

“I fell asleep during the Sermon! It cost me my life!” (Slide 1)

Reading: Ephesians 6:14-20

There is an episode of an old program on television that played back in the 60's where a visiting preacher from New York was coming to the small community church to speak.

(Slide 2) It was such a big deal to have someone come from an exciting place like New York to speak at their services. Everyone was super excited and looking forward to the Sermon. In fact, the hype was so great that everyone wanted to look their best and give a good impression.

The ladies talked in great detail about whether or not they would wear a hat and what earrings would be suitable for such a speaker. The men, of course, all wore a suit and tie.

The speaker began his sermon and the ladies looked at one another pointing to their hats and earrings, giving their hearty approval of the speaker and his abilities with their eyes.

Not everyone was focused on the speaker as he delivered his sermon. One in particular parishioner must have felt the effects of the warm morning and the lullaby projected by the speaker's soothing voice. The combination overwhelmed this man's focus and before he knew it, he was fast asleep. So deep was his sleep that he began to snore and snore so loudly that the windows in the building seemed to rattle.

The speaker paused and everyone turned around and looked at the snoring parishioner with disbelief and disgust. The man sitting next to the snorer firmly nudged him and he awoke out of his sleep startled and embarrassed. The visiting preacher glanced over toward the church's minister and shook his head.

Thankfully, he was awakened and could hear the rest of the sermon! Perhaps, given a second opportunity to hear the speaker effectively helped the man spiritually as he lived here on this earth. Unfortunately, in reality, the word of God had no effect on the actor who portrayed this unique character on the show.

Unlike the unfortunate circumstance which is our focus of our study today the character in the show was awakened before the sermon was over.

“I fell asleep during the Sermon and it cost me my life!”

Acts 20:7-12 (Slide 3)

7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together. (Slide 4) 9 And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead. 10 But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, (Slide 5) “Do not be troubled, for his life is in him.” 11 When he had gone back up and

had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left. 12 They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.

I think most of us have experienced a circumstance like ***Eutychus***. Not falling out of window but falling asleep. Perhaps not during the church service, but in some setting, when the speaker went long and the *ambience* was just right, we became drowsy and struggled to stay awake and suddenly, we drift off into a deep sleep.

For sure there are a couple of lessons we can learn from this incident.

First, we need to be aware of where we're sitting when listening to someone speak. It might be advisable to stay away from open windows.

Second is that ***Eutychus*** will always be remembered as the one *who fell asleep during the sermon*. It was a slumber that cost him his life, temporarily. Thankfully, Paul was there and had been given the ability through the *Holy Spirit* to bring the boy back to life.

Falling asleep, spiritually speaking is much more devastating than what happened to ***Eutychus***. When one dies spiritually simultaneously with physical death, they can no longer be brought back to life.

Last week we talked about *Barnabas, Son of Encouragement*. This week will see that encouragement is also a way to sustain one another's faith and to stay *Spiritually Awake*.

Verses 14-17 of our reading encourages us to protect ourselves with the equipment we need to face the enemy. I don't know to many that are just about to enter a battle who are not on the alert and ready. In fact, rest and sleep are difficult to realize in those situations.

Ephesians 6:18-20 (Slide 6)

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the (Slide 7) opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

"Be on the alert" is basically saying *"stay awake"* spiritually all the time. Thus the word ***perseverance***.

(Slide 8) There are many passages that encourage believers to be persistent in prayer. Phrases such as these can be found:

Pray without ceasing

Be constant in prayer

Continue steadfastly in prayer

Communicating with God in prayer on behalf of one another is a major way we help and encourage everyone to stay awake spiritually.

Proverbs 18:10 (Slide 9)

***The name of the LORD is a strong tower;
The righteous runs into it and are safe.***

Prayer is our way of taking cover in the *tower of God's Holy Name* and when we petition God on behalf of someone else, our intent is to shelter them as well under the *Mighty Name of God!*

How many times have you said to someone who is ill or has some type of trouble; *"I'm praying for you!"* Our intent is to encourage them. But not only that. We are genuinely bringing up their name to *God The Father* so that He will, according to His will, act on their behalf.

However, prayers like this are only effective if praying is actually part of our lifestyle. A lifestyle that has caused us to have an intimate relationship with *God*.

Consider also how one can be spiritually awakened if no one taught or shared the message with them. The answer lies in our prayers for those who are sent to deliver the message.

Paul says; (Slide 10)

pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel

If we consider *God* as our leader and we are in a *constant spiritual battle*, would it make sense to **not** communicate with our commander? No military battle has been fought where the troops on the ground didn't keep in constant communication with their commander, unless that line of communication had been cut off.

Spiritually speaking, that's how we stay awake. That's how we stay alive! Our enemy will not show us mercy as *David* did toward *King Saul*.

1 Samuel 26:6-11 (Slide 11)

6 Then David said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" And Abishai said, "I will go down with you." 7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the (Slide 12) circle of the camp with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people were lying around him. 8 Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with (Slide 13) one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time." 9 But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD'S anointed and be without guilt?" 10 David also said, "As the LORD lives, surely the LORD will strike him, (Slide 14) or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and perish. 11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed; but now please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go."

David was in a position to take advantage of Saul as he lie before him asleep. But according to the word of God he showed him mercy. When we are spiritually asleep our enemy will not show mercy!!

We are no match for the enemy if we are Spiritually asleep!! The Bible admonishes us either to do oof two things: **“STAY AWAKE OR TO WAKE UP!!”**

Invitation

Today we invite you if you are spirituasleep, to *wake up* to the *Holy Word of God* and to be part of His church. If you have not put on Christ Jesus through Baptism, don't delay! Do it today!

If you have been baptized but have Spiritually fallen asleep, may we implore you to wake up and restore your relationship with God and Christ Jesus. We want to pray with you and for you.

Please let us know how we can help you with your Spiritual walk!

Reading:

Ephesians 6:14-20

14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

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