

Subject: A Wake-Up Call for Believers

Scripture: Romans 13:11-14

Some of us need a wake-up call. The great revivals were called “awakenings” for a reason. A Sunday School teacher told her class about Adam and Eve. She said that God did a little surgery on Adam and took out his rib. She asked the class, “How do you think He put Adam to sleep?” One student said, “By preaching a long sermon.”

1. Believers need to wake up

Someone said, “The great task of the church is not only to get sinners into heaven, but also to get saints out of bed.” We must know it is high time to awake out of sleep. This is no time for apathy, indifference, or laziness. It is a terrible feeling when you wake up and realize you have overslept. Maybe the alarm didn’t go off or you didn’t hear it. We need to know what time it is so we can wake up. Sleep has been defined as “a state of inactivity with a loss of consciousness and a decrease in responsiveness to events taking place.” With that definition in mind we can say that sleep can be a good thing or a bad thing.

Sleep is a good thing. It is a blessing from the Lord. *Psalms 127:2 It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.* But there are times when sleep is not good. It’s not good to sleep when you should be awake and alert. There are times when sleep is shameful and even criminal. A pilot needs to sleep, but not when he’s flying the plane. A truck driver needs to sleep, but not when he’s behind the wheel. A security guard needs to sleep, but not when he’s at his post. We find some examples of people sleeping in the Bible when they should have been awake, and how they speak to us today. The Bible warns us about sleeping when we should be awake.

- *The sleep of a disobedient prophet – Jonah 1:6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.*
- *The sleep of careless disciples – Matthew 26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*
- *The sleep of a lazy son – Proverbs 10:5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*

Too many Christians have hit the snooze button. They want to sleep just a little while longer, but it’s time to wake up. Why do believers need to be awake? Verse 11 gives the answer: now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The word “our” means it is a personal salvation. The word “salvation” means rescue or deliverance. God’s provides salvation through Jesus’ sacrifice. God applies salvation to us through repentance and faith.

This refers to the final chapter of our salvation. We have been justified (saved from the penalty of sin). We are being sanctified (saved from the power of sin). We will be glorified (saved from the presence and possibility of sin). This is when we will see Jesus face to face and enter our heavenly home. This time is nearer than when we first believed. We are getting closer than we’ve ever been. Imagine how those storm victims felt when they waiting on someone to rescue them from their flooded homes. That should be our attitude as we wait on Jesus to rescue us and take us home.

This is no time to take a spiritual nap. The Lord has warned us to look up and be ready. He's coming back sooner than you think. The words on the side mirror say, "Objects in mirror are closer than they appear." Events in the Bible are closer than they seem.

Hebrews 10:37 *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* Don't get too comfortable in this world. This world is not our home. Soon and very soon we are going to see the King.

If this life is all there is, then it would be alright to sleep. If we had not been saved by the marvelous grace of God, then we would have a reason to be sleepy. If Jesus hadn't given us an assignment to do, then sleeping would be acceptable. If Jesus had never promised us that one day He would come back and take us with Him, then go ahead and sleep on. But that's not the case. Now is the time to wake up and look up.

2. Believers need to clean up

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand." The night is just about to end and the new day is about to dawn. This speaks of man's night of unbelief, rebellion, and sin. The day speaks of the day of Christ's coming and the day of His glory and judgment of the world. A new day is going to dawn very soon. For that reason we need to dress up. The Bible describes the process of sanctification in terms of taking off the works of darkness.

"Let us walk honestly" means to live properly or decently as a Christian should. Our conduct should be a proper reflection of who we are. It gets more specific. Take off rioting and drunkenness, etc. NASB makes it easier to understand: "carousing and drunkenness, sexual promiscuity and sensuality." This would include all forms of pornography and immoral behavior. Take off strife and envying. These sins are more acceptable, but just as terrible and destructive.

3. Believers need to dress up

We must take off the dirty clothes of darkness and put on the armor of light (holiness). Verse 14 is a powerful summary of how to dress. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put on His character, His attitude, His lifestyle. Make no provision (*pronoia*, means to plan ahead, forethought). Make no plans to satisfy your sinful desires, but only have thoughts to live for Christ and put Him first. ***Galatians 5:16*** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* To walk in the Spirit is to put on Christ and live by His Word.

Looking over these verses, the Lord is telling us how to live. We need to wake up and live with urgency. We have only a limited time to worship, work, and witness. We need to clean up and live with integrity. And we need to dress up and live with consistency. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, We Have Met to Worship

*Brethren, see poor sinners round you slumb'ring on the brink of woe;
Death is coming, hell is moving, can you bear to let them go?
See our fathers and our mothers, and our children sinking down;
Brethren, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around.*

How can believers help sinners who are slumbering on the brink of woe if they are asleep too?

