

Title: Danger of Falling Asleep
Text: Acts 20: 7-12
Date: April 19, 2012
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Acts 20: 7: And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. 8: And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. 9: And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. 10: And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. 11: When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. 12: And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

Proposition: We will look at this story as an allegory of the danger and cares of this world which believers face.

Title: The Danger of Falling Asleep

Divisions: 1) Watchfulness of the believer; 2) Danger of the believer; 3) Cure for the believer

I. THE WATCHFULNESS OF BELIEVERS

Acts 20: 7: And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

This is a happy picture of a family of believers who are spiritually healthy, walking in the light of Christ, feeding upon the gospel, watching and waiting the day of our Lord's return.

First Day of the Week

Our Lord Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week—that is why we meet together on Sunday. Christ is First in the heart of the believer. He has Preeminence in the heart of a believer. _We seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness in all that we do. All worldly concerns are subservient to our having the gospel of Christ, to seeking to honor Christ, to walking after his will. We want to be where the gospel of Christ is preached where brethren are. _We give to him first of the firstfruits he has blessed us with—Christ is first.

Colossians 1: 18: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Disciples of Christ

When the disciples came together they broke bread and Paul preached unto them. Note who came together—the disciples. Paul preached to them. Believers are disciples of Christ. Disciples means a student, a pupil, a learner. It comes from a word meaning to increase one's knowledge, to hear, to be informed, to learn. We have no wisdom of heavenly things—we must be taught of the Lord. Christ is our Teacher and Christ is our Wisdom. We must learn of him.

Illustration: You who are students in school are disciples of your teacher. You gather to school every day to be taught of your teacher, to hear, to increase in knowledge. Believers are students who come together like this tonight to be taught of Christ through the Holy Spirit through his scriptures, through the preaching of his gospel.

That is why Paul preached the gospel of Christ to them. The last thing Paul and they all wanted before Paul left was to hear the gospel of Christ.

Paul Preached the Gospel

The gospel of Jesus Christ and him crucified is how it pleased God to save sinners.

1 Corinthians 1: 21: For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Faith comes by hearing the word of our God.

Romans 10: 12: For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13: For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14: How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15: And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!...17: So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We live by faith and our faith is increased by this word.

Romans 1: 16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

That establishing and comfort and faith comes not by a man, but through Christ who instructs us in the heart by the Holy Ghost.

1 Thessalonians 1: 5: For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;...

1 Thessalonians 2: 13: For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Believers are established and comforted in the faith through the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 3: 2: And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

Illustration: Do you eat bread at your table at home once and then go days, weeks, months without eating again? You would grow sick. So it is with this gospel—Christ is our Bread from heaven—we must feed upon Christ, come to his table, be fed of him continually through his gospel and we go home and eat by reading his scriptures for ourselves. Search the scriptures daily like the Bereans.

Truly that night when Paul preached, Christ was preaching the gospel to them through the Spirit of God. I do pray he meet with us here tonight. That ye receive this word not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually works in you that believe.

They Broke Bread

They observed the ordinance of the Lord's table—they broke bread. The broken bread symbolizes the broken body of Christ. The wine symbolizes his shed blood—his life poured out unto death

1 Corinthians 11: 26: For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Ready to Depart

Acts 20: 7: Ready to depart on the morrow, Paul continued his speech until midnight.

In all this we see an allegory of watchfulness on the believer's part. Paul was going to another place the next day. So he preached until midnight and visited with them until the breaking of the day. What a picture of the believer's life.

We are ready to depart and go be with our Redeemer. We are like those who ate the Passover ready to depart Egypt.

Exodus 12: 11: And thus shall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it *is* the LORD'S passover.

We do so watching for the Lord's return at any time now--*he preached until midnight*. _Midnight is used in scripture to describe the Lord's second coming.

- Parable of the 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins. Matthew 25: 6: And at **midnight** there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

This is the believer's life of faith: we are disciples taught of the Lord, taught of Christ our Prophet through his gospel, we gather together to remember his broken body and shed blood, ready to depart to be with Christ at any time, watching for we know not when he shall return.

Mark 13: 35: Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

II. THE DANGER BELIEVER'S FACE IS FALLING ASLEEP.

Acts 20: 8: And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. 9: And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

As far as the literal conditions in that place these lights may have been putting off fumes that caused him to become sleepy, the place was probably crowded and hot and Paul preached long. But...

Slumbering is Due to Our Flesh

Our slumbering is not God's fault—*There were many lights in the upper chamber.* Christ is our Light. We have many brethren who are lights. We have **the light of the glorious gospel of Christ (2 Cor 4: 4)**. All three of those were present in that place.

He Sat in a Window

Even with many lights, the danger is growing lukewarm. Verse 9 says that **he sat in a window**. The window is a place in between—between the light inside and the darkness outside, between the hot inside and the cool outside.

We see in this window an example of being in a seat that is neither cold nor hot, light nor dark—somewhere in the middle—lukewarm. One of the greatest danger a believer faces is to lose our zeal, to think we have need of nothing.

Revelation 3: 15: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16: So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17: Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19: As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

A Certain Young Man

The cares of this world put us in danger of falling asleep. This was **a certain young man**. He was one like John warned not to love the world. Scripture usually speaks of a middle-aged man in Christ as a young man. Probably he was not a babe in Christ, not an old man in Christ, he was a middle-aged man. He had many cares, many responsibilities, and had probably worked hard all day long.

His **name was Euthychus**. His name means prosperous. We do not necessarily have to be rich or prosperous above others. The problem comes when think ourselves rich and in need of nothing.

Matthew 6: 21: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22: The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23: But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!..31: Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32: (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34: Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

Whatever we do to pay the bills and provide for our families falls under the purpose of ministering to God's people and our families—we cannot serve Christ and the world.

Mark 4: 19: And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

We see it here. It appears he fell asleep twice. **Acts 20: 9:...being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.** See the progression. The cares of this world are able to: lull us into a deep sleep before we know it,

then the gospel is not light to us—it becomes *long preaching*. We then become “sunk down” weighted down with sleep and thus the fall comes.

III. OUR CURE IS THE MIRACLE OF GOD’S GRACE

Acts 20: 10: And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

Intercession

We see three things here: an example of the intercession of Christ for his redeemed children, we see an example of the Spirit of God entering in does through the intercession of Christ, we see an example of the earnest intercession of believers to God for one another

Because Christ came down from heavens glory to take our nature in union with his divine nature, because Christ came down willingly made sin for his people and justified his elect of all our sins, Christ is able to send forth the Holy Spirit and create life in those who are asleep spiritually. Christ was lifted up on the cross and refused to come down—refused to deliver himself—in order to justify those given him of the Father. He purged us of our sins. He reconciled us to himself—justified us, performed all things necessary, bringing us into friendship with God. He performed the hard part through his death—it is done. It is because he lives all his redeemed shall live also.

Romans 5: 10: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

He is able to breath life into his reconciled children in regeneration making us willing and thankful to be reconciled to God by him. Likewise, Christ is the Life who sustains us and revives us by his Spirit when we are apt to slumber. Christ does this work through the mouth of one brought down like Paul to preach this gospel of his grace and to pray for God’s will.

We see the Lord confirming Paul’s gospel by what Paul did. Paul went down, fell on him and embraced him and said Trouble not yourselves his life is in him. The boy was dead. But as one of the old writers says,

“The Lord did, as it were, seal up and establish that last sermon which Paul made at Troas...the young man’s life was restored through the grace of God”—Calvin

So let us come down.

Christ is our Life, Christ in you—the hope of glory. Come down to his feet and ask for strengthened by his blood, to be robed in his righteousness, to have our eyes opened by the eyesavle of his gospel.

We need his gospel and need our brethren. So let us come down like Mary and attend the hearing of the gospel as one sitting at Christ’s feet to hear the one thing needful.

Let us be watchful and pray therefore lest ye enter into temptation—keep our eye on Christ, pray for one another. Herein does God keep us and comfort us till that day when we depart and are raised with him

Acts 20: 11: When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. 12: And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

Amen!