

## **BE WATCHFUL IN AWAITING HIS COMING BACK**

*"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." (Matthew 24:42 NIV)*

Without realizing it, we have entered the second month of 2024. Our guiding verse today is taken from Matthew 24:42 which says, "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come". Being alert means that we remain firm in our faith in Christ and live it at all times, so that whenever He comes, we are ready to welcome Him. Thus, the coming of the Lord will be a joy for us. Our waiting period is actually throughout life, every moment and at any time. According to one source, being on guard also means that we have to be responsible in carrying out the tasks assigned to us. We must become wise like the five wise virgins in Christ's parable in Matthew 25:1-13, so that at His coming we will all be caught up and enter the "wedding feast" of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). If we study Paul's letter to the Corinthians in the New Testament, we know that the city of Corinth at that time was a bustling metropolis and a melting pot of culture at. Busy ports provide jobs and prosperity. Above the city of Corinth rose the temple of the Greek goddess of romance, Aphrodite, home to devoted prostitutes. In Corinth, Greek philosophical thought, pagan traditions and Jewish culture met and shaped the character of the city. And in this city of Corinth, Paul became acquainted with Aquila and Priscilla. They both worked as tent makers. Aquila and Priscilla's house became his headquarters. Silas and Timothy also arrived in Corinth. Paul spoke to the Jews and Greeks in the synagogue every Sabbath. Many people came to believe in Jesus. God revealed to him that he had "a great nation" in that city and the Corinthian church was born (Acts 18:1-10). This is a promising start! But after that, instead of becoming more mature and firm in their faith, the congregation moved in the wrong direction after Paul left. Theological errors spread, there were disputes among congregations and groups were formed. Christian freedom misunderstood led to moral failure, sin was tolerated and the sacraments were profaned. The congregation has lost its way. The first letter that Paul sent to the Corinthian Christians was full of advice and rebuke. However, in situations and conditions like that, in Paul there was still eternal love for them (1 Corinthians 13:1-13). Nothing was more important to Paul than getting them back on the right track in love. At the end of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul exhorted them and said: *"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love."* (1 Corinthians 16:13-14 NIV). In Greek, these two verses form an inseparable whole. Paul wants to say to the congregation: Your bonds are up for grabs, so be on your guard against all corrupting influences! Don't grow weak in your faith in Jesus! Instead, courageously and persistently resist all negative influences! And in doing so, line up yourself to God's love, agape love, which is patient and kind. As a congregation who is waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus, let us also live a life that is alert and filled with God's never-ending love. The world around us needs God's love. Who will bring it to him? Let us live constantly on guard, and ready to do what is pleasing to God. Amen! Jesus bless you!

*By Pastor Silwanus Obadja, M.Th.*