

Rousing the Drowsy

Sleeping saints are at risk.

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Based Upon Acts 20

I must admit, my crazy schedule has me on the grind working at a frenetic pace. By the time I get to the end of the workweek, sometimes all I want to do is sleep. The Bible says that we should labor for six days, and rest on the seventh, right? Well, I'm sure the rest on the seventh day is far more than sleeping.

Last Sabbath, I was a member of a panel that discussed the parable of the 10 virgins of Matthew 25. Remarkably, there was somewhat of a disagreement on whether their natural slumber, due to their weariness during the bridegroom's delay was quite fine or a bad thing. I was one of the few who believed it was unconditionally a bad thing. Yes, becoming weary is natural. Yes, rest is necessary. Yes, they all slumbered and slept. However, in the context of awaiting our Lord, we are implored to be sober, vigilant, watchful, alert, and awake. One cannot be any of those things and be asleep too. For in a time that we think not, the Lord will come. The Bible says, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." (Romans 13:11-12). It also says, "Behold, I am going to come like a thief! Blessed (happy, to be envied) is he who stays awake (alert) and who guards his clothes, so that he may not be naked and [have the shame of being] seen exposed!" (Revelation 16:15, AMP). Once the cleansing of God's people, including those who find faith in Him during the 11th hour, is complete, He that shall come, will come, and not tarry.

What if brother Paul were preaching such a message, well into the night the fateful Sunday referenced in our theme chapter? What if the state of the people was such that, a quick-bite message of only a few minutes would not cut through the slumber of the church at that time. What if, as the clear message of repentance and preparation for the coming King was just about to reach its climax and, in weariness, you fell asleep? And what if, instead of your head nodding, like it often happens in church, you were seated on a windowsill and you fell out of the window on a couple of story drop to your death? That would be tragic, wouldn't it? Well, as we can see in the story, that is exactly what happened to Eutychus.

Now it's time to wrap this story up and apply it to our times. Many, many people are in such a state, that we are not capable of enduring strong doctrine. Some recite little palliating ditties like, "Stop preaching doctrine! Preach Christ!" But, is not doctrine a Bible teaching by which we must all live for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)? Some say of their Christian fellowship, "It's not a religion. It's a lifestyle." But, did not James say that there is pure and undefiled religion that is about serving and helping those who cannot help themselves (James 1:27)? The point is that far too many of us who profess to be awaiting our Lord's return use the natural impediments of the flesh to excuse slackness. And to make matters worse, if there is no immediate consequence, some of us take it to mean that we are doing just fine.

I thank God for His mercy, friends. God understands our weaknesses and has

made provisions to deliver us from them. Eutychus may have simply been sleepy, but his story really helps to keep things in perspective. In patriarchal fashion, Paul took up the young man and raised him from the dead. In mercy, God gave him another opportunity to live life to the fullest. Much in the same way, our God is raising sleeping saints today. He has dear ones mounted upon the proverbial walls of Zion to blow the trumpets, making the call, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh!" Jesus will soon be done cleansing those who have faith in Him, and getting them all arrayed in white in preparation for His arrival. This is our chance to join the final movement to embrace and share the message of Christ and soon enjoy the grand culmination of His blessed work of salvation. Wake up, and don't sleep!