

Awake Thou That Sleepest - the Snare of Sleepiness

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. calls the church to awaken from spiritual sleepiness and be vigilant against the snares of the enemy through prayer and community support.

Duration: 51:24

Scripture: Matthew 24:12, Luke 21:34

Topics: "Christian Life", "Vigilance in Faith", "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the urgent need for spiritual awakening in his sermon 'Awake Thou That Sleepest - the Snare of Sleepiness.' He warns that the love of many can grow cold due to the abounding iniquity in the world, leading to spiritual sleepiness that can ensnare believers. Beach encourages the congregation to remain vigilant and prayerful, highlighting the importance of self-examination and the need for the Holy Spirit to awaken their hearts. He draws parallels from scripture, illustrating how even the wise can fall asleep spiritually and miss the call of God. Ultimately, he calls for a collective awakening to avoid the snares that lead to spiritual death.

Transcript

I need you. I need you. Lord, I need you.

Lord I need you. Hallelujah Lord bless you. We bless you Lord.

We bless you Lord. We bless you. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Thank you Lord. Thank you Lord.

Father, thank You, Lord. Father, we thank You for Your presence. We thank You, Lord, for Jesus Christ.

Lord, we thank You for the Holy Spirit of God, that indeed is the Spirit of Truth, working in our midst, ministering to us, revealing to us the things that belong to Christ and that are freely given to us because of His shed blood for we who are in need. Lord, we want to praise You and thank You for Your presence in our midst. Lord, we want to give You honor and praise, Lord, because of Your mighty power that You have demonstrated to us, Lord, time and time and time again, rescuing us, Lord, from the depths of depression and sin and discouragement, revealing to us, Lord, that You are the light in the midst of our darkness.

You are the hope in the midst of hopelessness. You are our strength in the midst of weakness. You are our prosperity in the midst, oh God, of lack.

You are our peace in the midst of turmoil. You are, oh God, all that we have need of. And we acknowledge that today, Lord, with one heart and one mind and one soul and one strength today, Lord.

We acknowledge that You are the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We praise You, Lord. We praise You, Lord.

We love You, Lord. Now, Lord, we pray that You would give us ears to hear, continue to hear what the Spirit is saying to us, Lord, as the church. You would awaken our sense of understanding that we might be able to receive the Word of God in meekness, Lord, that we might be able to grow, that we might be able to lay hold of all that You have for us, Lord.

We bless You. Let's all sing this one more time together in the presence of Jesus Christ. Prepare your hearts, dear saints.

Thank You, Lord. Thank You, Lord. Hallelujah.

Thank You, Lord. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your presence. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit, Lord.

Thank You for the ministry of the Holy Spirit and His effectual ability to communicate to us the things that pertain to our salvation, the things that pertain to the glory of Jesus Christ, enabling us to receive all that Christ has purchased for us through the death, burial, and resurrection of His atoning sacrifice. Lord, we look to You now for light. We look to You, Lord, for utterance.

We look to You, Lord, for the release of this word from Your heart, Lord, that we all might be warned, that we might be encouraged, and that we might be awakened out of sleep. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen. This is the beginning of a release of some word that the Lord has been working in my spirit for several months now.

It is one that has been birthed through much anguish and much prayer and much turmoil. And so I want to encourage you, if you have paper or pens, to take notes and to just listen carefully to the Spirit of God, because God is going to speak through His word and He's going to bring us something that I believe is a very important, important word from His heart. I'd like to... Actually, this message began several weeks ago.

And I don't even know if we have that tape, but if we don't, that's alright, because we're going to start afresh this morning. I'd like to entitle this entire series, Awake Thou That Sleepest. Awake Thou That Sleepest.

And I'd like to begin by reading a verse in Matthew 24, verse number 12. Awake thou that sleepest. A number of weeks ago, my father shared a testimony and he entitled the testimony, A Wake Up Call.

And that was a very appropriate testimony, because first of all, it was born in affliction. My father received that testimony as a result of the affliction that he had gone through that week, suffering a mini-stroke. And the testimony had the ring of truth to it.

It had the ring of life to it that was unquestionably a sign that it was birth from God's Spirit. And during that time, this entire message, Awake Thou That Sleepest, was churning in my own spirit, and so it served as a

wonderful opportunity to continue to be before the Lord that this message might be released. I am anticipating, as God leads, sometime in December, to begin to share what I believe is the next step that we as a body are heading in through the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ in our midst.

And I believe that it is not only a message that the Lord has been birthing in my spirit, but in sharing, in talking with many of the brothers and sisters, I have sensed the same stirring within their hearts too. So I believe that we are on a journey together, and that as we continue to look to the Lord, He's going to give us direction as to the manner in which He is leading us and what He wants to do. But let me make it very clear now.

Very clear. We cannot enter the next step of what the Lord wants to do in our lives unless we are very careful to allow the Holy Spirit to work in us the things that are essential in order to prepare us for the next step that He wants to do in our lives as a body. Because the next step that God has for you and I as a local church is going to require a measure of the Holy Spirit and a measure of the power of God to release us from the inherent tendency that we have to be self-centered.

And to be self-sacrificing for ourselves. You see, the next step that God has for us is He's going to take us out of ourselves and bring us into His heart. And His heart is for others.

And therefore, it is imperative that we hear what God is saying and that we pray about it and allow the Lord to work it deeply in us. First of all, I'd like to read Matthew chapter 24 beginning in verse 12. Let me just say by passing this is the fourth day that I have been suffering from a fairly high fever.

It's been 102, it's 101 this morning. And so I'm looking to the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus to quicken this mortal body. And to be able to keep up with what's going on in the Spirit.

In my spirit, because my body and your body is not in tune with the Spirit of life. And I just would ask for your prayers. I don't really know what it is.

Some kind of an infection. But I believe that through weakness God's power is made perfect in our life. And so I stand trusting in the power of God.

I have felt a touch this morning in the presence of Jesus. And so therefore, I'm just continuing to look to Him. And I would appreciate your continued prayers.

This is an untimely problem seeing the upcoming trip for Wednesday. But I believe God knows what He's doing. And as we stand steadfast on His Word, He is able to deliver us.

Matthew chapter 24 beginning in verse number 12. These are introductory thoughts leading us to the meat of this message that has been birthed in my spirit. And these introductory thoughts are thoughts that would be thoughts of loving warning from the Holy Spirit.

Listen carefully. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. Because iniquity shall abound.

Iniquity there is lawlessness. Transgression of the law. Because of an abounding state of lawlessness and rebellion that we are living in in this generation, the love of many shall wax cold.

Now, the phrase wax cold literally means to concrete into coldness. To concrete into coldness. Beware, beloved, of the effect of abounding iniquity.

It can cause your heart to become cold and concrete and hard regarding the things of God. We must battle with the weapons of spiritual warfare to keep our lives from becoming cold, calloused, and hard, and cynical because of the abounding iniquity that is surrounding us everywhere we look. Luke chapter 21.

Luke chapter 21, beginning in verse 34. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, which could be translated riotous living, and drunkenness, which could be translated excess of any form. Excess of any form.

Beware, beloved, we are living in a generation that loves excess, that does not know the meaning of contentment. And the Spirit of God is warning you and I and the church at large, beware of the spirit of excess. It will choke the good word of God right out of you.

Take heed to yourselves by way of passing. Don't allow your life to be so involved with things that as we develop this message, we'll discover that one of the warnings that we must take heed to is being so involved in things. But by way of warning here, don't allow your life to be so involved that you fail to learn the spiritual discipline of taking heed to yourself.

I see a very dangerous pattern that's developing in the church today, and that is this, people are out of touch with what's really going on on the inside of their heart. They're out of touch with themselves. They don't want to think about themselves, so they drown themselves in all manner of things.

And I love Christian music, but beware when Christian music becomes a thing that you are putting yourself into to keep you from taking heed to yourself. Lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares, unexpectedly, without warning. For as a snare, remember that word snare, because we're going to be talking about ten snares, not this morning, but eventually.

Ten snares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always.

Watch ye therefore, and pray always. Beloved, we are being called by God to be watchful, and to pray always, and to take heed to ourselves. Paul told Timothy, take heed to the doctrine that you teach.

Take heed to the things that you live, for in doing so it shall both save you and those that hear you. Watch ye therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. Now, the word snare.

As a snare shall it come upon you. As a snare. What significance is there that Jesus used the word snare here to describe the way these things are going to come upon us.

Great significance when we understand what the word snare means. Listen carefully. A snare.

And this is what Jesus was referring to. An instrument that is used to trap an animal. Thereby preventing their escape.

And if not freed, cause their eventual death. A snare is an instrument that is used to trap an animal. Thereby preventing their escape.

And if not freed, cause their eventual death. Beloved, one of the devastating surroundings of a snare is that a snare is generally camouflaged. It is very unlikely that somebody would set a snare for a particular

animal in an open field visible to their sight.

Do not think for a moment that you are going to be snared knowingly. Don't think for a moment just because you've assessed the situation and you've said, looks pretty safe to me, I'm going forward. Don't think for a moment that such an assessment guarantees that you're going to be free from a snare.

The very nature of a snare is that it is hidden. It is camouflaged. It is not necessarily visible to the sight.

And therefore, to discover the snares that are being set for the church in this late hour, it is imperative that we live in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ. And live by the knowledge of His heart. He alone knows where those snares are.

He alone knows how to get around them. He alone knows how to disarm them. Awake thou that sleepest.

The way Satan, our adversary the devil, who as a roaring lion is seeking to and fro who he might devour, the way that he brings us into a state of sleep is through ensnaring us. The first but not final stage of being caught in a snare is you begin to develop what I've called spiritual sleepiness. Spiritual sleepiness.

The effects of being caught in a snare is spiritual sleepiness. The Bible has a lot to say in the New Testament about sleeping. I'd like to give you three instances in the New Testament where we are warned about sleep.

First of all, in Luke, or Matthew chapter 25. We all know the parable of the ten virgins. And it would be very wise for us all to realize that the Bible begins in Matthew chapter 25 by saying the kingdom of heaven is like to ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

Five of them were wise and five were foolish. Now immediately you might be in your mind saying, well, I think I'm one of those wise ones. And you might even be saying, brother, so and so is one of the foolish ones.

And I hope you're not doing that. But you may be a wise virgin and God bless you if you are. And you might be a foolish virgin and God help you if you are.

But whether you are a wise virgin or a foolish virgin, I want you to read on because in verse 3 it says, they that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, the foolish slumbered and slept.

Is that what it says? No, it doesn't. What does it say then, brother? The Bible says while the bridegroom tarried. We are living right now in the fulfillment of this scripture because our bridegroom is tarrying.

And some of us have oil. And some of us are wise. And some of us don't have oil.

And some of us are fools. But whether we are wise or whether we are fools, they all slept and slumbered. This tells me that even the wise virgins who had oil for their lamp got ensnared and fell asleep.

And if they were not awakened from that state of sleep, they could have suffered grave consequences and penalties from the soon coming bridegroom. Don't get too high minded about your perceived state of spirituality, dear brother and sister. Don't get too cocky over how well you feel you may be doing.

They all slept. Luke chapter 9. Perhaps one of the greatest moments in the life of the apostles was when Jesus led them to the top of a mountain and there for a moment's time allowed himself to be transfigured in their presence. Sounds like an exciting spiritual time, doesn't it? We'll get a load of this.

Verse 28. And it came to pass that about in eight days after these sayings, Luke chapter 9 verse 28, He went into a mountain to pray and as He prayed, the fashion, that is the visible appearance of His countenance was altered. And let me just say by passing, I don't want to get into this because I'm not preaching on the transfiguration, but don't think for a moment that this thing that happened to Jesus was a light coming from without shining on Him.

This transfiguration was nothing more than God allowing what Jesus was on the outside to begin to affect His outward appearance. What He was on the inside to begin to affect His outward appearance. This transfiguration was nothing more than the awesome glory of what Christ was in His inner man.

It wasn't an outward thing shining to Him. It was an inner thing bursting forth into the natural realm. And you know what, brothers and sisters? God wants the church to be transfigured.

In other words, God wants the church to have such an inner life that's so full of Jesus that at the moment of His coming, it won't be His light shining up on us that causes us to shine, but it'll be His light bursting out from within us that's causing us to shine. That's what He wants. That's what He's after.

But now listen. Behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep.

And when they were awake, they saw His glory and the two men that stood with Him. At the moment of Christ's greatest glory, manifestation of glory upon earth, those that were closest to Him were sleeping, brother, sister. Now it's believed that these who were brought to the transfiguration were very dear to the Lord's heart.

We might even consider them to be representative of the wise virgins, right? Those who had oil. But as wise as they may have been and as filled with oil as they may have been, their eyes were heavy with sleep. And they slept.

One last sobering incident, Mark chapter 14. This perhaps is a time when Jesus as a man was in the most need He ever experienced in His time as being human. Yes, He had need as a human.

He thirsted. He had to sleep. He obviously got quite tired at times because during a great horrendous storm they found Him sleeping.

He must have figured, I need to catch some Z's before I meet the crowd on the other side because I know that they're going to be wanting me to pray for them. They're going to be wanting me to preach to them. I know that as soon as I see them, compassion is going to come out of me.

And you know that when the virtues of God flow out of your life into others, it is a tiresome thing. It can wear you out. You know when virtue leaves you, it wears you out.

Our bodies are not compatible to what God is doing in our inner spirit. This mortality's got to put on immortality. This corruption's got to put on incorruption.

This body is not what God's thought is regarding what He's doing on the inside of us. It's not. And Jesus knew.

And so He took a nap. So He had need. Mark chapter 14 Verse 32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane.

And He said to His disciples, Sit ye here while I shall pray. And He talked with Peter and James and John and began to be sore amazed. This means astonishment with fear.

Intense fear and astonishment. And to be very heavy. And said to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.

Tarry ye here and watch. Can you hear Jesus say that? Here He had some guys that were His close buddies. And He said, you know, I'm really going through it, guys.

My soul is heavy. My soul is burdened. There's fear gripping my heart because of the cup that I have to drink.

Brothers, do you think you can cover for me? Think you can cover for me? Think you can pray for me? Could you tarry here and watch and pray? And He went forward. A little one fell on the ground. Verse 35 And prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from Him.

And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee. Take away this cup. Nevertheless, not what I will, but Thou will.

And He cometh and find them interceding and praying. He found them weeping, saying, Lord, is everything alright? We've been standing in the gap for You. He found them sleeping and said to Peter, Simon, Simon, can you sense the anguish of this man? Simon, are you sleeping? Could not you watch one hour? Brothers and sisters, the Lord Jesus is saying this to the church today as He's saying it to you.

Could ye not watch one hour? Could ye not stay awake one hour? Could you not remain fervent and focused and centered on Me and centered on the things that really matter for one hour? How is it that you're spiritually sleeping and caught up in the world and caught up in the things of the world? You have your religion. You have your traditions. But you're sleeping.

You're sleeping. Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The Spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

And again He went away and prayed and spoke the same words. You know, we've often heard over the past years sermons of the God of the second chance. Amen? But in this instance, they needed more than a God of a second chance because look what happens.

Now, this is the second time. He went away. He came back and they were sleeping.

He rebuked them. He said, come on, guys. Get it together.

Pray. This isn't a time to sleep. And He returned.

Verse 40. And found them what? David fast asleep. They were sleeping again.

Brothers and sisters, are you hearing? There's sand in our eyes. We're sleeping. Ephesians chapter 5. Verse number 8. For ye were sometimes darkness.

Now, darkness is for sleep, right? Unless you work graveyard. But God made darkness for sleep. He created the night for sleep.

Ye were sometimes darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. Verse 14.

Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. Now, thieves come in the night, and the reason they come in the night and not at lunchtime is because, generally speaking, at night we're sleeping and at lunch we're eating. And so it would really blow the cover of a thief to come at noon.

Can you imagine? Hello, hi, I'm a thief and I've come to steal and rob from you. What are you doing? Well, we're having lunch. Oh, you are? Oh, I guess it's a bad time, huh? Well, I'll come back later.

They wouldn't do it. Here's what Paul is saying. Here's what the Holy Spirit is saying.

You 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 comes upon them as travail upon a woman with child and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake.

That word overtake means to come upon you unawares. That day shouldn't come upon you unawares as a thief. Listen, ye are all the children of light and the children of the day.

We are not of the night nor of the darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep. I am apt... No, I shouldn't say that.

I can say it. I'm going to say it. I'm not saying the Lord revealed this to me.

But in my own spirit, I'm almost persuaded that when Paul wrote, let us not sleep, he had in his mind the words of Jesus because Paul was aware of the writings of Jesus. And he was probably so keenly aware of the fact that the Master spoke a number of instances about his people sleeping at the wrong time. And I'm sure, I'm sure that when he says let us not sleep, he had in mind the words of Jesus about the ten virgins.

He had in mind the disciples who slept at Gethsemane. And he had in mind the disciples who slept on the Mount of Transfiguration. And he said, don't sleep.

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 a helmet, the hope of salvation.

Awake thou that sleepest and arise. It is time to let God wake us up. It is time with humility to call upon the Lord.

I trust that as a result of this word, everybody here is at least persuaded of these things that I'm about to say. And then I have one more scripture and we're going to bring this to a close because I don't want to

overload your circuit. Because sometimes when our circuits are overloaded we don't have a spare circuit breaker.

And after it busts, we lose everything. Right? This is not an indictment. But in the generation that we live, people are not used to thinking for long periods of time.

They're used to being entertained. You know, when you watch TV, you don't have to think, do you? Unless you watch Jeopardy. And then most of us find that our thinking falls short.

I don't think I ever got one answer right when I used to watch Jeopardy as a kid. But we're not used to thinking. We get tired, we get bored.

Because we're so prone to want to just be entertained. So, we'll not get too lengthy here. But I do want to make this point.

And that is this. I trust you have come to these conclusions as a result of this word. Number one.

Foolish or wise, whatever you perceive yourself to be, you have fallen asleep. And number two. If you have fallen asleep, or about to fall asleep, it is imperative that you recognize your need to be awakened.

Lest you be sleeping when he calls you. Second John. Sleeping and the failure to be wakened up can result in loss.

First, second John, second John, chapter one, verse number eight. Interestingly, we have a phrase here. And again, I can't say the Lord revealed this to me.

Where was the last time? Where was it that we just read that? Luke chapter 21. Look to yourselves. Didn't Jesus say, look to yourselves? Oh, brothers and sisters, I pray in the name of Jesus that you have not developed a lifestyle that prevents you from looking to yourself in the light of God's Word.

I trust you don't live in that unreal world, but that you learn that part of God's command to you is to get alone with him and let his light shine in your life. Didn't Paul say in 2 Corinthians, examine yourselves while there is an unwholesome self introspective, introspection. And that is when we engage in looking at ourselves and our faults not in the light of God's Word.

Then we get all in trouble. But let me tell you, brothers and sisters, it's impossible to see the Lord in his glory without saying, woe is me. You've got to stay in touch not only with seeing Jesus, but also in getting perspective on what's going on in your heart.

You can't just sing away that bitterness and unforgiveness. You can't just sing away that greed. You can't just sing away that bad attitude.

You can't just pray away those unholy thoughts. You've got to look to yourself in the light of God's Word and pray, God, deliver me. This isn't passivity.

This is God working in our midst. Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought. Isn't that interesting? But that we receive a full reward.

The need to wake up is imperative so that we are able to look to ourselves in the light of God's Word and not lose anything that we have wrought. Sometimes people go for a season and there's wrought in them

great things. But a snare comes along.

And when that snare comes, the words of the Apostle are reverberating in their heart. Look to yourself, lest you lose, lest you lose that which was wrought. But that we receive a full reward.

God's purpose, God's intention is a full and complete reward, brothers and sisters. And so, as we close and ponder in the presence of Jesus Christ, by way of remembrance, awake thou that sleepest. Watch for the cold heart, the concrete heart.

If your heart starts getting cold and insensitive, cry out to God. If you start getting cynical, cry out to God. Beware of sleeping.

Beware of the snare. That is used to trap an animal and prevent its escape. And if not freed, will result in eventual death.

And lastly, remember, Jesus knows just how to wake us up. Let's bow our hearts. Father, we thank you for your presence.

We thank you, Lord, for the Holy Spirit. And we simply, at this time, Lord, want to be still before you and give you time in these last five or so minutes and let you speak to us individually. We invite you to confirm your word and shine light.

During these moments, beloved, let's just let him do that very thing.

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