

# Wake up the Mighty Men

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[0:00] My message here tonight is wake up. Wake up. Now these are words I sometimes feel like yelling out halfway through a sermon.!

When I see some people nodding off. But I hope you'll all keep awake when they're here tonight. And if not, we have ways of making you wake up. But seriously, many are asleep. Spiritually asleep.

Really, it's like they're asleep at the wheel. Now, I don't know about you, but when you have those micro-sleeps, who's ever had that happen? You're driving along and, oh, you almost fall asleep. It's not funny. It's very dangerous, isn't it, of course? And sleeping when you're not supposed to is dangerous. It's hazardous for your health. And it's interesting how the term awakening is used to describe revival.

Revival. In the Word of God, it talks about awakening. Waking up. And so we're going to go to Joel chapter 3. And it talks about, wake up, the mighty men.

[1:05] Are there some mighty men here tonight? Wake up. Wake up, mighty men. These are stirring words from the book of Joel. These are rousing words, aren't they? And it's in the context of war.

We read in Joel chapter 3 from verse 9. It reads, Proclaim you this among the Gentiles. Prepare war. Wake up, the mighty men. Let all the men of war draw near.

Let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, I am strong.

Now here's a call from the prophet Joel for us to awaken. To wake up. To renew our strength, our courage. We face challenges of life.

And it's a war zone at times in life, isn't it? It's a battle. Living the Christian life is a battle sometimes. And many seem oblivious to the fact that we are in a war.

[2:01] It says prepare war. We are in a spiritual war. And that means we're meant to be soldiers. Soldiers on active duty. And do we realise that?

Sometimes I think it doesn't gel, does it? It doesn't always strike us that actually I'm in a war and I'm in service to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

I'm in the army of God. And we don't always realise that. We don't realise our potential in God. And in this war we've got things to confront. We've got to face some fears.

We've got to face some enemies. And these mighty men, it says, it calls them mighty men. And it says that they are the men of war. That all the men of war draw near.

We've got a mission to fulfil. Every one of us. Every one of us are soldiers on active duty. And I reflect sometimes. I was a weekend warrior for a little while.

[3:06] For a couple of years or so in the army reserves. As just being a casual soldier. But when you're really in the army, the military, full time. They're on call all the time.

They could be summoned at any hour of the day or night to report for duty. And it's the same picture for you and me. That we're meant to be soldiers on active duty.

And we've got a mission to fulfil. We've got a mission to impact our world for the Lord. For the glory of God. To live for the glory of God. And this call to the mighty men.

Really, it's not just to men. It's to all of us. Truly. Men and women. Will we heed the call? Will we rise up to our full potential? Will we stir ourselves?

Stir from our slumber? I love the sentiment here in Isaiah 64. Verse 7. We'll get to. But in the context it talks about Isaiah 64.

[4:02] Verse 6. It reads, But we are all as an unclean thing. And our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. And we do all fade as a leaf. And our

iniquities like the wind have taken us away.

It's saying there that we're unclean. It's saying that even our righteousnesses, the best things that we do, are as a filthy rag. Something they just wipe dirt up with.

And verse 7 it reads, And there is none that calleth upon thy name that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee. For thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities. And then in verse 8 it goes on to say, But now, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we are all the work of thy hand. I just wanted to dwell for a moment on verse 7 here.

Our Lord says, There is none that calleth upon thy name. None. None that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.

[5:03] These are sad words really, aren't they? That in this time this prophet is telling how there's none. Not one. Not one that calls upon his name. Not one that stirs up himself to take hold of God.

What a reproach. That in this nation, that there is no one. No one who answers the call. No one who answers the need. Friends, I put to you tonight, we need a wake-up call.

The church of God needs a wake-up call. We need to be stirred. To stir up ourselves. It's alike to this scripture here, where Ezekiel writes, Of our Lord, I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.

So it's alike to that one there, isn't it? None to stir up themselves. None to call upon his name. And then none to pray. None to stand in the gap. None to intercede for the nation.

It makes you think too, of really our Lord's call to pray for labourers. He says the labourers are few. I guess few is better than none, but it's still a problem too, isn't it?

[6:17] That there's not enough labourers to go out into the harvest field. And he says, Pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would thrust out labourers, that he would send forth labourers into the harvest field.

And there's a lack there. There's a lack. There's a lack of men. There's a lack of mighty men.

There's a lack of men who are going to call upon the name of Jesus. There's a lack of men who's going to stir up themselves to take hold of him.

There's a lack of men to stand in the gap and to pray, to intercede. There's a lack of labourers. It's a need. The church is in need.

The greatest need that we have as a church is not finances. It's not programs. It's not technologies. It's about men. There's a lack of men.

And so, there's a call to stir up ourselves. It's easy to get such that we're not stirred. We're just...

What's the opposite of stirred? Just sloppy, coasting.

[7:17] There's a need for a new awareness about what's happening. And I was just looking about some recent news stories I saw. And these are all recent stories. Are we even aware of what is happening as we look around the world?

You know, I know sometimes there's ministries that tell us about persecution, about persecuted nations, about the persecuted church. And we don't often hear from them really routinely these days.

But just in looking at some recent news stories, these are things that should shock us and awaken us, that should stir us. We see here in Indonesia, churches getting attacked, Christian worship getting intruded upon, churches getting built, and them coming with hammers and mallets to knock down the walls of this church that is getting built in Indonesia.

Here's another story about Pakistan. Christians getting attacked. I've seen some stories of churches getting burnt down, of them tearing crosses off of buildings and ransacking churches and burning churches and killing Christians.

This is Pakistan. And then we've got another one here, Nigeria. Hundreds, hundreds of Christians getting slain. Some 300 Christians getting slain here. Two pastors got killed.

[8:42] This is just June. And 38 church buildings destroyed. This is happening to our brothers and sisters in other countries. Here in Australia, we've got none of that.

I mean, a church is just a building, but it's a place of worship. It should be such that that's honoured and that should be set aside and sanctified. But there's no regard for that.

There's people that are killing Christians all around the globe. And then we've got church buildings being converted into mosques. In the UK, I saw a story. There was one Muslim man kind of laughing about it.

And so you think that's a church? No, it's a mosque now. And they're saying these things and kind of having a bit of a laugh. And then we sing as we see them on Saturdays. As we go out witnessing in our small numbers, we see the Jehovah's Witnesses, we see the Mormons.

But where are the true witnesses of Jehovah? We are there. We are the true witnesses of Jehovah. Cults are evangelising. They're walking the streets, putting out this false teaching, false salvation.

[9:48] There's no salvation at all. Deceiving many. Where's the church? The church is mostly silent. Let's be honest here tonight. It's not stirring itself. The church is not stirring itself.

What is it doing? It's snoring. It's like me sometimes. It's a problem. The church is snoring. Really, the church by and large is asleep.

It's mostly dormant, inactive, passive, in a kind of slumber. Most Christians are snoozing, honestly. And worse still, in some quarters, the church, even though it's noisy in some quarters and it's full of coloured lights, it's actually dead.

It's actually dead. There's much talk about the spirit, but I don't think it's the Holy Spirit. And I read this, and this is the Uniting Church website. This is on the Uniting Church website.

And I'm going to quote here how Uniting Church members celebrated world pride recently, joining thousands of others in Sydney's annual gay and lesbian Mardi Gras parade.

[10:52] This is the Uniting Church website. They're making no hiding of it. They're blatantly displaying it. And I quote, this is one of their ministers, I quote, it was a sacred, joyful, evangelical experience for us all.

Talking about the gay Mardi Gras. And it was particularly special for us to join forces with Christians of other denominations this year. And spectators express such gratitude at seeing us.

It's a beautiful thing. That's what they're saying. Friends, many are asleep today. We know that these ones are sadly in the grip of the devil, as many are heterosexuals, sodomites, you name it. There's, it's not unique to one people group, but it's just another sign, isn't it? It's a sign of our world. And I was a bit shocked lately to read, and we all might have some patriotism about the soccer and the women's soccer team and the Matildas, almost getting to the final, finals of the World Cup. But I was a bit shocked to read lately in some kind of gay, friendly magazine said that of the 11 players, nine of them are lesbians.

[12:10] They are lesbians. Nine of them are lesbians. And there's another three substitutes, kind of reserves, that are lesbians as well. So, and these are the ones, these are the heroes that our young people are going to be looking up to.

These are the heroes of our nation at the moment, are being lauded and applauded, and maybe they can kick a ball through a piece of wood. Maybe they can play a soccer game very well.

But it's almost like they're pushing that agenda at the same time. They're pushing it on the young people, on the young girls that want to learn to play soccer. These are the heroes. They're saying, be like Sam Kerr or whoever it is, be like her.

And we know what they're standing for. We know what they're, and they're very open and very much publishing it and promoting it. So, it's just another sign. And again, I'm not having a, necessarily, an attack on them as persons.

They're just deceived. They're just in the devil's hold. They're in the devil's grip, just like most of our nation are. But it's just another example of the way the world is going. But many are asleep to these things.

[13:20] They're like Samson in Delilah's lap. And of course, we read in Judges 16 of Samson, the man of God, and yet, a foolish man. We see that he laid down on Delilah's lap in Judges 16, verse 19, she made him sleep upon her knees.

And she called for a man and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head and she began to afflict him and his strength went from him. And she said, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson.

And he awoke out of his sleep and said, I will go out as at other times before and shake myself. And he wished not that the Lord was departed from him. So here he was.

Of course, there's numbers of times she tried different things that he revealed and they were not the source of his strength. But then he revealed that the source of his strength was his long hair as a dedication of himself to God as the vow that was made on that part.

And so when they took that, they took his strength. And it says, he awoke out of his sleep. But it was too late for Samson. He woke up too late. So beware, sleeping one.

[14:29] Beware, sleeping one. Beware, lest you sleep like Samson. And the Philistines took him and it says they put out his eyes. You know, I don't know how they gouged them out or burnt them out but they took out his eyes and he was a blind man.

Thank God, God had mercy that God used Samson at the close of his life but he was a sleeping man. God gives us here in these words, prepare war, wake up, the mighty man.

He gives us here a clarion call for you and me, for young men, young women, older men, older women. Notice here some things about this call, wake up, mighty man.

Notice it's a call to awaken. In the book of Joel, the prophet calls upon the people to wake up, the mighty man. Now this call was not only about a physical strength but also about awakening their spiritual selves too.

Many slumber and sleep, they're spiritually shut down. They're spiritually asleep. A sleeping man can do nothing. Think of a man when you're asleep, when you're asleep, you're shut down.

[15:38] A sleeping man can do nothing. And in our modern world we often find ourselves caught up in the routines and distractions of life where other things occupy our mind, our attention such that spiritual things get put on the shelf.

And this spiritual man is a picture of a disconnection with spiritual truths. Beware, sleepy one. Wake up, oh sleeper. Wake up and see the false doctrine.

We can't have discernment when we're asleep. A sleeping man cannot serve. They cannot communicate. They cannot activate. It's a picture of laziness, isn't it?

Of being a sluggard. And friends, the church is sleeping. In many quarters it's quite worldly. There's not really much to show that's spiritual. It's all a lot of noise.

And friends, we're called to be diligent to seek out the truth. By and large the average churchgoer is lazy and scarcely a churchgoer. They settle for the minimum and the devil loves it that way.

[16:40] The church gets sleepy, people get careless, they neglect prayer, fellowship, the word of God is neglected. We can miss God's best and falter and grow apathetic and careless spiritually.

When you think about the discernment level of some Christians is just about zilch. This is one of the popular preachers of today. Todd White is his name.

You know, can you take that kind of man seriously? I mean, people are toying with the world today. They're toying with these false teachings, false teachers. And it's no wonder they're falling prey to these wolves that are in sheep's clothing.

They come along with these words. It's foolishness. They're preaching false doctrine. And the devil has just about taken over some churches. And it amazes me really, and I'm talking honestly here tonight, how some people drift off into churches with scarcely any discernment about spiritual truths.

How could you go to a uniting church? How could you set foot in such a thing? I mean, churches that curry favour with the Christ rejecters and the godless, the rainbow crowd, how could you have any part?

[17:50] How could you have any part to do with that? People who do that are asleep. They're sleepwalking into falseness and false doctrine.

And look, Baptists can be just as faulty too. There's Baptist churches that are losing their way. We know one in Rockhampton. It's just a rock concert now. It's changed.

Something's happened. I've still got the King James, but that's about it. Friends, we need a spiritual awakening. We really do. We need a spiritual awakening. We need a revitalisation, a visitation of God.

We need an awakening. To wake up, we must wake up. So there's a need to have a call to awaken. Secondly, there's a need to a call to arms. A call to arms.

I like how it says in our text that it says, let the weak say, I am strong. We might feel weak. I feel weak most of the time. There's a weakness that we feel humanly, naturally, of ourselves.

[18:51] But it says, let the weak. That's you and me. Let the weak say, I am strong. I am strong. And we see examples of, like Paul, the apostle.

It tells in the context here, this is 2 Timothy 4. Paul talks about 2 Timothy 4. He talks about the mouth of the lion. He talks about people hurting him. He talks about Alexander the coppersmith. Now, some people have got their names in the Bible, but it's not in a good way. You don't want to be Alexander the coppersmith. It would be nice to have your name in the Bible if you're in Hebrews 11.

You know, those that God worked on and changed their lives like we heard about this morning. Some people, their names are in the Bible and it's a disgrace. It's a reproach. Alexander the coppersmith.

He did me much evil. But, he says, Nevertheless, the Lord stood with me. The Lord stood with me and strengthened me. Friends, that's our strength.

[19:50] That's the source of our strength. Even though we are weak of ourselves in Him, we are strong in Christ. And every one of us possesses something we can do to be for God.

We've all got an ability, a potential, a strength. And God can harness that. God can build that and grow that. That strength of character, of resilience, of determination, mighty man.

That's what He calls you. He says, Let the weak say, I'm strong. You are mighty in God. You are a mighty man. You are a mighty woman here tonight. Maybe you're feeling like you're not mighty. You're feeling like you're spiritually lacking. that's what the devil would have us to think, to be, to stay in that zone. Oh, I can't do anything. I'm not worthy. I'm not able.

What's stopping you from being mighty in God? You can be. You can be a mighty man of faith. You can be a mighty woman of faith. Mighty for God. As we face the challenges of life, as we face the obstacles, the adversities, we can overcome.

[20:54] We can win. We can have victory. We can know God's help. We can know Christ is with us. He's standing with you. He's standing by you. Like He was standing by Paul. Even in the prison cell, we know that we have God's strength.

And we are the mighty men by faith to confront the challenges ahead. It says prepare war. This is no picnic. It's a battlefield. It's a battlefield that we are in.

And there's a little video we're going to run shortly.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[23:12] Thank you.

A force to be reckoned with. That's what we're meant to be. An invading force. We're behind enemy lines really, aren't we? And we've needed weapons. We need to take up arms. It talks about beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears.

It's saying we need some weapons. And of course the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They're not fleshly. They're of God. They're spiritual weapons. Weapons that we need are spiritual weapons for our equipping, for spiritual battle.

For some, they've neglected their swords. Of course we know Ephesians 6. You could go there later to refresh yourselves about the armour of God. It's like the word of God is the sword of the spirit, the word of God.

Some are neglecting their swords. They become dull. They've neglected their swords. They've lost the fight. And it's no wonder we see false doctrines sweeping across Christendom.

[24:33] Many are oblivious to the erosion of sound teaching. It's like they don't get it. And there's people in our own number. They're tuning into some wacko teachings out there. There's some wackos out there.

I know Brother Doug talked about them. There's some nuts out there that are very popular preachers. And for some, it's like the spiritual armour that we should be wearing. We've laid it aside and it's going rusty. This is a spiritual battle. We're calling. Calling here tonight. God's calling. Mighty man. It's time to wake up. We've got need of perseverance in this battle. We've got to go the long haul too. Sometimes we have a little bit of a challenge and we throw the towel in and get all uppity and worried and think God's not with us when really this is just part and parcel of being a Christian soldier that we've got to persevere. We've got to press through those times of battle. And it doesn't matter what we feel like too. Some people have the idea and it's a common view out there. I've seen preachers often say this kind of thing.

[25:36] It's almost like when you get saved, you feel good. It's almost like getting saved is about your feelings. Now, of course, that can happen. I think knowing Jesus does make you feel good.

But it's not about our feelings. It's not that. Some make the mistake that they tie how they feel to how they are spiritually. It's not always the case. It doesn't matter what we feel like.

It doesn't matter. You might feel lousy. You might feel really lousy. But God's still with you. God's with you. Our faith doesn't rest on our feelings. It's a wrong idea.

It's a misperception we can have. When we're feeling lousy, we think God's not with us. When we're having some challenges, some difficulties, we think God's not answering our prayers. And we get desperate.

It's not how it is. Because our faith does not rest on our feelings. It rests on the word. And we need to face our fears. Overcome that. And don't let the feelings deter you.

[26:36] You might feel lousy. It doesn't mean that God's not with you. All the more he is with you. And let the weak say, I am strong. All right? And we need to regain our fighting spirit.

To realise this is the real life. This is where the rubber hits the road. We need to go the distance. Because really, it's a war of attrition. It's one of the sayings about war.

It's a war of attrition. Which means basically, it's a wearing down. It's a wearing down. The enemy wants to wear you down. To wear you out. To make you worn out.

And there's a lot of sleepy soldiers out there. In Christendom. In the church. There's a lot of sleepy soldiers. We need to wake up to the fact that there's some battling to do. A sleepy soldier cannot see.

His eyes are shut. He cannot hear. He's vulnerable. He's sleepy. He's unprotected. He's in danger. And what's more, if he's on guard duty, him sleeping means that others are in danger.

[27:31] Think of that. A sleepy soldier is not protecting his home. A sleepy soldier is not protecting his family. His community. His unit. Now, where I used to work in disability, we had people 24-7 on shifts.

And if someone was meant to be awake supporting clients and they were asleep on duty, that was a serious offence. That was serious. The people that they're supporting who've got disability are really in their care.

And they should be watching and they should be watching and wakeful and ready to respond and help and serve. And when a certain worker who's rostered to be awake on shift is asleep, that is a sackable offence.

They can be terminated for that because it's very, very serious. And likewise, in the military, they can be court-martialed. If you're on duty, you're on guard duty and you're asleep at your post, that is really, it's a court-martial.

You could be thrown out of the army. So, friends, it's a call to awaken. Wake up, you mighty man. It's a call to arms. It says, get those swords. Get those spears.

[28:44] It's a call to arms. And thirdly, it's a call to action. Let us report for duty. We need to have the attitude, yes, sir. Sir, what do you want me to do, sir? Yes, sir. To our Lord, our commanding officer, to have that kind of discipline, that military discipline.

What does awakening look like? It's a stirring to service. We've got a job to do, every one of us here. Don't think you're inactive. You are on active duty. Now, some have got the view, oh, he's in the ministry.

He's the one doing the preaching. Might get some payment. But no, we, all of us, every single Christian is in the ministry, in the full-time ministry. It's a full-time ministry for every one of us. And what does that call to action look like? It's a refreshing of our zeal. It's a refiring of our spiritual engines. A sleepy soldier has neglected his duty. Don't be a sleepy soldier. Friends here tonight, a sleepy soldier has failed his commanding officer. He has shirked. Faces discipline. We have responsibilities, each and every one of us. We have to have that attitude, I want to report for duty.

[29:50] I've got a mission to fulfil. I've got a calling to fulfil. We all have a station to man. We've all got a gift to employ. We all have a part to play. And that's what being a man of war means.

Every one of us has a place in the army of God, a commission. And really, every sermon is a call to action. We have a service to render. Every one of us, the sleepy soldiers, need to be roused. The alarm clock goes off and we know we've got a job to do. We know each of us have a job to get up to. When that alarm goes off, you don't just press the snooze button. You've got to get out of bed.

You've got a job to get to. You've got a mission. You've got a gospel mission. Every one of you. And we've got a responsibility to fulfil our service for the glory of God, for the service of our King. So think of that, friends, tonight. And let's take some practical spiritual steps to, hey, how can I be more awake as a believer? Wake up the mighty man.

[30:52] What can I do in my responsibilities, in my home? Dads, fathers, husbands, mothers, wives. Children. Children.

We've all got responsibilities to fulfil. And we're all called to be mighty men. Role models. You're a role model to the younger Christians around you, whether you realise it or not.

They're looking up to you. You're an older person. They think you know God more. They think you're following God. You want to be a good testimony to them. What's stopping you from being mighty for God? What's getting in the way?

Will you leave a legacy behind you for your children, for others? Will you be a testimony for the glory of God that when you've lived, they'll say, yes, that was one who was a mighty man, a mighty woman.

There's a call to awaken, a call to arms, a call to action, and also there's a call to be a part of the army. We're not doing this alone. We can't be a lone soldier. We're part of an army.

[31:51] That's what church is. We realise the power of the army that we're part of because we're together. There's a strength when we're together. It's together that we're stronger. And just as the call went out in Joel's day, it was a collective awakening.

It was wake up mighty men, plural. We too are called to that brotherhood, that is the church, to come together, to rise up together as a fighting unit.

And there's power in the welding together of the people of God like a fighting force that is the church, that unity, that brotherly love, that support, that empowerment.

Even in the worldly sense, they've got mateship, haven't they? There's a bond there. There's a bond of the military men. And what about us?

We should be more so, shouldn't we? Shouldn't we have that brotherly bond, that brotherly love, that we should awaken as a unit, as a fighting force, as the church of God, that we lift each other up, that we be that support for one another, that we be that community of faith, that the church can be that strong fighting force for the glory of God.

[33:00] And the call is a call for action here. It's for all of us. We're all called to this. You know, this is written in Joel's day, but we can apply it today to ourselves. We might fill up with wheat.

We can say, I am strong. I am strong. Have we lost our fight, our fighting spirit? Are we like the sleepy soldiers? Easy to be that way, isn't it? We've got an enemy to fight.

We've got to fight some things. We've got to call a spade a spade. We've got to say some things are false doctrine. Don't go there. Don't go to the compromising church. There's lots of good churches.

If you want to leave this church, we can recommend some good ones. All right? I'd love you if you leave this church. I'll refer you to a good one. It breaks my heart when I hear people leave this

church and they go to a flaky church.

It's just bad news. It's so sad. Such a grievous thing. A reproach. Friends, the call goes out still. The call goes out still and there's a call for us to be together, pull together in the one direction.

[34:00] Let's rise to the challenge, to stir up ourselves, to wake up, you mighty men. It's a call for courage, a call for combat. We've got to work to do. We should be pulling in the same direction.

We're under attack. And it's the sleepy soldiers that are shirking and letting everyone else down. We don't want to be one of the sleepy ones, do we? I pray not.

So I urge you tonight, I pray you've been exhorted and challenged. I pray lovingly exhorted to be that wakeful soldier, not a sleepy one. And realise that God's got something for you to do, to rally to the cause, to answer the call, to wake up, wake up the mighty men.

Let's stir ourselves to that end. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that you are our commander in chief and you've enlisted us, as it were, you've recruited us to your army and we are soldiers, as it were. And so it says we are. Lord, pray that each one might know what it is to please our commanding officer, to please you, to be such a soldier that is on duty, that's alert, awake, that's armed, that's ready to serve.

[35:17] And part of that fighting force that is meant to be your church, Lord, help us to be alert to the enemy's deceptions, because the enemy comes in many shapes and forms. Sometimes the enemy stands in churches and preachers from the Bible, yet he's an enemy of the truth.

Lord, we pray we'd have discernment and realise that. We pray that each one might know what it is to truly have faith that saves, that each one here tonight would know what it is to say, Lord Jesus, you died for my sin and I trust you as my saviour and to know for sure that they have eternal life through that trust in you.

Lord God, we pray each one might have that assurance here tonight and if anyone does not, that they'll seek out prayer so that they can settle that with you tonight. And we pray, Lord, for your great grace to continue to work in us.

Lord, as we get the alarm clock, wake us up tomorrow morning, we'll remember that you want to wake us up, us mighty men, that we can be awake, spiritually awake, to be of use for your kingdom's sake and to report for duty as you call us to.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.