

1 Alarm Fatigue

- Paying Attention to Warnings

2 Tonight's Scripture

- Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand — a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was of old nor ever will be in ages to come. (Joel 2:1–2 NIV)

3 Tonight's Scripture

- "Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. (Joel 2:12–13 NIV)

4 Introduction

- We know what happens when someone cries "Wolf!" too many times.
- The cries are soon ignored, and, when the wolf arrives, no one responds to the call for help.
- Something similar is happening in hospitals, nursing homes, and even in holy places.

5 Introduction

- Walk into your neighborhood hospital and the first thing you'll realize is that the place is full of beds, but no one in those beds actually gets any rest.
- Patients in recovery from illness or surgery are constantly poked and jostled by nurses at all hours of the day and night, family members hover at the bedside, the food tray comes in and sometimes even the pastor shows up to visit—at the exact moment the patient has finally drifted off into something resembling sleep!

6 Introduction

- Perhaps even more obnoxious than all these distractions, however, is the constant beeping, wailing and chirping of a gaggle of monitoring devices to which the patient is attached.
 - The IV stand beeps when it's empty.
 - The blood pressure alarm screams when the patient shifts in bed.
 - The ventilator bongs whenever the patient coughs, and the heart rate monitor gives its telltale flat-line whine when one of the stick-on pads comes loose.
 - It's enough to make a person sick.

7 Introduction

- Thing is, though, most of these alarms are of the false variety that don't require the nurse to come rushing in with a crash cart.

- They're just irritating, harmless anomalies that become a form of annoying white noise after a while.
- One estimate revealed that such alarms go off on an average of every 66 seconds, which can cause something called "alarm fatigue" in health care professionals.

8 Introduction

- Nurses, doctors and other hospital workers can become so desensitized to the ding day after day after day that their instinctual response is to turn down or mute the alarms, or ignore them altogether.
- Think of it sort of like that "Check Engine" light on your car dashboard that fades into the background after you've ignored it for several months.
- If you don't get that checked out, the consequences could be dire.

9 Introduction

- The consequences of ignoring the alarms in the hospital, however, can be fatal.
- The parents of a high school junior recently won a \$6 million malpractice suit after their daughter died after a simple tonsillectomy.
- She had been given a powerful painkiller which slowed her breathing. By the time the nurses checked on her 25 minutes later, the patient had suffered irreversible brain damage, and died several days later.
- During the deposition, one of the nurses said that the respiratory monitor had been muted, probably because of alarm fatigue.

10 Introduction

- The Joint Commission which accredits hospitals estimates that there may have been up to 1,000 such incidents where the patient died or was injured in U.S. hospitals over a 3½-year period ending in 2012.
- Patient safety advocates at the ECRI Institute, a hospital safety organization, listed alarm hazards as the number one health technology danger to patient safety in 2012 and 2013.

11 The Purpose for Alarms

- The upshot of all of this is that alarms are there for a reason, and we ignore them at our own risk and at the risk of others, whether it's in the hospital, in the car, at work when the fire alarm goes off or any other place where beeping and bonging is a sign of trouble.
- In our text for tonight, the call is clear: "Sound the alarm ..." Ignoring the alarms that God has turned on for the people of God can be hazardous to our spiritual health.

12 Warning Alarms

- The reading from the prophet Joel is full of such alarms, which makes the beeping and chirping of the hospital room sound tranquil by comparison.
- Joel is writing to the people of Judah in the wake of a devastating plague of locusts that has overrun the land, which, for the prophet, is a microcosm of the final judgment of God: the "day of the Lord" (v. 1).
- The warning alarms to get ready for that coming day are shrill and require immediate attention.

13 **Sound the Alarm**

- "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!" says Joel, speaking for God—is an alarm that's hard to ignore!
- The inhabitants of the land will "tremble" with fear when the Lord returns in an earth-shaking, world-changing way (vv. 1-2).
- It is definitely a fearful, apocalyptic vision that will cause the hearts of people to flutter with fear in the face of God's judgment.

14 **Sound the Alarm**

- The sound of the "trumpet" is thus an alarm that tests the heart condition of people in the face of God's righteous judgment.
- It's a warning for people to check and see whether or not their spiritual hearts are healthy and right with God now in anticipation of his coming.

15 **The "Repositioning" Alarm**

- In the hospital, an alarm often sounds when the patient rolls over or gets up, which can change the position of sensors.
- Those alarms are usually the ones that get ignored the most, but in spiritual health, paying attention to those alarms is actually a sign of health.
- "Return to the Lord your God," says Joel, "for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love . . ." (v. 13).
- The indicator here is all about repentance, which means to turn from the way you were and turn to the way God wants you to be.

16 **Responding to the Alarms**

- The first step toward repentance is confession.
- We confess our sins before God, which is the result of recognizing the deep warning alarms that go off in our lives when we know we're doing something wrong.

- There's something deeply embedded in our humanity, created in God's image, that knows when things with us and with the world aren't right.

17 **Responding to the Alarms**

- Unfortunately, we often shut off that alarm and instead listen to the enticing siren song of the world that pulls us away from being the people God created us to be.
- Our response to the internal alarm must be confession, that is, admitting that things with us aren't right.
- This will then lead to repentance and the repositioning of our lives in God's will and God's way.

18 **The "Code Blue" Alarm**

- The one hospital alarm that always brings people running is the "Code Blue" announcement.
- A "Code Blue" means that someone is in immediate, life-threatening danger, and a community of doctors and nurses quickly gathers to help.

19 **The "Code Blue" Alarm**

- Joel announces a "Code Blue" for God's people, signified again by the sounding of a trumpet.
- "Sanctify a fast," says Joel, "call a solemn assembly; gather the people . . ." (vv. 15-16).
- Everyone is to come running: the aged, the children, the infants; even those who might be getting ready for a wedding are to respond to the alarm and come to the Lord because the situation is dire.

20 **The "Code Blue" Alarm**

- The difference, however, is that the "Code Blue" patient isn't someone else, it's the gathering of the people of God themselves.
- "Spare your people, O LORD," blares the Code, "and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations . . ." (v. 17).

21 **World Wide Crises**

- I don't know if you have noticed this or not, but in our society today there seems to be new crises popping up almost every day.
- In fact, in a recent FOX Poll, 58% of the people responded that they thought the world was "Going to Hell in a hand basket."
- Already, people are calling 2014 the "Year of the Unravelling Crisis."

22 **Cascade of Catastrophes**

- Malaysian Flight 370, carrying 239 passengers went missing over the Indian Ocean.
- Russia invades the Crimea and bullies the Ukraine and Europe as well.

- Malaysian Flight 17, is shot down over the Ukraine killing all 298 of the passengers.
- Chaos on our borders with tens of thousands children and other illegal aliens cross our southern border.
- Riots in Ferguson, Missouri where widespread looting and arson where common.

23 **Cascade of Catastrophes**

- ISIS - declares themselves to be a Caliphate and run wild in Syria and Iraq and before the whole world, beheading captured American journalists.
- Secret Service Fiasco - fence jumpers jump over the White House's fence and invade the White House with initially no one noticing that something was wrong.
- Murder and beheading of an Oklahoma women by a convert to Islam who was outraged that he couldn't proselytize while at work.
- Ebola Outbreak in the USA that was said by the government experts impossible to happen, but it did—sending panic to both the public and the stock market.

24 **Billy Graham**

25 **Religious Liberty**

26 **New Caliphate**

27 **Wake Up!**

- Wake up, you drunkards, and weep! Wail, all you drinkers of wine; wail because of the new wine, for it has been snatched from your lips. (Joel 1:5 NIV)
- One of the reason why the people of Joel's day were unable to discern the sign of the times is because they were intoxicated.
- Why they were intoxicated we don't know. It could have been due to anxiety or they were too busy having a good time.
- No matter what the reason, they weren't responding to the alarms that were all around them.

28 **The Army of the LORD**

- Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand — a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. (Joel 2:1–2 NIV)
- This warning is like no other, it is not regarding pestilence, plague, or a foreign army.
- It is a warning of the LORD's approaching army, which will target the wicked and make all his enemies his footstool.

29 **Description of the LORD's Army**

- Before them fire devours, behind them a flame blazes. Before them the land is like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert waste — nothing escapes them. (Joel 2:3 NIV)
- At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. (Joel 2:6–7 NIV)
- They rush upon the city; they run along the wall. They climb into the houses; like thieves they enter through the windows. Before them the earth shakes, the sky trembles, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command. (Joel 2:9–11 NIV)
- The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it? (Joel 2:11 NIV)

30 **Prophetic Timeline**

31 **Conclusion**

- We live in a very exciting time of human history.
- However, the things we are seeing unraveling before our eyes shouldn't scare us or even frighten us.
- Nevertheless, they should give us ample reason to keep focused and about being God's people and doing the Lord's work.
- According to the prophet Isaiah, You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you. (Is 26:3 NIV)

32 **Psalm 91**

- If you make the Most High your dwelling — even the LORD, who is my refuge — then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. (Psa 91:9–12 NIV)
- "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble . . . (Psa 91:14–15 NIV)

33 **The King is Coming, Sound the Alarm!**