

Refuge City Church — September 11, 2022 “Awake and Alive” [Acts 20]

Introduction

- **Today:** Paul completes his time in Asia and Greece with some encouragement to the new churches.
- **Verses 1-6** [summary]
 - Paul and his team make their way through the region of Macedonia and Achaia [modern day Greece]; ministering to the newly established churches in that region [Athens, Corinth, Thessalonica, Berea, Philippi, etc.]
 - Still purposing to return to Jerusalem; to report on his mission and to bring a gift from the churches.
 - On the return trip, they travel back to Troas [coastal town in modern day Turkey], and that where our study begins.
- **Think:** Do you remember your initial feelings/reaction when you saw the planes fly into the buildings?
 - I remember 9/11 giving me a different feeling about the world; Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995; Atlanta Olympics in 96; Boston Marathon in 2013.

Verses 7-12

“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, “Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him.” And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.”

- As Paul encourages the church in Troas, he speaks through the night.
 - At around midnight, a young man named Eutychus falls asleep and falls to his death from 3 stories up. [every Pastor’s dream scenario]
 - God works a miracle through Paul and brings the boy back to life [maybe a good times to end the meeting??]
 - Yet, Paul returns to teaching/encouraging the church until the next morning.
- Some may pass this by, but the Lord instilled something that I believe He wants to speak to.
 - Scripture is clear on the *spiritual* connection between death, sleep, and faith.
- I. **Death is but sleep for those who believe**
 - **Isaiah 26:19 NLT**, “But those who die in the Lord will live; their bodies will rise again! Those who sleep in the earth will rise up and sing for joy!”
- Jesus brings Jairus’ daughter back to life.

- **Matthew 9:23-25**, “And when Jesus came to the ruler’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, “Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.”
- **Mark 5:36**, “Jesus said to Jairus, ‘Do not fear, *only believe*.’”
- Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead
 - **John 11:11-15**, “After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.” The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, *so that you may believe...* **[What does death have to do with faith?]**
 - **John 11:25-26**, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”
- For those of us in Christ, whose name’s are emblazoned in the Book of Life, we don’t fear death. [**2 Corinthians 5:8**, “to be absent from the body is to be in the presence of the Lord”]
- Yet, while we are here, we are do all we can for the Lord [**Romans 7:4**; God raised us from death to life in order that we may bear fruit for God.”... *not to be anxiety-ridden in fear of death*]... So how can we get to that perspective??
- 2. **Sleep can be spiritual laziness/ignorance to those who are self-focused**
 - Jesus prays in the garden prior to his arrest, taking with him Peter, James, & John.
 - **Matthew 26:36-41**, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.”... “remain here, and *watch* [*be alert*] with me.”... And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? **Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**”
 - In essence, being awake is to commune with Lord.
 - When we ‘sleep’, we act as though we don’t have an awareness of God in our life.
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:6-11**, “So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep *awake* [*be alert*] and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day [*live, move, awareness, life, light*], let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”
 - *Asleep in the Light*, by Keith Green
 - “The world is sleeping in the dark, that the church just can’t fight, because it’s asleep in the light. How can you be so dead when you’ve been so well fed. Jesus rose from the grave, but you can’t even get out of bed.”
 - We simply *cannot* be spiritually ignorant & unaware when God has given us light & life.
 - Be encouraged in the fact that according to Jesus, what was once lost is found. What was once dead, is now alive! So live in such a way.

- **Ephesians 2:4-6**, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”
- So wake up!!
- For those of us awake in the Lord, let’s help those who are dead in their sin, headed for final death and eternal separation from the Lord.
 - Let’s stay awake and alive to learn the most from God and His word as we can.
- For those that are tired of the confusion, chaos, and are just trying to keep your head above water, cry out to God for salvation.
 - Life in Jesus’ name is freely given. So freely receive it and fall into the life you were meant to have!

Verses 13-17 [summary]

- Paul continues his journey towards Jerusalem. Traveling from Troas to Miletus; avoiding Ephesus on the return trip [for obvious reasons].
 - I’m sure the air still smelled of a riot and chaos, and had Paul traveled into town, it could have reignited that fire.
 - Yet Paul desired to address and encourage the Ephesians church... so he called the church elders to join him in Miletus.

Verses 18-38 [read]

- A dedicated life to ministry and serving the Lord will be accompanied by the following: purpose and joy... but also... humility, tears, and trials.
 - This we’ve seen in all the Apostles lives.
 - Thus encouragement is crucial [see vs. 1, 2, 12]
- 1. Stay faithful to the Lord!**
 - **1 Thessalonians 2:12**, “we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.”
- Paul commends them to the Lord, because all that happened to him in bringing the gospel to the region, may very well happen to them. Stay faithful. Stay vigilant. Preach the gospel! [last week: no matter what may come, cry out to God, remain faithful, trust in Him]
- The Holy Spirit informed Paul of the danger that lied ahead. But it didn’t matter. Paul was awake and alive knowing what he was called to do.
 - **Verse 24**: “But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”
 - **Psalms 16:8**, “I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.”
- 2. Stay alert!**
 - In what Paul experienced, these elders and the church *would* experience.

- So this is a stern warning to church leaders and Christians alike!
- **Ephesians 6:18**, “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
- **1 Corinthians 16:13**, “Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong.”
- Paul goes on to encourage them to teach the whole counsel of God’s Word.
 - To know and understand scripture in which God speaks of His redemptive plan for all!
 - Whether this offends or not, it is God’s Church, to which we have been gifted to proclaim His Word!
 - Pastors, Elders, Shepherds are to care for and protect God’s church from dangerous people who wish to present dangerous teaching.
 - Members of the God’s Church, be alert in what you hear. Long for the solid food of God’s Word [**Berean mentality**], and resist the temptation to be led away by a false/incomplete gospel.
 - **John 10:27-28**, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”
 - This is why Paul would warn the Church at Ephesus... **Ephesians 4:14**, “so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”
 - **2 Timothy 4:3-4**, “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”

Conclusion

- Paul explained this in regard to his joy and willingness to minister and serve without pay.
 - He worked when he needed to provide.
 - But more, he wanted to present the Christian life as a testament to who, and how Jesus lived.
 - Jesus gave all, so that all could receive the free gift of salvation.
 - **Verse 35**: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
 - Therefore all followers of Christ should give willingly and freely to support the work of the church, so we can continue to serve and give as much as we can for the sake of the gospel. Amen!