

Sleepwalking Saints

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon focuses on the urgency for believers to awaken spiritually, casting off works of darkness and embracing the light of Christ. It addresses the prevalent spiritual shallowness among Christians and the need for a deep, transformative relationship with God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of responding to God's call, awakening to His truth, and experiencing a radical transformation through the power of the gospel.

Scripture: Romans 13:11, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 5:14, Ezekiel 2:1, Psalms 92:14

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening", "Embracing the Light of Christ"

Description

This sermon focuses on the urgency for believers to awaken spiritually, casting off works of darkness and embracing the light of Christ. It addresses the prevalent spiritual shallowness among Christians and the need for a deep, transformative relationship with God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of responding to God's call, awakening to His truth, and experiencing a radical transformation through the power of the gospel.

Transcript

So let's turn to the scriptures together, shall we? We'll go to the book of Romans, if you're following me in your Bible. I'm going to read a few verses. There's one verse that will be really the text, I suppose.

But I'm in chapter 13 of Romans, and toward the end of the chapter, I read this, and I'm using the King James Translation, which I know makes some people very happy. It probably upsets a few others, but there you are. Verse 11 of chapter 13.

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 armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness or chambering and wantonness or strife or envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.

Amen. You know, I trust with all my heart that the Holy Spirit will touch a live nerve in many hearts today. I'm never seeking to produce a clever sermon.

That's just not where I come from at all. I recognize that unless the Holy Spirit speaks, nothing will be said. My constant prayer is really quite literally that line of a verse of a hymn that I've quoted on numerous

occasions over the years, but it's simply this.

Speak Lord in the stillness whilst I wait on thee
Hushed my heart to listen
Inexpectancy Speak O blessed master
in this hallowed hour
Let me hear thy voice Lord
Feel thy touch of power
That's my personal prayer
and I can remember when I first heard those words
and they just resonated in my heart
and they have continued to do it down through many decades now.
So here we are and as this Western culture spirals into chaos
most folk are too busy to consider the impending disaster.
The fact is so many are so hopelessly preoccupied with themselves
and the readily available escapes from reality that surround us
in these days and again in this culture.

But it's against that kind of background of apathy and indifference
that I want to focus my thoughts here before you this morning.
I want to talk about a topic that should be that should be of enormous concern
to everyone professing to be Christian. It is the topic or the theme of spiritual shallowness
that abounds on every hand around us.

Never has there been a time I'm sure when there's been more Christian ministry available
and yet at the same time who can deny the shallowness and the appalling absence
of those who are locked in a personal pursuit of the knowledge of God.
You will have noticed yourself I'm sure how readily conversations among professing believers
center around other subjects subjects such as politics and sports events and movies
and and children some of these things are very legitimate of course and houses
and and work There are others who tend to focus in on the latest church gossip
or perhaps on subjects such as the Antichrist the tribulation the rapture
Christian music If the group together are pastors they're probably focusing
their attention on their new building or the one they're planning or on the size
of the congregation or the size of the offering But you know show me someone
who wants to talk about their hunger for God or the sacredness of the presence
they enjoy when they're alone in his presence and you're showing me a very rare
Person in these days. I believe I'm right.

I invited you a moment ago to To agree with me if it was true, and I think I think who in
In honesty can deny that this is so rampant The title that I feel to give to this talk
on this occasion is this Sleepwalking Saints You know in a material world they tell us
that about 3.5 people actually engage in sleepwalking but could it be that in the realm
of professing Christian people in our culture at least it's more like 3.5 are the ones
who are not sleeping And some of you will remember how Keith Green So clearly describes
this kind of situation one of the verses he wrote Went like this my eyes are dry
My faith is old My heart is hard and my prayers are cold
And I know how I ought to be Alive to you and dead to me You Would agree with me
also, I'm sure that sleep has features in common with death itself it renders sleep
renders us completely ignorant to one surroundings and One's own state and were sort
of lost in a world of unreality It's this it's this sort of dream version of Christianity
that requires or demands little more than a nod of approval to certain Christian doctrines
and maybe the mouthing of a familiar prayer But The life of so many Is not significantly
changed And The the problem is that that such experience of The Christian faith Bears
little resemblance to the dynamic Christianity of the New Testament You know well we find
men and women who who First gave their lives to God you probably remember how Paul uses
that expression in 2nd Corinthians They first gave themselves Their lives to God
and they also gave that of their substance to remember how we read That none called
what they possessed their own Indicating the the sheer depth of the Impact that
the gospel and their response to the gospel the work of the Spirit of God in their lives
was making to make such radical changes Once again, we live in the context of such shallowness
You know it's this is not new We know as we look back into the Old Testament
and to the story of Israel this was the perennial trend Perhaps summed up in one phrase
that occurs back there when it says that everyone did

that which was right in their own eyes in other words I'm saying that for so many people they They hear something of the message of the gospel. They make a degree of response to it But it seldom translates into that complete heart transformation that transformation that impacts our spirits and our souls and even our bodies This came up in the conversation. We were having yesterday with some men This these sort of try parts Features of Who we are my personhood and How we can only know God truly in our spirits but then as the result of that life coming into our inward being It begins to sort of percolate through our souls through our emotions through our intellect through our minds Thoughts It Changes us There's a true redemption takes place in our spirits I understand that but there's a sense in which our souls become redeemed because they're not functioning As they once did As they used to and then even for our bodies and Paul Paul Puts a sharp point on this writing to the Romans He's talking about his physical body these these members of my body He said they were once and a better translation puts it this way.

They were once weapons of unrighteousness But now they're weapons of righteousness unto God such is the radical Transformation brought about by the power of God through the gospel by the Holy Spirit's ministry Into the lives of men and women and they become new creations If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation Old things are passed away. Behold a Double L all things have become new amen and In this in this text that I've read to you in Romans the Apostle Paul is basically Informing his readers. He's gone through this enormously important body of Christian truth and doctrine here here and he's reached a point in this letter where he he sort of I don't know he he's sort of preparing to land this 747 of truth and In this context, he's sort of winding it up with some very important and very moving statements But this is just one of them when he says you need to know what time it is beloved It's time to wake up out of your sleep He said time's short We'll get every one of us are closer to the finish of our earthly lives and our earthly journey No matter how old or young we are for that matter And the word of the Apostle which I believe is the word of the Holy Spirit today right now here as we're together and We're talking and thinking about these things.

We're saying well, what what time is it? I'll tell you Paul says I'll tell you what time it is. It's time that you woke up out of your sleep walking and out of your sleep It's getting late. It's getting very late for some of us.

It's time to wake up to the realities of The call of God and the grace of God extended to all of us It's time for us to come to a fresh appreciation of the words Which are so familiar to so many of us, but we need to the Holy Spirit should refresh them to us and that our response to God should be refreshed and It's not too late for us to begin to discover what God has always had in his heart for us to know To experience and turn joy and to glorify him with well, we still remain in this world there's a There's a phrase it comes to my mind right out of Peter's epistle. I Can remember it was 1966. That's a long time ago before many of you were born But I heard this verse quoted that I've read it before I've been raised on the Bible But when I heard This and again, it works so perfectly in the old King James Bible listen to these words as He is so be ye.

They're all two-letter words and Close to that statement the Apostle says this he says That were to be as he is in this world This is a here-and-now thing where we can talk with great passion and excitement and anticipation about the future So far as eternity is concerned But there's that which God has for each and every one of C has it for you my dear beloved right now to enter into and it's not too late, but it is getting late and It's time to wake up him Paul takes this again in the book of Ephesians some of you will have remembered this as I'm Saying this but in Ephesians 5 and 14 He says awake thou that sleepest and Christ shall give you light And then he goes on to say and stop walking like fools. I Get what he's saying

To do anything other than waking up to the light of Christ and the gospel It's amounts to being a fool You know, yes, I know this that the the action of Awakening to the things of God to the true things of God will be contested. Of course it will and And The call of God is contested as every stage in our lives.

I mean, for example we think of Youth mine was a long time ago But I know a bit about youth and we've had children grandchildren now got great-grandchildren But then the great-grandchildren are not used yet or used But I know that in that period of life everything's all about self, isn't it, you know and we we hear the Apostle talking about youthful lusts or youthful desires and today we've got technology and We've got What I dare to describe as faith destroying colleges and faith destroying universities Someone will have something to say about that But I know so many people who've gone in as Christians and they've come out as atheists but there you are, but the temptations and the Contesting of the enemy against a person having faith in God and trusting God in a complete sense Because the same is certainly true and most certainly true in middle age, you know This is that period in our lives. It's probably where many of you are who are listening to me Well, it's a period of busyness and There's a verse of scripture it comes in and in the book of Psalms in chart Psalm 91 I think verse 6 where it says the destruction that lays waste at noon there's a there's a certain kind of Contesting and temptations that are common to midlife when when you know There's so much going on. There's the Careers developing or perhaps it's quite well established by that point and there's so much That's going on in in terms of family whether it's little children or whether you're dealing with you teenagers or whatever it is or even older children whose You know whose lives we carry concern for for the rest of our days Not true.

Just pausing there for a moment just for a moment I Just heard about someone this morning who had Together he and his wife had purchased a little dog and that's a drive quite a distance to get it and then Then it turns out that there's a lot more going on with training a little puppy than they were bargaining for and so they took it back again And so on But you know Think it thinking of having children this Our families, you know, we've seen a lot of children getting born around us And I know a bit about the joys as well as the challenges of having children But when we enter into everything so wonderful, but but it's a commitment for the entire journey of your life I've got some of the illustrations that go hand-in-hand with this that I can't take time to say, but the fact is We'll worry about them for the rest of our lives one way or another and that's that's a fact and speaking about the rest of our lives There are the the challenges that we face in old age I'm beginning to learn a bit about this Pete who some of you know who is my colleague here He knows more about it than I do But you know in in our old age spiritual there's kind of like a spiritual rigor mortis that begins to set in a resistance to to change whatever form it's coming in and Few in the old age have have that passion remaining for Jesus Although I've met some who certainly Have and continue to have that but it's too easy to sort of you know relax and kick out the lazy boy chair and lean back and Turn the TV on or whatever you're doing and just drift to the finish You know the world of natural sleep Has has what is referred to as a you have a body clock Not everyone pays a lot of attention to it, but the sense in which you Certainly my experience I woke up at twenty past two this morning, and I've been awake pretty well since then That's not always that serious But you know we can wake up at certain times you get into a routine in life and You know or perhaps looking at it from a different point of view there are Circumstances that occurs in our lives that are quite shocking and we refer to them as a kind of a wake-up call But these these factors don't apply spiritually It's not so in the spiritual realm in the spiritual realm. You don't naturally wake up And we can even face really shocking perhaps terrifying circumstances That we may humanly Speaking refers to as wake-up calls, and they may they may have their role in that But in the truest sense Nothing wakes us up that is part of our lives or circumstances We have to be awakened and we have to be awakened by God and here lies the great need That we're that we're facing It's that need to

hear God Speaking yeah, and I'm not I'm not talking about you know dynamic Preachers so clever expositions of Texts that you know when we leave the meeting we say well That was a good word and so on and that kind of thing can leave people and sort of better Educated and they the assumption all too frequently as well. We've heard the Word of God But you know and I hope you know something about this as you're listening to me when he speaks You know that he's spoken I love Wesley's words.

He said on one occasion he speaks and listening to his voice New life the dead Receive he wakes the dead The Word of God wakes the dead is that wonderful the Word of God? Is living it's quick and powerful says the Old King James. It's living. It's vital It's sharper than a two-edged sword and it penetrates deeply even unto the dividing of soul and spirit and it's like a It's like a surgeon's scalpel.

It's sharp. It's got the sharp cutting edge that penetration factor to it The Word of God never comes to us merely to educate our minds The Word of God never comes to us In just some sort of superficial way God never speaks to us to just entertain us When God speaks and someone will want to contest me on this. I'm sure that when God speaks it.

He doesn't come you know To just chat with us Yeah, I'm sorry this may seem inappropriate, but in England years ago Well before we had cell phones mobile phones We had telephone kiosks and there was one stage in history where someone decided to call those boxes Those telephone boxes that chatter boxes for obvious reasons, but let me tell you I Was told when I was a boy in school that I was a chatterbox But but let me tell you God is not a chatterbox He doesn't just talk for the sake of talking when he speaks He wakes you up inwardly. That's all I can say I think he there's something about his speaking that shakes he shakes everything that you thought you understood In some sorry Isaiah chapter 51 would be an appropriate chapter to look at We're basically God is speaking. He's he's calling to Israel and in that chapter.

He's saying wake up There are expressions depending on which translation you're using well where you hear God saying listen to me listen to me Again, there's another phrase used where he it translates pay attention to me It's time to pay attention to God and the again the Apostle Paul's words from Ephesians. I've quoted before again a so appropriate way He says awake thou that sleepers to rise from the dead And Christ shall give you light amen You know in perhaps the greatest story Jesus ever told He speaks about an awakening he speaks about a man awakening And we think of him and remember him as the prodigal son But you remember that phrase in the story that Jesus Created himself. He just told the story Every detail would be significant in it, but here's one detail where Jesus speaks about the Boy, who's been so wayward and he squandered Everything riotous living We're told but then comes this moment as he's sitting there surrounded by the pigs and he was Old King James he feigned would have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat But he came to himself He there was an awakening And in the revelation of the ways of God with men and women we we would say well today That happens to a man or a woman.

It's the Spirit of God awakening Something Deep within ourselves and for that young boy. He was awakened to one primary fact I suggest to you and that was That the identity of his father he remembered who his father was His father was a loving father and he'd wasted his father's substance in his right riotous living But he remembered his father Jesus intended that we should Understand what he was saying there, you know, you don't really know yourself until the Word of God has come and light has come into your heart and the Lord In the same moment he reveals himself to us he exposes ourselves to ourselves And we discover every one of us whatever our story has been and whether you think about in these terms or not It's not the important factor, but but he reveals that I'm a fool I'm living in a in a prison cell and I Wake

up to the fact that I've got a loving father and he's got the door open for me And so You know, I said a few minutes ago that this waking or awakening experience Will be challenged. Well, that is certainly true and I gave you a few illustrations, but you know We will be challenged you will be challenged You are being challenged no doubt but defeat is not inevitable That's that's the important thing and you know, let me give you a couple of examples I thought about Youthfulness before but it was a young man Who wrote these words in his journal? He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose Or again, he wrote in his journal Starting with a part of a quotation of scripture.

He makes his ministers a flame of fire Then the young Jim Elliott went on to write God deliver me from the dread asbestos of other things and Pour upon me the oil of your spirit that I may be a flame But a flame is transient and short-lived Canst thou bear this or my soul? short life In me dwells the spirit of the great short-lived Make me thy fuel flame of God That was Jim Elliott He was a young man. He was contested with the kind of things that young people are contested with But he was he refused to be defeated and he wrote things like that And God took him at his word as you will know or For a man in middle age That it was a middle-aged man who wrote and said all things are lawful unto me But I will not be mastered by anything That's first Corinthians 6 What about in old age Well the psalmist writing claimed this in Psalm 92 They will still yield fruit in old age They shall be full of sap and very green not wonderful Defeat is not inevitable beloved Let me ask you a question. Is it possible that you're being awakened even now while you're listening to me? But really you list if it's true, you're listening to the Holy Spirit Every call of God every call of God demands a response from us You know God called out and said Lazarus come forth And he came forth Bound hand and foot with great clothes, you know that story The call of God demanded a response It demands that we take Action when God speaks and if you're sensing that God is touching that live nerve I referred to earlier then then In the name of Jesus I beseech you Hear his word embrace his word respond To his word, you know many many ask And I've had this asked of me very very recently, you know, you know, my heart is quickened I'm open to what I'm hearing, but but how do I do the next thing? you know And I shared with this person I'm thinking about this fact I said, you know God has made it so simple but we've made everything so complicated and because of a superficial gospel That's been adjusted so that it's seeker friendly.

I know my message this morning's not seeker friendly But it's been adjusted to be seeker friendly. So we've reduced it to its lowest common denominator and people sincerely Attempt to respond to it, but they're not responding to the fullness of the gospel, which is in Christ Jesus and You know So that Later on when they realize that they're frustrated that this isn't working out Some people tend to think well, it's never gonna work for me or they others just give up. But the fact is They've not understood and heard clearly the Word of God as they need to hear it The fact is God has made it so simple that we need to come like little children and forget all your past efforts on your past failures and And so much of the complex doctrine things that can Stumble us at this point We're just hearing God speak and we just need to just fall before him and yield ourselves to him There's a verse of scripture In the Old Testament, let me read it to you it's in the book of Ezekiel If I can just put my finger on it very quickly it's in chapter 2 of Ezekiel You'd never think of looking here would you for this but I read this and he said to me This is the Lord speaking to Ezekiel son of man stand upon thy feet and I will speak unto thee and the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me and Set me upon my feet and I heard him speak to me Sounds a bit complicated at first but it's not and then there's some more that follows That was Ezekiel chapter 2 verses 1 & 2 But the thing is Something was in his heart What was in his heart? It was something was in his heart because God had just spoken to him and said stand on your feet that Truth that challenge that word of God was in his heart and All we do is inwardly we grab hold of it If God has spoken Something into being

grab hold of it with all your being and in that very moment We're not doing anything.

There's nothing wrong with praying a great prayer of repentance and response to God I'm not being foolish here. I'm simply bringing it down to the real Essence of what goes on you sense that God is speaking to you. You're a youth you're in midlife You're an older person today.

You're old maybe But you sense God is arresting you God is speaking Inwardly as though you've got inward arms get hold of that word Paul talked about arresting Embracing That which God had arrested him for Inwardly get hold of it and in that very act of Virtually saying yes to God or amen to his word His spirit acts that's what I read here in the Ezekiel passage in that response The spirit of God came and listen and this is the spirit of God lifted him up So he didn't have to stand up himself after all God had said stand on your feet. He received the Word of God he got hold of it and in that moment the spirit of God lifted him up and Set him on his feet and then began to speak to him and tell him what he was to do This is exactly what happens Keep it very simple in your heart if you hear God speak Believe it get hold of it and in that very in that very moment believe and and recognize that the spirit of God is quickening you and Empowering you for the fulfillment of all that is his purpose That he's ordained for you to know and to experience Let me just pray Father we commit Whatever of this has been the Word of God but whoever it is that's listening I pray father that There will be a penetration of your word and Lord that you will wake up those inward parts of men and women today and quickened Faith there in those precious hearts Lord To disbelieve you like a little child believing its parents won't drop them when they jump To them Lord do that I pray thee and start a refreshing awakening work in many many lives Lord for your praise and for your glory and for the joy and Fulfillment and blessing that you bring into responsive hearts and lives and I pray in Jesus name Amen Amen you know just before I Close can I just say this and I know it's a bit out of keeping with what I've just been saying But I have to say it at some point. I want you to know that in this strange setting where we're all so remote When people sort of subscribe and it just means we're with you brother Doesn't mean you have to give money or anything.

You just say I'm with you by clicking that subscribe button and when people leave comments Very in the earliest hours this morning. I've read a number of them from a year ago Some of you had sent and my heart was melted and I so much appreciated sewing Just so encouraging and there's that sense that although I don't see you all I'm not with you all there's a sense that we're together Here and what as Wesley would put it were kindly helping each other on till we all receive that starry crown as you put it in one of his songs But we want we want to sense togetherness, which is such an important part of the Christian experience And this is just one way in which we can do it rather than just hit and run Let's cultivate this idea that we're in this together. We really are and And And there you are, you know, and if you want to indicate or express your appreciation Materially, there's a provision made in the website Some of you are commissioned to other churches and you tithe there and that's fully understood But if you want to support Sheila and me and what we're doing you can do that But God bless you all and thank you from my heart

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ahpTXkt3U7k.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fred-tomlinson/sleepwalking-saints/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net