

Sleepy Land - the Believer's Enemy

by David Rubio

David Rubio's sermon warns believers about the dangers of spiritual sleep and encourages them to remain vigilant in their faith.

Duration: 1:17:18

Scripture: Hebrews 2:1

Topics: "Sleepiness"

Description

The sermon transcript begins with a call to give earnest heed to the word of God and not let it slip away. It emphasizes the seriousness of neglecting salvation and the consequences of disobedience. The speaker urges listeners to awaken from spiritual sleep and be alert, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of salvation. The sermon concludes with a reminder that it is high time to awake out of sleep, as our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

Transcript

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A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Let us rise for an opening word of prayer, please. We thank you, Lord, that you are bread of life.

That with you, Lord, we will hunger no more. And your bread is everlasting bread. O Lord, may we this morning look to you for strength, look to you for sustenance, Lord, look to you for all that we could ever need or ask or desire.

O Lord, we are so thankful that you are here with us this morning. We thank you for the word preached this morning, Lord, to grown-ups and to children. And we just ask that your Holy Spirit will continue to be among us, Lord, and that you would open up ears to hear and spiritual eyes to see.

What you would have us learn, what you would have us take note in our own lives this day. Remove, Lord, the distractions of the morning. Keep the enemy from taking any toehold, Lord, in our lives this time.

Lord, may we look to you. It's no mistake that each one's here this morning, Lord. It's been orchestrated for you, by you, that on this day, on this day, this morning, that each individual here would be here to hear what you have to say.

Give me unction, Lord, and lead and guide us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

Well, this morning, I too would like to greet you in Jesus' name. I pray that you've been encouraged. I thank you, Ron and Willis, for setting the foundation of what God, I believe, has for God's people to hear this morning.

Well, I would like to first just kind of give, by any way of introduction, I'd like to talk about a favorite pastime of mine. In fact, I would have to say it's probably a favorite pastime of everybody here in this room, that each one here enjoys doing every day. In fact, all of us will end up spending about one-third of our lives doing this every day that we are alive.

And what is this favorite pastime, you might be wondering? You know, this favorite daily activity, you may ask? Well, it's sleep. Sleep. Good old sleep.

And you know, doctors and scientists today still do not fully understand the role of sleep in human beings. Sleep is defined as a state of changed consciousness. A change of awareness.

A change of alertness. Or it can also be defined as sleep as partial unconsciousness. From which a person can be awakened or aroused.

That's how sleep is defined. And although doctors and scientists do not fully understand the full significance of sleep in the human being, they do acknowledge that sleep is necessary for the body to be able to repair itself and restore itself in many of our body systems. Whether it's our circulatory system with our heart, our nervous system, our digestive system, sleep is there to help us repair and restore.

In fact, scientists have found out that we actually go through several stages of sleep during the night. Actually, five stages, they feel, especially if you're a younger person. As we get older, that changes a little bit, but five stages.

And those five stages are gone through every 90 minutes a night. So that's about an hour and a half. So if you sleep eight hours a night, you're going through those five cycles about four times during the time that you sleep.

And they find that the first four cycles, the first four are you going to light sleep. And all of us know what that is. You kind of start dozing off, but you still know what's going on around you.

And the second stage, you fall a little more deeply asleep. In the third stage, you're getting pretty deeply asleep. And scientists realize then that your breathing slows down.

Your heartbeat slows down. Your moving muscles, called skeletal muscles, they start to relax. Even your body temperature starts to drop a little bit.

And in that third and fourth stage, that's when you start to do a little dreaming. And you're real relaxed, and the body is very, very quiet and still. And for really deep sleepers, and that fourth stage is really pretty deep sleep, it's hard to wake people up.

Some of you have little children. You know how that goes when your little ones fall really, really asleep. And you try to wake them up, and they're just, I mean, it's hard to get them up.

Well, they're in that fourth stage of sleep. And then the strangest thing happens in the fifth stage. It's called the REM stage, R-E-M.

It stands for rapid eye movement. All of a sudden, we're real relaxed. We're at the most calmest time that our body could be.

Everything's slowing down. Then all of a sudden, our brain activates. And our brain gets really active.

And all of a sudden, our heart rate goes up. We're still asleep. Our heart rate goes up.

Our heart starts beating faster. We start breathing faster. Our body temperature starts to come back up.

And then the body starts moving our eyes underneath our eyelids. That's why it's called rapid eye movement sleep. Our eyes are rapidly moving.

Our eyes are closed. And some of you have seen this in your children. Your children are asleep, and you look at them, and you'll see their eyeballs are moving underneath their eyelids.

And see, all of us as adults do the same thing too, rapid eye movement sleep. And scientists are wondering why all of a sudden are we so relaxed, and then we're so active again. And scientists think it's one way of the brain to be able to.

And the Lord's given us this ability. To be able to reshuffle the events of the day. And like in a computer where you put things in a file someplace here, and you put things in a file there, that's when the brain is doing all of those things to clear all of the clutter out of our minds so that we can think better and more clearly the next day.

That's why if you don't get sleep, you start getting frustrated. You can't think real well. And they think it's because our brain hasn't had a chance to go through that one stage.

Well, my point here this morning isn't to talk about sleep necessarily, not physical sleep. It's fascinating. It's a really interesting subject that I really find myself really drawn to quite a bit.

But the goal is not to talk about physical sleep today. But it's to draw you to the fact that the Bible teaches us a lot about sleep that relates to our spiritual life. And it is this area, this morning, this area of our Christian life that the Lord has laid on my heart to share with you today.

And the title for today's message is a simple title, but it's a powerful title. Sleepy Land. Sleepy Land.

The Believer's Enemy. Sleepy Land. The Believer's Enemy.

You know, this message shared with you this morning is from the Holy Spirit, not only to you, but to me. In fact, I consider it my own wake-up call this morning here. So I'm preaching to myself this morning, not just to you.

So if my preaching seems somewhat direct this morning, it's not directed necessarily to you, it's directed to me. And I pray that as it reflects off of me, you will see some things in your life also. Because, see, there is one thing that I dread above all others in my life.

And that is the thought that I would drift away from Christ at some point in my life. I tremble at the thought that I could become slothful, lazy, that I could become spiritually neglectful, that I could be caught up in faithlessness and prayerlessness and go on for days or weeks without seeking God and His precious Word, growing sleepy spiritually, sleeping off into unconsciousness in my soul. Many of us here today would agree that this is the state in which we find many Christians, in which we find many churches today.

It's the state in which we find many of the denominations today. Once mighty men spiritually, once mighty women spiritually, once mighty churches, once mighty denominations have fallen asleep and drifted off the narrow path of the true faith and the true Gospel, leading to the ruin of multitudes of souls. And how did this happen? How did this happen, you may say? Well, I would like to just, as a matter of introduction, read you a little few paragraphs.

And one of my, other than the Bible, one of my favorite books is *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. And there's a passage in here. How many of you read that book or have heard the tape series? I think many of us here have, because I know the ministry had a tape series.

But you know the characters. Kristen's the main character in this dream that John Bunyan had, and he wrote it down. And there's a passage here where his partner, one of his travel companions by the name of Hopeful and he, are traveling along.

And they've been traveling along now for a little while. And they come to this place. And it helps answer this question that I just asked.

How did this happen? To strong Christians, to strong churches, to strong denominations that they got off the narrow path. Let me read this to you. John Bunyan starts out by saying this.

And I saw in my dream that they went till they came into a certain country whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy if he came a stranger into it. And here Hopeful began to be very dull and heavy of sleep. Wherefore, he said unto Christian, I do now begin to grow so drowsy that I can scarcely hold up mine eyes.

Let us lie down here and take one nap. By no means, said Christian, lest sleeping we never awake more. Why, my brother asked Hopeful, sleep is sweet to the laboring man.

We may be refreshed if we take a nap. Christian replied, do you not remember that one of the shepherds bid us beware of the enchanted ground? He meant by that that we should beware of sleeping. Wherefore, let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

As we read this little excerpt from the *Pilgrim's Progress*, we see that on their journey to the Celestial City, which represents heaven in this story, this was the most treacherous, the most dangerous portion of their journey. Because it is here that they and we get comfortable. And we settle in.

And we curl up and we snuggle up. And zeal is lost. Lukewarmness settles in.

And like in our own spiritual bodies when everything slows down, also in our spiritual bodies, all the systems slow down. We start losing discernment. We lose our zeal for the Lord.

We don't understand Scripture the way we used to. Everything starts to get fuzzy like when you start to fall asleep. And that happens to us spiritually as well.

And then sleep and slumber follows. And the Bible warns clearly that it is possible for devoted Christians, and many of us sit in this room, devoted Christians, that it is possible for devoted Christians to drift from Christ due to being spiritually asleep. And the Bible offers powerful warnings against falling asleep in neglecting so great a salvation.

In Hebrews 2, 1-3, the Lord talks about that great salvation. And I need to read about that this morning to you. I feel compelled that I need to.

Because it sets the stage of the seriousness of what I'm talking about here this morning. Hebrews 2, verses 1-3. Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense or reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him? So the question is, how shall we escape? How shall we escape this world? How shall we escape hell if we neglect so great salvation? You know, there are biblical examples here of once strong churches that neglected that warning, that ended up drifting from loving Jesus Christ and loving his biblical truth and walking in obedience. In Revelation 2, we read about the Ephesian church grieving Christ by drifting away in sleepful neglect and disobedience from their first love, our Lord Jesus Christ. And in Revelation 3, we read about the Laodicean church that also drifted through neglect, spiritual sleeping into lukewarmness.

And the church at Sardis in Revelation 3 drifted in sleepiness all the way to spiritual death. Paul warned the church at Galatia, the believers there, that they had drifted from the victory of Christ's cross and had turned back to the works of their flesh for a false salvation of works. And he spoke of that in Galatians 3. And the Bible goes on and warns of many who fell to the wayside, who entered that land that John Bunyan talked about, that place where slumber was easy.

I call it sleepy land. He called it the enchanted ground. Enchanted means magical.

It means kind of, there's a spell on it. And that spell isn't from the Lord. That spell is from the enemy.

You know, you wished in that stage, in these churches at that stage, and maybe in your life at that stage, you wished you could pray, but now the desire to really pray, true heartfelt prayers is nearly gone, to all gone. In your slumber, you have become numb to the moving of the Holy Spirit in your life. Numb to your sin.

Numb to your lack of zeal and fervency. Numb to your lack of obedience to God and His Word. Insensitive to God's people because you're asleep spiritually.

Your heart no longer leaps at God's Word preached. The songs of worship, the hymns sung, no longer move your soul. Christianity has become a formality, a tradition, a religion.

It has been said of such a person, and I quote you this, once, if you thought of a person being condemned to hell, you would have wept for every soul out in tears. But now, you could sit at the very brink of hell itself and hear its wailings unmoved. And at one time, the thought of being used of God to turn a sinner from his wicked ways would have made you jump at the opportunity.

You are told of the multitudes of souls swept by the mighty tide of sin to destruction and everlasting fire. And you casually, nonchalantly, express your regret. Oh, that's too bad.

And yes, you contribute some money, some time, maybe a little bit of effort, maybe you take a short-term mission trip, but your heart is not stirred. Your heart is not moved. You know you're asleep.

You know you should wake up. But it's just too comfortable, too cozy. Oh, wake up, Christians.

What happened? What happened? Well, God is calling us through the Holy Spirit this morning to wake up from our slumber. Lest we also drift off to sleep, leading to that sleep that will separate us from God. And just as with physical sleep, spiritual sleep doesn't suddenly come upon us.

We just don't instantly fall asleep. Remember those stages I talked about? You slip through them. You go through those stages.

Even in spiritual sleep, you start out getting kind of comfortable, and the spiritual eyelids get a little heavy, and pretty soon our spiritual focus gets off, and we get fuzzy, and we get a little cloudy, and we get relaxed. And then drowsiness sets in, and before you know it, we drift off to sleep. Well, I'd like to talk about that sleep this morning.

What kind of condition does that kind of sleep put a Christian in? But I'm going to use some words here, and I think it's important for me to hear at the up front to clarify a couple of things. I'm going to use the word spiritually asleep, and I'm going to use words or a phrase like the soul sleeps. But I'm not talking about like when you're physically asleep.

I'm talking when you're awake, when your eyeballs are open, you're awake, you're sitting here, you're breathing, you're thinking, you're looking around. I mean, you're physically awake, but I'm talking about your soul's condition here this morning. When I say spiritually asleep, I don't mean these things are going to happen to you when you're actually asleep in your bed.

I'm talking these things are going to happen when you're awake, and they could happen when you're asleep in your bed too, but most of these are going to happen even when you're awake physically. And also, I want to clarify this too. When I speak about our soul being asleep, I'm not talking about that, those false teachings or heresies about, you know, the false doctrine of annihilation talks about soul sleep, and the Seventh-day Adventists are really big into that.

Other groups and cults are into that. I'm not talking about that thing. I'm talking about us, Christians.

When we're unawares, and we let down our guard, and we doze off into sleep. So, a question comes up. What type of condition does this kind of sleep put the Christian into? Well, sleep is a condition where we lack perception, and where we lack feelings, and we lack awareness.

Just like when you're physically asleep, when you fall into a real deep sleep, and those of you parents who have little ones, you know how this goes. There could be noise in the room. I mean, you have children

here probably right now, with me talking into the microphone, people moving around, they're asleep.

They're unawares of what's going on around them. Some people, you know, you could be sleeping so deeply that, you know, a policeman could come to the door, and knock on your window, and say, hey, something's going on outside. And you wouldn't even hear the policeman.

You'd be sound asleep. Someone coming to give you a warning that the house is burning, and their neighbor's house is burning down. And you could be so asleep, you wouldn't even know what's happening.

Perhaps there could be a loved one in your home that is seriously ill, seriously sick. But you could be so asleep, you wouldn't even know it. And perhaps, that loved one may even die from their sickness.

And you could be so asleep, so sound asleep, that you wouldn't even know it. The world could fall apart, and you could stay asleep, and not even know it. Well, do you get the picture? Do you see the dangerous condition of such a one who sleeps so deeply, physically? How about those who sleep, spiritually, that deeply? Are you alive, and awake physically and mentally this morning? You are, because you're here.

But are you asleep to the things of God? You know, you wished you could feel, and crave, and desire for the things of God, as you once did. But now, there is little to no stirring in your heart anymore. That's, that's where we come to.

Unawares. That's one condition that sleep will put you into, and spiritual sleep will put you in that same condition. You're unaware of what's going on.

You have no care for the lost. Your loved ones, you don't even know what's going on. Your loved ones underneath your own nose, in your own house, are in danger.

But you sleep on. Another condition that sleep puts you into, spiritually, just like with physical sleep, is this. Sleep is a condition where we are subject to various fantasies, various vain imaginings, various delusions, and various lies.

When we sleep physically, we lose judgment, and we lose discernment. And just think about it. When you physically sleep, when you're in bed, you don't know what's right or wrong, what's going on around you.

You can't make that decision. You're asleep. Well, spiritually, when that happens to us, the same exact thing occurs.

You know, we get deceived. We get deceived. Sometimes, when we physically sleep, we dream, don't we? And some people will dream more than others do.

And again, scientists don't know why all that varies so much, but this is one thing we can say. Some people that are poor will often dream that they're rich. And people that are rich will sometimes have a bad dream that they lost everything and grew poor, and they'll tremble.

Those that are sick, they'll dream, they're sick and disabled, they'll dream that they're whole and fully able again. The person that's well could dream that illness came upon them, and they're disabled, and they'll tremble in fear. And see, that's what happens when we sleep.

We are susceptible to delusions and to lies and to vain imaginings. You know, as Christians, the same thing can happen to us. We can have delusions and lies, and strange things come into your mind and into your heart spiritually.

Strange thoughts like, is the Gospel really true? Is the Christian life true, or is it just a phony life? Maybe the world, maybe this is just some story somebody made up. Maybe the Bible's not true at all. You know, those strange thoughts start to come into your mind, just like when you're physically asleep, you start thinking these strange things.

Well, when you're spiritually asleep, those strange thoughts, those delusions, those lies, those fantasies come into your life. Was Jesus really the Son of God, or was He just a man like many say? See those thoughts? Is this the state of spiritual slumber that you are in? You know, the devil will take advantage, planting lies, planting deception, that lead to doubt, fear, and unbelief. A Christian in this condition might even have delusions of thinking of themselves better than they ought.

You know, he or she might begin to believe that they're actually superior to other people. You know, that they're smarter, that they're better looking, that they're more spiritual, that they're more talented, that they have more spiritual gifts than somebody else has. And pride sets in during that time of spiritual sleep and puffs them up.

Numb. Asleep to the truth of God when the Word of God says in 1 Peter 5, For God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble, but in their sleeping state, they believe the delusion and it plays out in their life. Friend, does this describe your condition this morning? If so, may God wake you up from it.

In Ephesians 5.14, the Lord gives us the wake-up call. He says, Awake! Awake thou that sleepest! And that's the call this morning. Awake! You know another thing about sleep? It puts you in a state of inaction.

Inaction. In physical sleep, the body is still breathing, the heart is still beating, but there is no action of the body to accomplish any work or to accomplish any task or to accomplish any chore or to help someone or to serve someone or to minister to someone. The body is in a state of inaction physically.

And the same happens in our state of spiritual drowsiness. There appears to be a flicker of life there. You know, people still maybe read their Bible, they maybe still go to church, they maybe still go through the motions of devotions.

There's a little bit of flicker there. But there's no spiritual action there because the spiritual life is asleep. It's dead to the activity for the things of God.

You know, this is a plague upon the land of Christianity. There were those who were once active and awake to raising godly families, to nurturing a godly marriage, to having joyful and godly homes and children with godly attitudes at home and in public, wanting to participate in the outreaches and ministries of the Lord's work, but are now no longer active. And they're neglectful in all of these areas that they were once given to.

But they've fallen asleep. The Christian, the church that is asleep, is in a state of inaction, of lukewarmness. Oh, beware lest ye fall.

Awake! Awake thou that sleepest. Another thing that sleep does to us is it makes us vulnerable. It makes us uncertain.

It makes us insecure. If you think about crime, when does most crime take place? It takes place at night. And it takes place when most people are asleep.

A murderer easily kills the one that sleeps. A thief or robber easily steals from the home where the owner sleeps. While the same holds true for the Christian who slumbers spiritually.

In Judges 4, Jael slays Sisera while he sleeps. Abner, David's general, took King Saul's spear from his side as he slept. Sleeping Samson had his hair cut, unaware of his impending enslavement and torture by the Philistines when he awoke because he slept.

You see, spiritually sleeping men and women, brethren, are always in danger. Your family might be snatched away from you by the world, by the flesh, by the devil while you sleep spiritually right under your own nose in your own house. And besetting sin will overtake you as you sleep spiritually.

A heresy, a false teaching, a false teacher, a false prophet, a wolf in sheep's clothing might attack and wound and disable and destroy you while you sleep. Oh, awake thou that sleepest. You are in danger.

Those are some of the places that we put ourselves when we're asleep. When we stop in our Christian life and we slumber on that devilish sleepy land of what John Bunyan called the enchanted ground. So another question follows now.

How can sleepy Christians be awakened? How can they be awakened? If they're asleep, how can they wake up? How can they be awakened? Well, part of the answer, just part of the answer is given in this true story shared by a godly seasoned preacher from many, many years ago. And this is what he said. I remember once in my life having a sleepy congregation.

They had been eating too much dinner and they came to the chapel in the afternoon for the afternoon services very sleepy. So I tried an old method to rouse them awake. I shouted with all my might, fire! Fire! Fire! When jumping from their seats, alert and now awakened, some of the congregation asked, where is it? Where's the fire? Where's the fire? And I told them, it was in hell for sleepy sinners as they were.

Now some might say, wow, those are harsh words. But how many of you would have a loved one with your house burning down deep in sleep and you'd go up to them to rouse them from a deep sleep and you'd say, no, you're going to say, honey, the house is on fire. Wake up, get out.

Our lives are in danger. So those of you who heard that story and took a little offense and say, boy, that was pretty hard. But see, when people's souls are at stake, even more so than their bodies at stake in a house on fire, there's more at stake.

Their eternal destiny is at stake. Wake up. Wake up.

But there are some other important reasons and other important ways in which we can awaken the Christian and keep ourselves awake and shake off the drowsiness and wake up. One of them is this. Awake, O Christian.

Awake, O Christian, because the Lord is coming. The Lord is coming. And He will come as a thief in the night.

1 Thessalonians 5. It's some verses that we all know, but I want to read them here this morning in light of today's message. 1 Thessalonians 5, 1 through 9. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no

need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as prevail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that the day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day.

We are not of the night nor of darkness. Look at verse 6. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober, for they that sleep sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. So, brethren, we must be alert. We must be awake.

We must be ready. The One who suffered, the One who bled, the One who died on the cross for our sins, He will return as He left in a cloud to receive His people. Do you wish to be found by Him dozing and sleeping and napping spiritually when the Lord comes? Do you want to be like the foolish virgins in Matthew 25? Remember the parable there that the Lord Jesus gave? Who slumbered and slept as they waited for their bridegroom, Christ, to come? And because they slept and were not ready spiritually, you know, five had oil in their lamps, the other five didn't, five could not enter the wedding feast.

And in verse 12, if you look at that, it's found in Matthew 25, in verse 12, look what the Lord told them when they tried to get into the wedding feast. He said, I know you not. I know you not.

Oh, what a shame. What tragedy to have those words spoken. And I pray that it happens to none of us here.

That none of us get before the Lord someday and He says, I know you not. You fell asleep all those years ago. You departed from the faith.

You neglected the Holy Spirit's nudging. You neglected the preaching of the Word of God. You neglected My Word.

You quenched the Holy Spirit in your sleep. And now, I know you not. Well, let me ask you.

If some famous person came to your house, would you sleep and nap? No, if it was someone important to you, you would definitely be prepared. You would not sleep. In fact, some of you would probably stay up all night preparing if it was a last minute notice.

You'd stay up late, early into the morning, late into the night preparing. You know, there's a little track that I came across a long time ago, and it's a beautiful little track. Some of you probably have it.

It says, If Jesus came to your house. How many of you have this little track? You should get it. It's a good wake-up call.

If Jesus all of a sudden dropped in on your house, what would He find? What reading material would He find in your house? What music would He have playing in your house? What would your attitude be toward your husband if Jesus all of a sudden popped in? What would your attitude be to your wife if Jesus all of a sudden popped in? What would your children's attitude be? And see, that will keep you awake, won't it? If

you know Jesus could come at any time, you know the Lord is coming. And we say that sometimes so casually, but He's coming. And He's not going to come for people that are asleep.

He's going to come for people that are awake. Just as if you knew that special guest was coming, and when that person comes to your door in your house and knocks, will those around your house say, Oh, the owner of the house is asleep and unprepared for your visit. And the result would be that that important person, the Lord Jesus, would pass by and go to another house where they are ready, where they are prepared, where they are awake.

That's what will happen to you, or to me, if we don't stay awake. You might say, well, I'm not asleep. I am very active in the interest of life.

Remember, the Lord is coming. And when He comes, will He find your soul asleep in your vanity? Will He find your soul asleep in your amusements? Will He find your soul asleep in your fashions, in your sports, in your money, in your success, in your social activities? Will He find you asleep in your friends? Do you know what I mean? Those things that lull you to sleep spiritually? Will He find you being lulled to sleep to drowsiness by words of gossip, by dishonest actions, or words of pride? Let me ask you, in what condition or activity will He find you when He returns? Will He find you awake? Or will He find you asleep? O brethren, may He not find us asleep. But wake from your slumber, for the Lord cometh.

Another reason and way to shake off drowsiness or sleep in any spiritual life is this. How can we doze? How can we sleep? How can we nap while souls are being lost? How can we do that? O sleepy Christian, if I could shout in your spiritual ears this morning, you are sleeping. You are fuzzy-headed, you are drowsy while souls are being lost.

Even the souls of your own wife, your children, your loved ones, your family members, your parents, your neighbors. Sleeping while lost men and lost women are increasing the population of hell. Sleeping while Christ's sacrifice on the cross is being neglected and being dishonored.

Sleeping while the devil is grinning at your sleeping face. While he and his demons dance around your sleeping spiritual soul. Telling it in hell that a Christian is asleep.

Can you picture that? That's a sobering thought. It should be a sobering and a trembling thought that could happen to any of us here. Let me make one thing very clear this morning and let it be known abroad that you will never catch the devil asleep.

You will never catch the devil asleep. So let the devil not catch you asleep. Remember God's warning in 1 Peter 5.8 when he tells Christians be sober, be vigilant.

That means don't sleep, don't relax spiritually, don't sleep spiritually. Why? Because your adversary the devil is a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour. So let it be known that you will never catch the devil asleep and let the devil not catch you.

Well, let me ask you another question here this morning. When is the Christian most likely to sleep spiritually? When is that most likely to occur? Well, a Christian is most likely to sleep to spiritual things just like it is for us humans when we're doing physical sleep. But spiritually we're most likely to sleep when his or her earthly life and circumstances are comfortable and pleasant.

When life is comfortable and cozy, sort of a cozy bed of sorts, I put it. When life is warm and cozy, you are most likely to sleep even including a cozy church or a cozy fellowship. You know, cozy fellowship life, a cozy church, that'll lull you to sleep because it gets comfortable.

In Luke 12, our Lord Jesus spoke a parable and this is what he spoke. It was about the rich man. But there's some lessons we can learn here about this whole idea of getting comfortable and cozy.

Luke 12, verses 16 to 21, our Lord Jesus speaking. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do? Because I have no room where to bestow my fruits.

And he said, This will I do. I will pull down my barns and build greater. And there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease. Eat.

Drink. And be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.

Then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. You see, we can get comfortable just like this rich man did. And he got so confident.

And look what he said in verse 19. He said, And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years. Take thine ease.

What does take thine ease mean? That means, Hey, relax. Relax. Take a little nap.

Take a little sleep. You've got plenty to last you. Take thine ease.

You know, that sounds like the good life, doesn't it? People in the world say, Well, that's the good life. You've got enough money in the bank. You've got enough goods.

You've got enough properties. Take it easy. Retire.

Take a little nap. And that can happen to us in our Christian life, brethren. It can happen to us in our Christian life.

But look what our Lord Jesus says about that so-called good life. Look what he said in verse 20. He called that man, Thou fool.

Thou fool. And that's what the Lord thinks about the world's good life. And if that's how you define your good life, that's what God calls it.

You fool. And then the Lord went on to pronounce judgment upon that man's soul. And it cost him his soul.

And that man went to hell. Did you notice something here? You can pass over it real quickly if you're not careful. In verse 20, The God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.

What happens at night? We sleep. We sleep. I think it's kind of a little warning from God here in this parable that we sometimes pass over real quickly.

It's when we spiritually sleep that we are most in danger of being in the state of this man. But you know what? When we allow trials of life, when we allow persecution for our faith to work in our hearts and in our life and in our soul, then our bed in life is not so comfortable, is it? And we will not easily doze into slumber. And in these times of trial, our reliance is on God Almighty alone and not on ourselves.

You see, a wise saying to this remedy of being comfortable is let God work in your life and He will send the trials in your life that you need. As Brother Ron was sharing, that tempting, that testing that we need to keep ourselves awake and alert. A wise saying is this.

Easy roads make us slumber in this life. Few sleep in a storm, but many sleep on a calm night. So instead of fighting against the storms that God sends into our life, we should be so thankful.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for keeping me awake that I doze not off. You see, it's another way of looking at it. So often we Christians want a peaceful life.

We want just this peaceful life. But you know what God says in Scripture, and the reality is if we have a peaceful life, we will drift off to sleep and we will be in danger for our souls. Few sleep in a storm, but many sleep on a calm night.

Oh, why are Christians and the Church asleep now? Awake thou that sleepest, lest your lampstand be removed from God's presence. Well, a Christian is also in danger of drifting off to sleep, not only when everything is comfortable in the physical realm, but also when everything is going well in spiritual matters. We're in most danger of falling asleep.

See, we can be lulled to sleep with a lullaby. You know the little lullaby some of us sing, you know, to your children. Some of you sing little songs, rock-a-bye baby, you know, those little songs that put your children to sleep, whatever it might be.

Hopefully it's a little hymn and not that little worldly little tune. But lullabies, they lull you to sleep. But see, when things are going well spiritually, this is the lullaby that we sing to ourselves.

The battle has been fought and won, so now we can rest on our laurels, we can rest on our glory days from the past. We've won the battle for the Lord. Well, when you get to that point, you can count on this truth.

It is in the times of peace, it's the times of easy times, that Christians often shut their spiritual eyes and wander into the sleepy land of forgetfulness of the Lord. It has been wisely said, brethren, I prefer a roaring devil rather than a sleeping devil, because there is no temptation half so bad as not being tempted. You're going to say, that doesn't make sense.

That flies in the face of everything that I think the way, you know, the Christian life should be. Well, no, it's the reality, brethren. It's a safety valve that God has put in the Christian life.

You see, there is no temptation half so bad as not being tempted. Because when you're not being tempted, life is at ease. Your spiritual life is at ease, and you'll fall asleep.

Oh, we should praise the Lord for trials and tests. The distressed, the stretched soul does not sleep. It is only after we get comfortable.

It's only after we get self-confident. It's only after we get fully assured of our circumstances that we are in danger of falling off to sleep. A Christian is also in danger of spiritually falling into a deep sleep.

And this is one that I tremble about, brethren. This is one that I talked about when I opened up the sermon today, where I tremble. One of my greatest fears is that I would drift away from the Lord into unfaithfulness, prayerlessness, not loving the things of God anymore.

I don't want to go that way because this is what causes so many to fall asleep right here. The Christian is in danger of spiritually falling into a deep sleep when we get near the end of our journey. I remember years ago, sitting with Brother Denny, must be 17 years ago.

We were out in Idaho. And I said, Denny, where are all the older Christians? You know, the godly Christian men that are in their 70s and 80s. Where are they? Well, you know, we had a little chat about that, but I think here's part of the answer.

See, so often, too many Christians fall asleep when they near the journey's end. And sadly, yet truly, this is one of the most likely places where many weary, battle-worn Christians and saints sit down to rest and fall asleep in sleepy land on the enchanted ground, deciding that they have fought long enough and now it is their time to rest and let the younger ones take over and carry on the battle. I tell you, it is here.

It's here, near the journey's end of life, that many fall into such a deep spiritual sleep that at times it seems that none can awake them. Because they are so sure they're right. How many of us have known people like that? I have.

These are the ones who have been Christians for many years, faithfully serving God. Then sadly, in their older years, their senior years, if we want to call it that way, in their older years they drift off to sleep and they do not finish the race well. And sadly, some get in the wrong race and don't even finish the race, as the Lord calls it.

And take notice. Those that have been faithful, true Christians for many years are in the most danger of slumbering, going unconscious to their own sin, to their sin of pride, to their sin of indifference, to their sin of laziness, to their sin of unbelief, to their lack of repentance in their life, quenching the Holy Spirit, growing cold to the lost, neglectful to the souls of their wife or to their husband, neglectful to the souls of their children, or even their grandchildren, or even their great-grandchildren. Oh, what a sorry state that is.

And you know, life becomes routine if we're not careful. The older we get, the Christian life becomes somewhat routine, almost like a rut that the buggies make in the dirt roads out here. The ruts.

The grooves in the dirt that the wheels make. And the Christian life can become that way. You know, church on Sunday morning.

Maybe an evening service on Sunday night. You know, a Wednesday night service. Maybe a prayer meeting during the week.

Maybe a cell group meeting here or there. And maybe a little fellowship meal here or there. And life becomes pretty steady.

Pretty steady, pretty routine. And when years have worn our life road with such a rut of religion disguised as godliness, we are tempted to, and many succumb to, putting our spiritual life on cruise control. And we

fall asleep, soundly asleep, to their shame and loss.

Oh, may it not be so among us. We're somewhat of a medium-aged congregation. We have a number of younger people here.

Some kind of in their late 30s and their 40s now. And some of us in our late 50s and our 60s. And a handful here in our late 60s and our 70s.

But the warning is to us older ones. Let's not fall asleep near the journey's end. Let's stay awake.

Let's stay alert till the very end. So, let me ask you this. How can we keep each other awake then? I've talked about being aware that the Lord is coming.

But let me talk about a few other little things here as I get near the end of the message here. How are we as Christians to keep from falling asleep? And if we are asleep, how do we awaken ourselves or maybe others around us that we sense are spiritually asleep? Well, one of the answers is given to us in that same little passage here that I read out of Pilgrim's Progress when they come upon the enchanted ground and they want to go to sleep. And Christian warns hopeful not to do that.

And Christian says here, Do you not remember, hopeful, that one of the shepherds bid us beware of the enchanted ground? He meant by that that we should beware of sleeping. Wherefore, let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober. Now hopeful replies, I acknowledge myself in fault, said hopeful, and had I been here alone, I had by sleeping run the danger of death.

I see it is true that the wise man saith, Two are better than one. Hitherto hath thy company been my mercy, and thou shalt have a good reward for thy labor, Christian. Christian then replies, Now then, said Christian, to prevent drowsiness in this place, here's one of the answers, how we wake each other up, keep ourselves awake, and wake up other people.

Now then, said Christian, to prevent drowsiness in this place, let us fall into good discourse. With all my heart, said hopeful. Christian said, Where shall we begin? Hopeful replied, Where God began with us.

You see, one of the ways that we can keep from falling asleep ourselves or waking others up is to keep company with Holy Spirit filled, awake, on fire, genuine lovers of Christ who fear God and keep His precepts. You make companions of those people and I will almost guarantee you because the Bible will affirm to that that you will not fall asleep. You will not fall asleep.

Iron sharpens iron, right? You will not fall asleep. But I want to warn you about something here. You're going to say, Well, of course, I know that.

That's nothing new. Well, let me warn you about this. Let me throw this curveball at you, alright? Just keeping company with other Christians or so-called Christians who are also spiritually asleep will do you no good and will possibly harm you even more deeply.

And in fact, you will more easily will all fall prey to the world, the flesh, and the devil because you could be hanging around Christians that are asleep also. But when you find that Holy Spirit led and that Holy Spirit fed believer, we must with them talk about and obediently live God's Word, the Bible. Hebrews 3.13 is a verse that I quote often when I stand up before you and it says this, Exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

We need to be active in each other's life in a spiritual way, in an on-fire way. Hearts being hardened in this verse here I think relate really well to what we're talking about. Those are hearts that are numbed by being asleep.

Because you know, the Christian who is and stays awake spiritually, for that Christian, there is no subject no more exciting, no subject no more invigorating, no subject more energy producing, more inspiring, more convicting, more hopeful than God's Word to keep him or her alert and vigilant in serving Christ. Those are the people you want to hang around with. And as in this little story I read, the best and the most awakening place to start is to begin to share and discuss your personal salvation testimony.

Every time someone comes up here and gives a personal salvation testimony that is real and genuine, my heart flutters. I get excited. I say, God worked in their life.

And I pray He continues to work in their life, but that's a good place to start. If you're seeing yourself a little bit, you know, a little bit drowsy spiritually or you're around somebody that maybe, you know, that's a little sleepy, start sharing your testimony of what God did to change your life. If you have a testimony.

If you don't, that's a whole other subject. But the subject here is if you have a testimony, share it. Of what Christ has done in your life.

And that will perk up the conversation. It'll stir the soul quickly and divinely. And it will lead you into further uplifting, sleep-chasing, spiritual conversation.

And if it does not do that, then it might be revealing that you are still asleep. Or more so that maybe you are spiritually dead. That you're an unsaved, you're not redeemed.

Remember 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith. And that's a good place. That's a good measuring gauge to go at.

Do you want to be around God's people? Do you want to talk about things of God? Or do you just want to socialize and shoot the breeze? This is a truth. And I quote it to you. When Christians who are Holy Spirit led talk together, they will not sleep together.

Be forewarned. Christians who get together to gossip, and to backbite, or to brag, or to debate, or to boast, or to compare themselves among themselves, or to feed their flesh, are doing nothing more than singing each other to sleep. No, instead are gathering together.

Our assembling of ourselves together must be to exhort. Must be to encourage in the Lord. Must be to comfort in the Word of God.

It must be to teach the precepts of God from His Holy Word. It must be to bring conviction of sin into each other's life where we are going astray. It's to guide and to lead each one of us on the narrow path.

As it says in Matthew 7:14, it says, Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life. And few, few there be that find it. Why so few, you ask? I think it's because so many fell asleep along the way.

Yes, there are some that didn't find it. They rejected the Gospel. But those that were on the path, but they didn't find it all the way, they fell asleep.

And that could be you. That could be you. That could be me.

It is somewhat like falling asleep while driving a car, isn't it? It doesn't happen all of a sudden. You're driving along, and the road is straight, and it's quiet inside the car except for the hum of the engine, the car noise. It's just a steady noise.

You're either alone, or everyone else in the car is asleep. You've been there. And you begin to lose concentration.

The road's straight. Things are quiet. It's warm in the car.

You're driving along, and pretty soon, you start to lose concentration. Things get kind of fuzzy. You lose focus.

And then a motorcycle goes by, and oh, you wake up. Okay. But the same thing happens again.

A few minutes later, you begin to doze off, and you lose concentration. Your head starts to nod a little bit. And then a big semi-truck goes by, and oh, you start all awake again.

But then pretty soon, you get a longer stretch of road, and you start to nod off. You nod off, and you lose focus. And soon, you doze off to sleep.

And see, that's the way it is in the Christian life. See, we have the best intentions. We have a destination we feel we're going to.

We're going to heaven, right? We're going to go meet Jesus, right? We're on that destination, and we're driving along. And yes, the road isn't necessarily straight, but it's a drive. It's a narrow path, and it's narrow.

You've got to stay in the middle. You've got to stay. You're going to get off the road if you don't stay on it.

But pretty soon, things get comfortable, and you veer off the road. And just like a driving accident, you know, or a wreck, you veer off the road, you hit a tree, you hit a power pole, you roll into a ditch, and pretty soon, you yourself are seriously injured, and the passengers in your car, your family are seriously injured, or maybe even killed. And the same can happen to us, spiritually, in a spiritual wreck when we fall asleep.

You know, asleep at the wheel in our spiritual lives, in our relationship with God Almighty. So to help keep us awake, join yourself. Please, I beg you, join yourself to those who are themselves awake and alive in Christ Jesus.

And be sure that they give evidence in their lives, in their marriages, in their families, that they give evidence that they are truly awake, and not sleepwalking Christians. You know what a sleepwalking Christian is? Some of you have children to sleepwalk. Again, scientists don't know why that happens either.

But there are sleepwalking Christians. You know, they're asleep spiritually, but yet, they read their Bible. Yep, you know, they'll go to church.

Yep, they'll do religious activities. But they're sleepwalking. They're not alive.

They're not vibrant. They're not spirit-led. That's sleepwalking.

You know, they chat about the Bible with no to little evidence of fruit that they are living in true love for the Savior. Again, another wise saying that I want to quote to you today. It says, Two or more alert and awake

Christians talking together of the ways of the Lord will go much faster to heaven than one alone.

And when a whole assembly, a whole church of alert and awake believers get together, united in speaking of the promises of God, speaking of His loving kindness, speaking of His precepts in faith and obedience, then and there, there is no better way like that of keeping themselves awake. Well, another way of keeping ourselves awake, brethren, is to keep looking at Jesus, our Savior. Keep looking at Jesus, our Savior.

If you keep looking at Jesus, our Savior, you say, well, you mean I can have a picture? No, I'm not talking about a picture. I'm talking about what God's Word says. God's Word says who Jesus is in the four Gospels.

Many of you have read the four Gospels many times, especially those of us who have been walking with the Lord for a while. Keep looking to Jesus. Look at His life here on earth and what He did for us and how He lived His life.

Look at His life. Sinful, sinless, to us who are sinful. Sinless, a wonderful life.

Behold Him on the cross, suffering and dying for your sin and my sin. If you behold Him on the cross and what He did for us, you will not sleep because you know He's worthy. Behold and picture the empty tomb in your life every day and that will keep you awake because that tomb is empty because He is now sitting at the right hand of God, interceding for you and for me.

How could we sleep while Jesus is doing that for us? And then, as I mentioned earlier, how can we sleep knowing that He's going to gloriously return? He's going to return and He promises to take us with Him to heaven forever. Wow, brethren. Wow, do you get it? Keep near the cross.

Keep near Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, and you will not sleep. Another way not to sleep and to keep from slumbering is allow the Holy Spirit to overflow every moment of every day. Pray and ask Him to every day throughout the day to breathe spiritual life and spiritual truth into your life.

Those things that are new every morning, ask the Holy Spirit to do that to you every day. Some of you who are real detail-oriented might say, well, we got the Holy Spirit when we got born again. Yes, you did, but you know, when you fall asleep, you quench that Spirit.

You subdue that Spirit. That Spirit will not go anywhere where you do not allow it to go. That's why God has given us free will.

But see, we can choose to say, Lord, I see I've quenched. Lord, I see I've been neglectful of Your Spirit working in my life. I want You to begin to work in my life, Lord.

Open my heart up. I want to see through spiritual eyes. I want to hear Your words, Lord, and I want them to be real.

And I want to be alert and I want to be awake. That's another way to keep from sleeping. A final way to keep from sleeping, and I mentioned this earlier also, with very strong faith and conviction, unwaveringly remember where you are going when you finish the race.

The race here on earth. Heaven. To be with Christ forever.

Why would you want to sleep? You'll never get there if you fall asleep. But if you unwaveringly see that's the goal, there's the finish line, you won't sleep. And if you've run the race well, in a faith-filled, repentant, humble, agape-filled, obedient life for the Savior, you will hear the words which says, Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Enter into His rest. So if you remember that, if you remember that if you sleep not, that if you faint not, you are going to heaven, then you will not sleep on life's journey there. But there is an alternative, you know, because you need to acknowledge, we need to all realize, that sleepers, sleepers, their alternative to heaven is hell.

Where they will be separated from God in the lake of fire and tormented forever and ever. And we don't talk a lot about hell here, but I think that that's a reality here. And we need to remember that as Christians.

If we remember that, it's heaven or it's hell. You'll stay awake. Because the enemy is going to be nipping at your heels all your life, trying to get you to sleep, trying to get you to turn around and go back.

Because he wants to see your soul destroyed. And if you can say, if I lay down, he's going to devour me. He's a roaring lion, you know, seeking whom he may devour.

It's much easier for him to get a sleeping target rather than one that's running down that narrow path, full speed, awake and alert. So if we think of the alternative, you, brethren, you will remain awake. Well, as I bring this message to a close here, I just have one little thing to ask you.

I pray your soul has been stirred and awakened this morning. If it is not, perhaps it's because you are not asleep this morning, but maybe you're spiritually dead, meaning that you're not a true Christian, meaning that you're lost, meaning that you're unsaved, that you're dead in trespasses and sin. For you, this message will not awake the dead, but God.

But God can quicken the dead and make them alive in Christ, and you still have hope. If you would see yourself dead in your sins and humbly fall broken before our Lord Jesus, confessing and repenting, calling on him to save you, then he will make you alive, and he will quicken your spirit. But as for us here this morning who are now of the family of God, those of us who are redeemed, may we be alerted, and if need be, be awakened this morning by this message from the Lord.

As we are reminded from Romans 13.11, this is my closing verse. Romans 13.11 says, Now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. O, awake thou that sleepest.

May the Lord richly bless the preaching of His Word. Therefore, because of all we have heard, let us not sleep as do others. Let us watch and be sober.

Verse 8, But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. I have to confess this morning, brother, you spoke to my heart.

I have had those very thoughts and probably have uttered them out loud about letting the young men take more responsibility for things and just kind of relaxing, you know. I find that desire in my flesh more and more as I get older myself. But this morning, I take this as a very personal challenge and want to shake myself and be awake and alert.

As the Scripture teaches us in all these many verses. Many, many challenging thoughts that came our way this morning. I would just like to open it up for additional input and confession, testimony, whatever you have asking for prayer.

Just raise your hand and we will get a microphone to you and give you an opportunity to share. Up here in front. Alright, we will go in the back first.

Yes, I was just wanting to praise the Lord this morning for both messages. The opening, very convicting. I thought of some Isaacs in my life that I desire to lay on the altar.

And also the message we just heard. My heart says Amen to it. And something I was thinking of, sometimes we hear those kinds of messages and we say Amen, and we say that was convicting and all those things.

And we behold our face in a glass and forget what manner of men we are. And we live our life the rest of the week just as we came this morning. And I want to challenge us as well as myself that we be not forgetful hearers, but that we be doers of the word.

And may God help us to be changed, not just challenged. Amen. Thank you brothers for sharing this morning.

I was blessed with that. I was trying to think how those two messages kind of blend together. I thought of Abraham there as we were going through that story.

He told him to get into the land of Moriah and to offer his son. And he said he was going to have him offer him on a mountain which I will tell thee of. And it says on the third day he looked and saw it afar off.

And so he was looking and listening to God for instruction. And I think he probably was not sleeping those three days. I'm sure he was seeing the seriousness of I want to hear God.

He had to know where God wanted him to sacrifice and the particulars of it. That's right. And I just think sometimes those challenges can keep us from going to sleep.

And I remember one time I had a job where I had to take a real steep windy road to work every day. And I got very careless. And it was just something I did every day.

And I looked up in the rear view mirror one morning and I saw a sheriff's car behind me. And automatically both hands on the wheel, I was watching the lines, make sure I didn't get out of the lines, watch the speedometer. I was very aware of everything around.

And I just thought I need to be careful here. And sometimes I think in our Christian walk we get a little careless and sleepy at the wheel as we've heard them talk about. And may God give us grace to be aware of the presence of God in our lives that He can keep us on that straight and narrow, keep us from falling asleep.

So pray for me. I do not want to drift and fall asleep. Because I think that's all of our heart's desire.

Amen. Anyone else? Up here. I just want to thank you, Brother David, for your message you had this morning.

And both the messages, it really challenged me. One thing that the Lord's really been convicting me of lately is that the lack of time that I've been spending with Him and that I have not been spending enough time praying and seeking His face. And I've really been seeing the lack of the sleepiness it does give in my life and how I don't have that awakesness like I should.

And it's really been a challenge to me. And your message really convicted me this morning. And I pray that God will awaken me completely and I will live a very alert life.

Amen. Thank you, Devon.

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