

A Wake Up Call

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[0 : 00] Welcome to this week's message from Faith Bible Church of Lake Charles. We're excited to share a practical Bible-based teaching that we hope will encourage you and strengthen your faith.

Thanks for listening. Now, here's today's message. Have you ever found yourself falling asleep in church? God admit it, you would not be the first one.

You know the feeling. Your eyelids start to droop, and you've got that little eyelid flutter going on, and then your head begins to bob, and before you know it, you've got that head jerk, and then you look around, hoping no one noticed, right?

Well, one Sunday, a number of years ago, we had a man in our church. His name was Sam, and I always knew when he got in late on Saturday night, he would sing.

He was the bass in a southern gospel quartet, and they traveled home late many Saturday nights, and I could always tell when he had stayed up late on Saturday night because he would wear some dark-tinted glasses to church.

[1 : 16] And one Sunday morning during the message, we heard a loud bang, and out of the corner of my eye, he always sat there to my left, and out of the corner of my eye, I could see his head jerked back, and he hit the pews.

Matter of fact, we had wooden pews just like these that you're sitting in this morning. And everybody around tried their best to stifle their laughs, but it didn't work.

And I tried very hard, and I didn't laugh, but I stopped speaking. And Sam looks around, sees everybody laughing, and then sits up straight like nothing had happened.

Falling asleep in church happens. You know, one Sunday morning, you might find yourself weary and falling asleep. Well, the same thing happened to a young man in the Bible called Eutychus. But it went pretty badly for him. You know, just like Sam, Eutychus was listening to a message, and he was struggling to stay awake.

[2 : 28] And he made the mistake of trying to get some air and sat in the window. And he ends up getting drowsy, falls asleep, falls out of the window on the third floor.

And he falls, and he hits the ground, and he dies. Well, thankfully, that's not where the story ends. Paul stopped speaking.

He goes downstairs, goes outside, and he embraces Eutychus, and Eutychus comes back to life.

Well, I think it's also a wake-up call for us to remember that we need to stay spiritually awake.

And for us not to get spiritually drowsy to the point where we forget about who we are, we forget about what God is doing in our life, and that God's still engaged in our life, even when we're weary, even when it seems like he's not around.

Now, today, we're going to look into this story and see, and hopefully be warned to fight against the spiritual drowsiness that comes, that causes us to be inattentive in our lives.

[3 : 44] So let's wake up together and look in the book of Acts, chapter number 20. We'll go down to, we'll start with verse number 7.

Verses 1 through 6 really is simply after the most recent uproar that we saw last week with Demetrius and the silversmith and them getting upset because they were losing business because people came to know Jesus Christ and they stopped putting in orders for their personal gods.

And they said, we're going to go out of business because of what this Paul is doing. He's going all around talking about Jesus Christ. And verse chapter 20 starts off with, After the uproar had ceased, Paul calls his disciples together.

He encourages them or comforts them. And then he heads off to Macedonia. He had gone over that region. He encouraged a number of people there.

And he sent a couple of guys, Tychicus and others. He sends them on. So we come to verse number 7. Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

[5 : 09] Now what Luke does is he gives us a brief report of a local church service here in Troas. And from it, we can learn a little something about how the early church worshiped the Lord.

Well, to begin with, they met on the first day of the week and not on the seventh day, which was the typical Jewish Sabbath. The first day came to be called the Lord's Day.

We see it called that in Revelation chapter 1 and verse number 10. And we also remember that the church was born on the first day of the week as well.

Now there's a reason why, and they were there meeting together at night. And there was a reason why the church began for a pretty long amount of time.

The church didn't meet on Sunday mornings like we have come to meet today. The church met on Sunday evenings. And there was a reason for that because Sunday was not a holiday.

[6 : 16] Sunday, people didn't get off work. They continued to have to work. As a matter of fact, if you travel across the world, even today, and you walk around on a Sunday morning and you'll see people on their way to work.

Sunday, in most countries, is just another day of work. As a matter of fact, in many countries, children, you'll see them on Sunday mornings. They're stopping to meet the bus because they are on their way to school.

School is held on Sundays as well. And also, many of these followers of Jesus who gather together with the church, no doubt, would be slaves.

And so they couldn't get off of their household duties or their chores. And so they would meet in the evenings. And they met in an upper room.

The church didn't have buildings at this time. So they weren't all able to meet together at the same time in the same place. So this was probably in the home of one of the believers.

[7 : 19] And then the early church regularly, and Acts, early part of Acts, tells us that they met daily together to eat. And so they probably ate evening meals together on a fairly regular basis.

And so the early church would gather together on Sunday evenings, and they would have a potluck. It was also called their love feast. We see that in 1 Corinthians. It called that as well.

Acts chapter 2 and also 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And it's likely that the church observed the Lord's Supper each Sunday evening as well.

While the Bible doesn't give us specific instructions as to how often we should observe the Lord's Supper, it simply said, as often as you do this.

But I think we could take something out of the playbook of the early church, and it should be something that's done fairly regularly. And the thing about it is, our communion that we do today looks nothing like it did with Jesus and His disciples.

[8 : 32] And it looks nothing like it did for the early church. Because remember, the early church would gather together on the Lord's Day. They would have a love feast. They would eat a meal. And the wine and the bread was already on the table.

And so communion or the Lord's Supper was part of their meal. It wasn't a, okay, let's sit down and let's pass a little wafer and a communion cup. It was a regular part of the meal.

But we need to be careful. And many churches do it every Sunday. We have to be careful that it doesn't become so routine that we forget the reason for doing it.

And isn't that a danger? It's a danger. It's a danger that something becomes a tradition and we just simply do it. The Old Testament talks about the Jews getting together and performing their sacrifices, and they just did it because they were supposed to be doing it.

And God said, I don't need your cattle. I don't need your offering. It's just something that he instituted to remind us of and be a picture of one day that Jesus Christ would come and he would be the Lamb of God that would take away the sin of the world.

[9 : 47] So we have to be careful that when we do it, it doesn't just become a mechanical thing that we do. So they ate together and Paul preaches.

Paul gives a very long message. And this wasn't just a casual get-together for them. It was, I believe, a very deliberate and a meaningful time for the early church as they gathered together. It was more than a gathering together to listen to a message. It was about building strong relationships, and it was about encouraging one another. It was about, the Bible calls it edifying or

building up one another.

Remember, it's talked about in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 20 that Paul went around encouraging. Paul went around building them up. Excuse me. And he used many words.

He spoke to them, and he gave messages to them. And that is what it was about. Coming together on Sunday morning is more than just singing and hearing a message.

[10:51] It should be about us gathering together in community, learning from one another, encouraging one another, opening up to one another, and sharing our struggles, sharing our victories, so that we can support and be there with one another.

So the early Christians understood the importance of community. You know, they knew that spiritual growth didn't happen in isolation. There are some today who says, you know what, I can worship God in the middle of the woods.

Yes, you can. You can worship God anywhere. But you can't grow like God intended us to grow because true growth comes in community, where we have been given spiritual gifts so that way we can encourage, we can exhort, we can comfort, we can build up one another.

So sharing lives, encouraging one another. So Paul, who was speaking to them, didn't rush his message. I remember in the same church that Sam was in, we had a dear elderly lady.

I say elderly. I'm older than she is. I'm older today than she was then. But here I am. I was in my 40s, I guess. And she seemed old.

[12:11] But anyway, she sat to my right, y'all's left, in the third pew, I believe. And this is what she would do when I would get to about 30 minutes of the message.

She would put her hand up and she would point at her watch. And I kid you not. Well, Paul wasn't in a rush.

Because I know it's funny, right? Well, it wasn't funny to me at the time. I would just look at her and go on. So he didn't rush through his message.

He took his time because I believe Paul valued depth over brevity. You know, if you can preach the same truth in 20 minutes, I say preach it in 20 minutes.

Don't belabor it. But if it takes 30, 40, 50 minutes, take the time. And I appreciate all of you because, and I've heard people, we've had missionaries, we've had special speakers come in.

[13:16] And they've asked, well, how long do I get? And I've heard many of you say, you know, take as long as you need. So hopefully your roast won't burn or they won't burn in the oven.

But Paul, I think, valued depth over brevity. So he speaks until midnight. And this is why we see Eutychus getting sleepy. He knew growth takes time and takes effort.

So what does this mean for us today? Now, without wanting to over-spiritualize it, that's a danger that we have. We over-spiritualize scripture sometimes.

But I believe it's a reminder for us that, yes, we can get physically sleepy. But it's also possible to get spiritually sleepy, where we kind of go on autopilot.

And we're not alert to our lives and how we follow Jesus, how we serve the Lord. And we may allow sin to enter into our lives.

[14:20] And we just have to be careful. Now, what are some of the signs of becoming spiritually drowsy? Well, maybe routine worship attendance. I mean, you're here on a Sunday morning, but during worship, maybe you're checking your phone for notifications.

Or you're thinking about that grocery list. Or you're thinking about the roast in the oven rather than focusing on what you're hearing. Or it could be lack of community engagement.

You start to withdraw, maybe from your church community or your small group, whether that's Sunday school or another small group. And when you do attend, you avoid sharing personal struggles.

You know, you prefer to keep your conversations superficial. Or you prefer your conversations when people ask, you know, how are you doing? Or ask about your struggles, you over-spiritualize it and you're not honest.

So that's one of the signs of being spiritually drowsy. Another thing is spiritual apathy. Maybe you used to regularly attend the community gatherings of the local church.

[15:30] Or maybe you were the first to sign up for serving. And then now you're, well, hopefully someone else will sign up and they will take my place. So there are some things that can happen in our lives.

The early church shows us that it's important to gather together as believers regularly. It's not just about attending church. It's about being an active part of a community that we're there together. We work together. We encourage one another. We exhort one another when it's necessary. And we support one another when we are challenged. So let's ask ourselves, are we making time for fellowship?

Are we making time for worship? Are we making time for teaching? Are we investing in relationships with one another?

You know, maybe the shaking hands together makes you uncomfortable. You know, it may be. It's not for everybody. If it does, stay seated. But I think it should extend beyond that.

[16:30] You know, I think it should be, hey, let's come over and let's have a meal together. Let's meet together for coffee. Let's learn about one another.

Because if I were to ask you, how much do you know about the person sitting across the aisle from you who's not in your family? How much do you know about them?

I would dare say, chances are, many of us would have to say, I don't know much. Matter of fact, I don't think I really know anything about them. Do you think that was true in the early church?

I think they knew all about one another. They knew their struggles. They knew their, because they shared with one another. And that's what they were there for. Now, there's more to the story. Let's continue reading.

Look at verses 8 and 9. Excuse me. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. Problem one. In a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus.

[17:32] Problem number two. He was sitting in a precarious location, probably wanted to get some air. And who was sinking into a deep sleep. Problem number three. He was overcome by sleep.

And as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. That's a nice way of saying it killed him. So, here we meet Eutychus, a young man who found himself in a bit of a predicament.

Picture this. You're in somebody's house. You're on the third floor. And there were a lot of oil lamps that were lit, probably sucking up a lot of the oxygen.

It was getting warm. You had an evening meal. And Paul is going on and on and on.

And it's getting to be around midnight. And he's getting sleepy. So, Eutychus is sitting in a window.

[18:38] And the hours drag on, starts to feel drowsy. You know, we've all been there, right? Well, but for Eutychus, that was an issue. His name, by the way, means fortunate. And this wasn't just a sleepy moment.

It was a dangerous one. And he gradually is drifting off. And he falls asleep into what Luke calls a deep sleep. He falls out of the window, which was rather unfortunate.

But it doesn't stop there. Now, we have to be careful. Just like Eutychus, we might find ourselves over-spiritualizing. We start going through the motions.

But he falls asleep. And he goes over. And as the columnist Paul Harvey used to say, now for the rest of the story.

Let's look at verse number 10. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him, said, Do not trouble yourselves. He's telling this to the crowd, who I'm sure follows Paul downstairs.

[19:41] They gather around Eutychus. He says, Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him. He's not dead. Now when he had come up, had broken bread, and had eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.

And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted. Now remember I said Luke either uses hyperbole, or he uses a figure of speech called the litot, which is an understatement.

So Luke liked to either exaggerate or understate. And so he says they were not a little comforted, meaning they were so glad, they were happy that Eutychus was raised from the dead.

Now if there was ever a reason to cut a message short, is somebody falls out of the third story window and dies. You can stop preaching, I think.

And so Paul does, and he doesn't panic. What he does is he goes downstairs to where Eutychus is lying, and he does something incredible.

[20:55] And it's in a move that reminds us of the Old Testament prophets, Elijah and Elisha. Paul embraces the young man, and with a calm assurance, Eutychus' life comes back into him, and he

tells everyone, don't worry, because Eutychus is alive.

So also we see here in verse number 11, now when they had come up and had broken bread and eating. This is a second reference to breaking bread.

I believe this second reference, I think, takes us beyond the love feast, takes us beyond the Lord's Supper, and I think could describe what might be a midnight snack.

And so they eat again, because it's probably been a few hours since they had eaten. Somebody just died, and Paul resurrected him. So they're a little bit hungry.

Excuse me. So the excitement of the fall, the resurrection, and the nourishment of the snack rejuvenated both preacher and crowd.

[21 : 58] And so he gets started again to speaking. And so Paul speaks on until daylight. He says in verse number 12, And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

The comfort theme of verse 12 links very nicely with the comfort theme of verses 1 and 2. Because Luke uses the same word comforted in verse 12 as he does as encouraged or comforted in verse number 2.

It's the word parakaleo or paraklete, paraklos. That is the paraklete or parakaleo that was used, and it's used of the Holy Spirit as well.

One called alongside to help. So they were comforted. Excuse me. This is a wonderful picture of how God breaks in, even in our worst moments.

And God is there for us. And just like Paul brought Eutychus back from the dead, God's love, God's power can revive us from our spiritual apathy, from our spiritual drowsiness, even when we're exhausted.

[23 : 05] And it's a reminder that no matter how far we've fallen, no matter how weak we've gotten, God's always there to lift us up and to restore us.

Now, the church that night didn't just witness a miracle. They experienced the faithfulness of God in a very, very profound way. They were encouraged, and they were strengthened, knowing that God was with them, even in their darkest moments.

And God is with you, and God is with me, even in our darkest moments. No matter what's going on, God's there. Even if we've fallen asleep spiritually, and we're not aware of anything, and we don't take time during the day to think about God, we don't take time to think about using our spiritual gifts with anyone else, God's still there, and God can restore us.

So what does it mean for us? When we feel like we've hit rock bottom, when we've been overwhelmed by life's challenges, we can trust that God's power is still there with us in the dark. So He hasn't just come to wake us up. He's come to revive us completely. Well, maybe you're feeling spiritually drowsy. Maybe you've allowed some of the disciplines of the Christian life to slip a little bit.

[24 : 26] But just like Eutychus, we can experience God's restoring power. Now, Eutychus' story isn't just a strange or funny story, amusing story, that's tucked away in the pages of the Bible.

I think it's a wake-up call for each and every one of us. Now, what are some other examples maybe of falling asleep spiritually? Maybe it's neglecting prayer. Maybe you used to start your day with prayer, and now maybe you hit snooze on the alarm clock, and then you rush to get ready and get off to wherever it is that you go, thinking, I'll pray this evening.

And before you know it, you've fallen asleep. Maybe Bible reading has become a duty for you. Now you've got a Bible app on your phone that reminds you and gives you a verse of the day, or maybe when you do open your Bibles, you read a chapter very quickly so you can check it off of that list. Or maybe it could be a lack of expectation. You've heard of praying and expecting. You know, maybe we've grown to the point, or we've fallen asleep to the point, where we don't expect much from God anymore.

You know, maybe we've started coming together as a habit, and maybe you don't expect to hear anything impactful when we hear from God's Word.

[25 : 58] Maybe during the messages your mind wanders, and you leave without taking anything away, or you leave without applying the message that God has given us in His Word to our lives.

So let's not wait until we're at rock bottom. Let's not wait until maybe our life is so messed up that we have to work to get back. Let's experience this power.

Let's wake up. And sometimes it takes a bonk on the head to start us awake and realize, oh, maybe I do need to.

You know what happens a lot of times when people get that bad report from the doctor? Or when something happens in their life that scares them? That's when they begin to say, oh, maybe I need God in my life.

You know, maybe I do need to wake up and get serious again. So don't wait until something serious happens before we allow God to just have a part of every day of our life.

[27 : 01] In all your ways, acknowledge Him. That means when you wake up, when you go to work, when you go to school, when you go to the grocery store, acknowledge God in everything that you do.

Acknowledge Him in every way. He'll make our paths straight. He wants us to experience His power. So let's commit to staying spiritually awake. Let's commit to staying alert and know that God's always at work even when we may not realize it.

Let's pray. Father, this morning, I pray that You would help us to stay awake spiritually. Know that our enemy, Satan, is all around us. He's our enemy.

The Bible says he's like a roaring lion going around looking to see who he can devour. Lord, we know, Father, that this world that we're in is difficult.

Help us to keep our eyes on You. Lord, help us to allow others to comfort us when we're weary, when we're tired, when we're hurting. Father, may we also use, allow You to empower us to use our spiritual gifts with one another.

[28 : 18] Maybe it's a gift of encouragement. Maybe it's a gift of exhortation. Maybe it's a gift of mercy or giving or helps. Whatever it is. Father, I pray that we could come together in community and be using our giftedness to support, encourage one another.

We thank You for each one here today. We thank You for the offering that we're about to receive. We pray that You'd use it to accomplish Your will, that we may be able to serve and help others. We thank You for what You're going to do. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thanks for joining us today.

We hope this message encouraged you and gave you something to apply to your life this week. If you'd like to learn more about Faith Bible Church or connect with us, visit our website at meetfaith.org.

We'd love to hear from you. Have a great week and we'll see you next time.