitudes**, lines that have been used **too often**, it has become dull, "have faith", "God knows", "it's a God thing".
    - a) **Jesus didn't use these!** Have content, depth, **salt!**
- N. **CO-WORKERS!** (7-14)
- O. **Aristarchus** - There's a time to be **active** for Christ, & other times "sitting in prison cells of inactivity".
1. **An old woman, full of action & activity**, was laid aside, & her friends wondered how she could possibly bear the **inaction** after her constant **restless service**. When they asked about this, she replied, "When I was able to do it the Lord said, 'Betty, go here,' & 'Betty, go there,' but now He says, 'Betty, lie still & cough.'"

- P. Paul names 6 men who were working at his side & encourages them in the Lord.
1. I'd like to **honor & thank** a handful of guys:
- Q. (17) **Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.**
- R. **Bill** - Remember when Bill & Janet got married, had Breanna; worked here since 1994; building projects & many remodels, all forms of counseling & benevolence, started & for years involved w/Sat morn mens prayer; hospital calls & home visitations, bereavement ministry, seniors ministry, weddings & memorials.
- S. **Dean** - Came on with us when he retired from phone company; ran our bookstore for years; [**Events coordinator** of Harvest Festival for many years; father/son fishing trip; Christmas/Easter; & community outreaches] been coordinating the facility use & church calendar. Love Dean's friendship, he's been a big brother to me, taught me a lot about hunting & fish ("we need to go quail hunting today after work, you need it!").
1. And to honor him, I got 1 more quail than he did! :-)
- T. **Todd** - The plodder. has been here for probably 17 years; does counseling; College & Career; Singles; & started & runs a very successful Divorce Recovery.
- U. **Armando** - committed to me for 2 years & has been here for 7; has done a wonderful job with our High Schoolers & raising up leadership; also a great preacher(did our Sunday Night study for a few years). Has had a yearning for San Bernardino for years.
- V. Each of these men have made this church what it is today...& I am so thankful for them.
- W. I asked God one question on my spiritual day (Fri. Nov.21st) **"Is this of you?"**
1. It was confirmed in my heart that day.
- X. I also want to think my **advisory board**: *Des; Mike; Dan; Larry* whom I love & trust & appreciate the wisdom God has given these men.
1. We have prayed, thought, strategized, & fretted together over all these decisions..for months.
- Y. **Closing Blessing!** (16-18)
- Z. **Grace be with you!** Paul ends with the blessings of **God's Grace** to be upon us!
1. We're always so afraid of cheapening God's grace.
  2. **Let me end with this exhortation from a "Robert Farrar Capon".**
- AA. You're worried about permissiveness - about the way **the preaching of grace** seems to say it's okay to do all kinds of terrible things as long as you just walk in afterward and take the free gift of God's forgiveness...While you and I may be worried about seeming to give permission, **Jesus apparently wasn't**. He wasn't afraid of giving the **prodigal son** a **kiss** instead of a **lecture**, a **party** instead of **probation**; and he proved that by bringing in **the elder brother** at the end of the story and having him raise pretty much the same objections you do...

[He's angry about the party. He complains that his father is lowering standards and ignoring virtue - that music, dancing, and a fatted calf are, in effect, just so many permissions to break the law.] And to that, **Jesus has the father** say only one thing: "**Cut that out!** We're not playing **good boys** and **bad boys** any more. Your brother was **dead** and he's **alive** again. The name of the game from now on is **resurrection**, not **bookkeeping**." Robert Farrar Capon, *Between Noon and Three*

BB. This Wed night "*The Original Grinch*";

Next Sunday "*Jesus wanted NOTHING for Christmas!*"

CC. Christmas 7pm "*Simply Christmas*"

Christmas 11pm "*Simply Givers, Simply Receivers*" (Candle Lighting)