

Are We Asleep in the Light?

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. challenges the church to awaken from spiritual slumber and earnestly seek God to fulfill His highest purposes in our lives.

Scripture: Matthew 25:1, Romans 13:11, 1 Corinthians 3:8, Ephesians 5:14, Philippians 2:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:5, Hebrews 11:6, James 5:16, 2 John 1:8

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening", "Repentance"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. preaches about the importance of diligently seeking God and being alert and sober in these times of spiritual decline. He emphasizes the need to awaken from spiritual sleep, confess faults to one another for healing, and be filled with God's Spirit to avoid missing out on God's highest intentions. The sermon warns against spiritual slumber, the danger of being satisfied with earthly goods but not with God, and the necessity of being honest about our struggles and sins to experience true freedom and restoration.

Transcript

"God rewards those who diligently seek Him" Heb. 11:6. "Watch yourselves that you may not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward" 2 John 1:8. "But you, brethren, are are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober..." 1 Thes. 5: 5,6. "For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you"...

Eph. 5: 14. "Confess your faults one to another... so that you can be healed" James 5: 16. Recently I was listening to a song my daughters were playing written by Keith Green entitled, "Asleep in the Light". As I considered our desperate need to be earnest in our pursuit after the Lord in these days of rapid spiritual decline, I was reminded of God's command to seek Him with earnest diligence. Those who seek Him in this way will receive the Lord's fullness as their reward. The Spirit calls us to arrange our lives in such a way as to maximize our focus on the Lord's eternal interest and minimize our focus on earth's fleeting cares.

Ignoring his voice contributes to spiritual sleep and slumber in ourselves and in our families. Paul suffered the loss of all things for the sake of this calling, and if we resist we shall not obtain God's highest intention that He has purposed in His Son and for those who are prepared to share in His glory. Eventually, we

must come to see that God is not mocked. We shall reap exactly what we have sown. A life that is being sown after the impulses of the flesh shall reap a life of corruption and decay, failing to obtain the divine destination we are called to in Christ!

Likewise, a life that is sown to the Spirit's desires will reap life everlasting, being brought to the divine destination of winning Christ by God's mighty power. Christ makes seven promises in the book of Revelation to the overcomers--those who will enter into the full thought of God as expressed in the promise of reigning with Christ in the age to come by way of suffering with Him in this life! God has provided all we need to inherit His promises. Indeed, as Paul has said, "For it is God who is working in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure".

Paul prays that we may be able to see the mighty power that is at work in all who believe. He then shows that this power is the exact power that was working in Christ when God raised Him from the grave and set Him at His own right hand, far above all power, might, authority, and dominion! How shall we escape the judgment seat of Christ and the sorrow and eternal loss that will come to us if we are found, at that day, to have put off the Spirit's constant call to strip ourselves from every weight and hindrance that prevents us from running the race that is set before us?

Recently a brother said to me that many like to dream about the promises of God in Christ but never seem to enter into the realities of them. Indeed, this is true. This is because dreaming is a sign of sleep! Those who only dream are asleep spiritually and will never enter God's promise in Christ unless they are awakened out of this slumber and put off the old ways that bring sleep and slumber. We must be careful not to accuse others of being spiritually asleep when in fact many of us may be quite drowsy, if not already snoring!

Remember Jesus teaches us that everyone falls prey to spiritual sleep at one time or another! During the most difficult time in the life of Jesus his disciples fell asleep with heavy eyes and failed to pray with Him when He longed for their fellowship! In another place Jesus tells us that all the virgins got drowsy and began to fall asleep because the bridegroom delayed His coming. Then at the midnight hour there was a clarion call and shout, "Behold the bridegroom--come out to meet Him"!

Then all the virgins rose to trim their lamps. Some were foolish and some were wise. The wise had oil and the foolish did not. Yes, we must wake up but that is not enough. Once awake, we must be sure we have plenty of oil, which is the type of God's Spirit, who alone is the source of the true testimony of Jesus and who alone will make us ready to meet the bridegroom. Those who are relying on another's spiritual experience will not be ready to meet the bridegroom. Each individual has to be sure he has apprehended the truth for himself, and that he is living in the good of the teaching he may have received from others.

Over the years I have heard of many folks who left the way of God because they never truly came to embrace it for themselves. For this reason God sometimes takes from us for a season those who have deep spiritual influence over us so we can learn to walk in the truth because it has become real to us. He does this in many ways. Then we can truly benefit from the contributions of others following this season of discipline. In this way we can truly be awake and in possession of much oil!

God's message to us, His church in the West, in a stern warning to awake out of sleep! We must shake ourselves from all that is hindering our spiritual life, putting us to sleep and making us drowsy while stealing from us the full reward and inheritance to which God has called us in His Son! We must cry out in deep repentance, understanding that those whom God loves he corrects and rebukes and therefore not

despise the times when we are corrected by Him. Remember God 's thought is not just birth into His family through the regenerating power of His Spirit.

That is only the beginning. God's end is to bring us to spiritual maturity in Christ, to a place of spiritual responsibility in the age to come and even now! This responsibility will correspond directly with the measure of His moral character that we allow Him to form in us and be expressed through us, by the power of His Spirit. Tragically, many have come to accept a Laodicea testimony. Laodicea is characterized by an outward form of religion along with plenty of goods, wealth, abundance and a deep sense of being satisfied, but not with God!

But inwardly the spiritual life is in a state of blindness, misery, nakedness and spiritual poverty with the individual under the control of many destructive faults and behaviors, not the Holy Spirit. This testimony makes our Lord very sick and He warns those who embrace this testimony that they are in danger of being vomited out of His mouth. God's impatience with this condition is rooted in the unwillingness to be honest about how things really are but live under the illusion that things are quite good!

When we do this we imagine that our real problems are somehow not there and that the real damage they are bringing to our own lives and many other lives is not really there either. Then we live in a state of denial and immerse ourselves in "things" that keep us from taking an honest look at the way things really are. Ignoring warning signs, refusing to listen to others who try to tell us what our failures are doing to them, and slowly losing touch with the truth of God's Word are all patterns that tell a sad story, often our story!

Does this concern us enough to stop our busy lives in order to evaluate our lifestyles in the bright light of God's Word? Does this concern us enough to call a holy convocation with our families and with those we gather with and in deep humility and contrition of heart, confess our blindness and spiritual sleep, asking God to awaken us enough to produce real change? Or, do we consider these things as a sleeping man would, only hearing faintly or perhaps not at all, with no or little response?

When this is true, we never change but stay devoted to those things that are stealing from us God's highest purpose. Horribly when this is our condition it is passed on to our family. They too then become as we are: unprepared and sleeping, drowsy and spiritually dull! Should this happen, God may eventually remove our children from our spiritual influence to spare them from the consequences of our backslidden hearts! When we are in a sleepy physical state, we may hear the voices of those in the room or near to us, but we are numbed by our sleep and cannot respond.

Similarly, we may hear the cry of God's heart coming from His Word or from vessels who have been awakened and are speaking His heart to us, but do not respond because we may be in a deep state of spiritual sleep. How we need a very clear and firm wake up call, lest we sleep on and miss out on God's highest intention. But even if we do wake up we must pray earnestly that our lives are filled with God's Spirit so He is guiding us and leading us in all our ways. Our response before God to His call will be the criteria by which he judges us!

God is moving on toward His goal for His Son and only those who are moving on with Him, though they are weak and of no account in the world's eyes, often stumbling and very aware of their weakness and deep need, will receive the promise. They remain flexible in the Lord's hands and are constantly adjusting themselves to God's ever narrowing and straight road that leads to life, staying clear from the wide road that leads to spiritual ruin and loss. To them He will appear the second time without sin to full salvation

because they are looking for Him on tip-toes and such a hope is purifying them, even as He is pure!

All others are straying from the Way and will eventually become shipwreck in faith and disqualified from winning the prize. Let us not be surprised if God sends to us a wake up call. His loves compels Him to! We all need to be awake, filled constantly with His Spirit and on tip-toes, looking for and awaiting His Son. All who have this hope are being purified as He is pure and will be qualified to be that "glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing". May God have mercy on all of us and give to us a clear wake up call and a hunger to be filled with His Spirit and conformed to the image of His lovely Son!

The primary symptom of spiritual sleep is an inability to admit our problems and struggles-- refusing to call sin sin. We can so easily comfort ourselves with such thoughts as, "God is faithful" or "God will help me" but remain unwilling take simple, practical steps to correct the things in our lives that are not pleasing to the Lord, beginning with the failure to be honest. Some examples of our personal failures could be overeating, or any kind of an addiction; even to lawful things, failure to communicate properly, failure to take the place of spiritual leadership in the family, smoldering bitterness and anger, unwholesome attachments to inanimate activities and objects and prayerless hearts filled with pursuing pleasures instead of eternal treasure.

An unbridled tongue can cause much damage too and is a wicked vice we often refuse to admit to. We do not like to face up to the consequence of these sins and shortcomings--we choose to turn a blind eye to the fact that our sin has affected those whom we love the most. Often we have passed down to our loved ones our vices and yet remain silent, unwilling to admit this tragedy. Parents need to see the damage that their own addictions have brought to their children and spouses and seek forgiveness.

Likewise, this is the example all should follow toward anyone they have wounded. Perhaps most difficult is that it is very painful to take a long hard look at ourselves and actually admit our failures. Our pride must be broken at His feet if we will ever know the freedom that comes through honest confession. May the Lord help us to see ourselves the way He sees us, to confess our faults to Him and to one another, to take the simple and practical steps necessary to deal with our sins and failures, and to admit that our sin has affected our loved ones and the body of Christ.

Remember, the Lord required Jacob to confess His "name" or nature. Once he was honest with himself and with the Lord the Lord healed him from his sin and freed him from the behavior that characterized his bondage. We must arouse ourselves from spiritual slumber by becoming honest. God invites us to draw near to Him. Through the precious blood of Jesus Christ we are free to honestly confess all our faults and shortcomings and find mercy at the throne of grace. Healing comes by honest confession and God's marvelous grace!

By honest confession we can then seek forgiveness from those we have wounded because of our faults and healing will blossom into restoration and renewed love and spiritual health. God will then wash our hearts from any smoldering bitterness, and break the stronghold of unforgiveness. Today beloved, God is blowing the trumpet in His spiritual Zion! May we be awakened from spiritual sleep, filled with His precious Spirit, freed from our besetting sins and prepared as a bride awaiting our heavenly bridegroom.

God's calling and you're the one But like Jonah you run He's told you to speak But you keep holding it in, Oh can't you see it's such a sin? The world is sleeping in the dark That the church just can't fight Cause it's asleep in the light How can you be so dead When you've been so well fed Jesus rose from the grave And you, you can't even get out of bed Oh, Jesus rose from the dead Come on, get out of your bed How can

you be so numb Not to care if they come You close your eyes And pretend the job's done You close your eyes And pretend the job's done Don't close your eyes Don't pretend the jobs done Come away, come away, come away with Me my love, Come away, from this mess, come away with Me, my love. -Keith Green, Asleep in the Light, selected lyrics

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