

MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, 3500 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh, NC 27612

NEWS & EVENTS – June 2023

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If I had to give a title to this month's newsletter offering, I would call it *High Alert On The Homefront!* As I sit in my easy chair (I like to call it my *thinking* chair, trying to justify the time I spend in it) I am thinking about what it means to be in alert mode. This morning I was considering the importance of the Lord's words in the passage of Scripture I will endeavor to proclaim tomorrow by God's grace. A portion of the sermon text is found in Mark 13:33-37. Within those 5 verses Jesus is recorded as telling His disciples to be on the alert, or to watch, multiple times. When you see that much repetition of words and phrases within the Bible it is usually important. It seems that many followers of Jesus are so caught up in trying to determine *when* the Lord is coming, we tend to forget that we can surely know that He *is* coming. Of a surety... He is coming. And because Jesus is coming, the enemy is highly active. Maybe that is why the end-time disciple is given advance intelligence as to the warfare that is heating up in the spiritual realm, the realm that really counts... the realm that will endure. This earthly arena is fading away. Often, I seem to take for granted what I have learned about this journey toward eternity. I need to be reminded. Lately it seems that the Lord is conveying truth to me in ways that are hard to ignore. It's kind of like learning principles of life through the message of living parables.

I've got two parables to share with you this month. The point is the same for both... be diligent in vigilance.

Parable #1 is a continuation of the subject of last month's newsletter. Birds were building a nest, a home for the next bird generation, inside the overhead light fixture outside the front door of our house. In the weeks that followed, the birds occupied the nest. I look upon them as I go out and come into our home. All seemed to be working according to the birds' best plan of being productive in life. Till a couple of weeks ago. A threat appeared late in the day, out in the yard. My wife and I were on our way out to eat supper. A black snake was in the yard, and we almost stepped on it on the way to the car. It lay motionless... where was it going? To the nest. The serpent was going to supper. Its eye was on the nest too. How many days had he laid dormant while observing the target? That moment in time I charged the snake's position and he retreated into a planted island area and disappeared into the leaves. I made the statement that he won't be back around again, at least not tonight. A short time later we learned that we could make dangerous assumptions about the nature of things. Upon our return, it was almost dark, and we saw no evidence of a serpentine intruder as we entered the house. Sharon needed to take some things out to put into her car to take to work the next morning. Following her out, I caught sight of the enemy of the birds crawling up the wall behind the handrail. Sharon had just walked past the snake. As far as I can determine, the snake was determined to crawl up the wall and hang upside down to get to the nest, the birds, and their eggs. The end game for the serpent was not pretty. It will not be a threat any longer... at least that one. I don't know if the birds built the nest in what they thought was a safe place. But the nature of the serpent, whether a snake or the devil, is a threat to life.

Parable #2 is a live-action report of creation's activity in my back yard at the moment of this writing. I was literally observing 5 squirrels and a multitude of birds feeding at the bird feeder. The squirrels foraged for seed underneath the feeder that the birds had scattered and had to make room for a deer that walked out of the woods to join in the provisions. Our cat sat outside on the deck watching the scene. I recorded the animals feeding together on my phone. Then the deer saw the garden. I have three sides of the garden protected by fencing but the side closest to the house is not. I assumed that a deer would not get that close... only a few feet away from the wall of the house... at 9 in the morning. Another wrong assumption about the nature of things. That innocent deer was going to enter my garden and not as a casual observer. The only thing that changed the outcome of this story, and the preceding one, was the presence of a protector. Here's the question that comes to my mind that edifies me... how many times have I been present in God's timing when destruction threatens, and I can intervene and was not aware of what was happening? How many times have I assumed something was harmless and the Spirit of God is giving me warning to which I have been oblivious? Many times, I have assumed everything was ok while danger was lurking. It's time to get close to the Most High God. King Jesus is coming... the Enemy's activity is increasing. Be diligent in vigilance. Watch for God's activity. Listening is part of watching. Hearing is part of seeing. *For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. (1 Thess 5:2)*

Blessings to you,
Pastor Sam

(If you are unable to attend Mt. Olivet's 11 AM Sunday worship service in person, can go to website www.mobc.org and click on "Worship Services" for live streaming or prior messages.)