

Guard Your Gates

Matthew 5:13-16 (*Focus Matt. 5:14*)

In Biblical times, cities were built fortified which meant that they were protected like forts, with walls surrounding the entire city. City walls and city gates were built to protect what was inside to the walls.

Cities would often come under attack because it was a matter of taking over someone land then you will possess the land and everything on it.

So with the fort-like building, **city walls** were made out of stone or brick. The walls would be massive in height and depth. The walls would be so thick that people could live within the walls. You remember the prostitute Rhab that was visited by the spies that were sent by Joshua, her house was built in the walls. But the walls were made primarily to protect the city.

City gates were the entrances and the exits for the city. The gates of the city would open in the morning and close at night. There could easily be a lot going on at the gate. Elders and judges would often sit at the gates and hear cases. The market for the city was usually located near the gate. People would bring their goods to the area to sell.

But just like the city walls, gates were primarily built to protect the city. City gates were made out of wood covered with metal. Iron bars held the doors in place. As warfare became more sophisticated, the gates (the doors) became the most vulnerable part of the wall during an attack.

So as war tactics progress engineering of the wall did also. Cities were beginning to be built with two gates instead of one for an entrance. These gates were built at 90° angles of each other. So when the enemy would come to the gate, he would first have to get through. If he could get through the first gate, dressed in his armor, he would have to make a left turn to try and get through the second gate.

Well, this sounds easy to do, yeah but you were not the enemy. When he would make that left turn with his shield in his right hand, he exposes the left side of his body to the soldiers that lived in the city. He became under attack. He thought he was trying to be sneaking but once he thought he was in, he found out, he was not in the city at all.

I come to tell you, “The devil thinks he has you right where he wants you. But you are at child of God.”

The enemy has tried his last creep and his last pick a-boo, his last hide and go seek, in your situation, and I’m telling you to ask God to expose the enemy and return him back to the pit of Hell, where he came from.

You will stop asking is this of God or of the enemy.

You are not going to have to wonder are you doing the right thing.

You are not going to have to wonder, am I going to get stabbed in the back?

Have I been lied to? Am I making the right move?

JUST ASK GOD TO EXPOSE THE ENEMY.

Now, the gates of the city were built with watchtowers to serve as a look-out post, to see runners who would come to the city to deliver a message about the battles in the field or from the tower, you could see who was coming in any direction way off . **You were able to see if friends were coming or enemies where coming. Are you coming to hurt me or to help me?**

Even with all the construction that went into building the walls, the watchtowers and the gates, it still was not enough in some cases to protect the cities. So guards, were strategically position to pull watch, to guard, to protect the city.

Guards were often placed in the watchtower and they were called *watchmen*. The watchman would see if danger was approaching in any direction of the city. If the enemy had someone trying to into one of the gates, but yet had someone else trying to penetrate through the wall, the watchman could see all of this and communicate it.

Guards were also positioned at the gates, they were called *gatekeepers*. The gatekeeper was responsible for safety of the city by entries and exits.

The watchman and the gatekeeper were in tight communication. If trouble was approaching the watchman was able to signal to the gatekeeper to tell him to get prepared, an attack is coming.

I ask you the first question of the day. **WHO IS GUARDING YOUR GATES???**

What gates you ask, I am glad you ask.

You have gates in your city, on your body that needs to be guarded at all time against the enemy.

If you don't guard your gates then the enemy will try to possess the land.

1. **Eye Gate**—1 John 2:16 says, “For all that is on the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world”.

55% of our communication is non-verbal communication, so if you are trying to get a point across to me, you could easily communicate to me without speaking a word.

Take for instance a TV commercial. The commercial will show you, a fork dipping a big shrimp into the garlic butter, now all of a sudden you want some shrimp.

You are ready to start up the cars, throw the kids in the car seat and go to a seafood restaurant.

I know this is true for those shrimp commercials because I was a witness to my mom doing that many times. She would even tell the waitress once in the restaurant, I want it just like they showed on TV.

Some of you may be steaklovers; you see that commercial come on as you are watching your favorite TV show.

It is showing you steam coming from a nice juicy steak, with the baked potato in the background with melting butter running down the sides of it. I know I got you hungry now for real.

Okay, I got another one for you...

This commercial would often come on during a game of sort (e.g., baseball, basketball, football). You may have seen this commercial, the one with a well dressed attractive man and he has a well-dressed, attractive woman around his shoulders and you see this luxury car sitting in the back.

So all of sudden you figure you gotta get you one of those cars, you want to roll like he is rolling. Don't worry that you can't keep the Chevette you got now, and you want a luxury car.

What are we thinking, when we see these things?

The advertising industry knows how to entice us with what we see. That is usually why companies spend so much time and money to market their goods to you.

Because if they present the right thing, in the right way, or have the right person wearing it, they've got your dollar.

But God tells us if your eyes make you lust/or want after that thing that is not HIM, that thing is of the world.

FAITH is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.

God will show you things that you can't see with your natural eyes.

If that thing is making you lust after it, miss work for it, skip school for it, leave your family for it, lie for it, steal for it, hide from it, do anything for it, It is not of God. Guard YOUR GATE!!!!

2. **Ear Gate**—In both the Old and the New Testament, the word obey carries the same meaning as hearing.

The Hebrew word *shama* means both “to listen to” and “obey”.

I ask you today, who are you listening to???

- Are you hearing negative words?
- Are you hearing words of failure?
- Are you hearing words of poverty?
- Are you being called everything but the child of God?
- Are you being told to do something you know is totally wrong, out of your character?

If what you are hearing and what you feel inside of yourself is contrary to what the WORD says about you.

Check it at the Gate! So that the words will not come into the gate and take seed and grow. The problem with a lot of us, we did not have a gate check or know about the gate check.

Words may have been spoken to us as kids and now we are grown with kids of our own, but because we allow the thoughts from past to get inside of us, now we are in counseling, taking medication or acting out in some other way because of what we heard someone say about us.

What do you believe??? Who do you believe???

**God speaks hope, prosperity, health, divine order.
You are HIS child, HE made you in HIS image.**

**Do some house cleaning in get that stuff out your system.
Hold you head up, you are not what they said you are
You are not what you did 15 years ago, you have been redeemed by the blood.
You are all that and a bag of chips. Act Like It!!**

Out of all the things God could have done, HE decided to take time and create you. He made you.

Inside of you right now are all the characteristics HE gave you to succeed in this life.

To be that conquer HE has called you to be.

Let's us get over it and put it to rest.

Yes, it was not right what they, but pray for them and get over it.

The enemy will try to have you play that thing you your mind time and time again, until he has you crimped.

You will never be able to move on, until you deal with it, and get over it.

Get the walk-it out spirit and escort those thoughts and, those people if you must out of your life.

You are the seed of Abraham, it is time you walk in the blessing of Abraham.

3. **Mouth Gate**—Now you may not be able to control what other people say, but you can sure control what you say about others and yourself.

Some of us need to just zip-it!

There are many scriptures in the Bible that talks about speaking. But **Proverbs 18:21** sums it all up in a nut shell.

“Death and Life are in the power of the tongue, and those that love it, shall eat of its fruit”. This means what you speak (good or bad) will get deposit as a seed and grow. **You will produce Good fruit or Bad Fruit. What are you speaking???**

Are you speaking life to someone, are you speaking life to your own situations???

Are you speaking peace, joy, debt free, drug free, high self esteem, obedient kids, happy relationships, peace on the job, a job?

What are you speaking???

The treasures / the things that you believe in your heart will flow from your mouth.

It's time to do a gate check. Tell your neighbor, Do a gate check!

I know it may seem like all of this is a lot of work but the truth of the matter is, if we are in communication with the guard in the Watchtower more than on Sundays, **HE will be able to identify when the enemy is getting ready to attack and HE will warn the gatekeeper (the Holy Spirit- that rest inside of us) to be on guard.**

Then it will be very difficult for the enemy to try and get in.

Oh, he will try and yes, more than once.

So if you are not ready get ready for a fight for your life. Warfare is getting ready to start. See the devil knew God gave me this Word to speak so he will be waiting for you after church.

Be on the outlook.

Get ready.

Don't back down, don't pucker out, you stand with the Whole Armor of God.

The Bible tells the battle is already won, so do give in, don't give up, don't throw in the towel.

Because WE win at the end. Just stay the course. Pass the test!!

See the devil don't want you to know he is already defeated. **He is already under your feet.**

We need to stand up with wings of an eagle and soar through those situations that come about in our lives.

He knows what gates are vulnerable, so that will be the gate he will try to get into first.

Don't think he doesn't know what you like. He has been studying you to find out how to get you and keep you.

If he knows your weakest gate is your eyes, then he knows he just has to show you the right thing, and he got you.

If he knows your weakest gate is your ears, then he will have the right thing spoken to you and he got you.

See if the Holy Spirit is your GateKeeper, HE will not be persuaded.

He will not let the enemy in no matter what he does to sweet talk you.

The GateKeeper will be able to identify the devil and his schemes.

He will put something in your spirit when confronted with the enemy and all of a sudden you can't explain it but something says,

Don't answer that,

Don't respond to that,

Don't go by there,

Don't listen to that,

Don't do that.

You start talking to yourself saying "Some thing just not right about this thing.

I can't put my finger on, but I think I better pray about this first.

Run that thing by the Gatekeeper and see what HE says. Now you got to listen to HIM, when responds.

That is the whole purpose of doing a **Gate Check!**

I remember after 9-11 living on and working on a military base, only those that had business on the base were allowed on the base.

The guards at the gate had a duty at all cost to protect those inside of the gates.

One way for the guards to identify if you belonged on the base, they would first check your military ID card.

This identification showed that you at least belong to the military which to some degree gave you access to the base.

But the guards didn't stop there they had everyone get out of the cars and they checked the inside, outside and underneath the cars.

The guards wanted to ensure that even though you had a military ID, that you were not the enemy in disguise and packing something that could be dangerous to those inside the gate.

When someone comes to your gates, before you let them in, **Check their ID** to see if they belong (**are they saved, do they go to church on a regular basis, are they working in the kingdom in some capacity,**

But don't stop there, **Check their baggage.** Check to see if they are carrying any hidden secrets that could be potential harmful to you.

Guard your GATES!!! Tell you neighbor Guard Your Gates!!!

In the passage of scripture we are focusing on this morning, Jesus is talking to His disciples (they were followers of Christ and they were people who were already called to do a work for the kingdom).