

Sunday, December 18, 2005

# Sleeping Saints

By Pastor Nick Bibile

*Eph 5:13-14 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,*

*“Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”*

It is amazing what sin has done to man. It even has marred metaphors that reflect goodness; the blessings have turned into a curse. The pictures of goodness and blessings have become pictures of sin. Water is a good picture of life but because of sin water destroyed mankind by the flood. Fire too is a good metaphor of the Holy Spirit, it is the great zeal of the Christian, and fire is good for the cold, during winter it keeps us warm. But even this word is marred due to sin, sin has influenced the tongues and sometimes the tongue is called a fire which can destroy many, there is fire in hell.

Then there is sleep, which a blessing, as Psalm 127:2 says that he gives to his beloved sleep.

We can sleep in Jesus, rest in Jesus but how amazing sin has touched this metaphor and the blessing has made into a curse. Now sleep is a metaphor of the sinful condition of man.

1 Thes 5:6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

There are many who are spiritually dead and they are asleep. Remember when God told Adam if you eat of this fruit you shall surely die, Adam did not listened to God but listened to the devil and ate from the fruit and from one man death came to all, in the same way there was spiritual death that came to all. The unspiritual man cannot understand the spiritual things as the unspiritual man is dead towards spiritual things.

People are healthy and alive but alive to sin and dead to God. They are in darkness of sin. Unless God of Light will awaken many sinners with his light. Jesus is the Light of the world and this is the reason why Jesus came.

Isa 60:1 Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.  
2 For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the Lord will arise upon you,

and his glory will be seen upon you.  
3 And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.

We too were dead and in darkness but when the Lord called us we rose from our spiritual dead condition and became alive to God.

Eph 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

We were in bondage to sin, chained to sin, slaves to sin. There was no way we could have risen ourselves from the dead or no way to break the chain of sin, only the heavenly power can rescue, remember Peter was put to prison by Herod and he was chained, put in a cell and he was asleep, there was no way he can get out.

Acts 12:6-7 Now when Herod was about to bring him out, on that very night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood next to him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands.

We were like that, we were in prison chained to sin asleep but the light of the Lord shone upon us and our chains fell off and were rescued from sin. Oh! How we need to adore his grace as sinners like us were rescued by our Lord.

But there are many Christians who are asleep in the church. They are called sleeping saints.

1 Thes 5:6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

You are not dead but made alive to Christ Jesus but why go back to sleep? How can you sleep when you realize what your Savior has done for you? But it is sad that many who are called Christians are asleep. Not literally although some do fall asleep literally in the church, the meaning here is figurative.

Let us see some of the signs of sleeping saints. When you asleep you don't feel anything, no feelings. There is a state of insensibility. There is no consciousness. When you see the Fatherless, widows, orphans, poor, hungry, needy, many will be not moved with compassion for them as they are asleep, no feelings. They have no feelings and compassion as long as they have enough. They love their religion as they can praise God in Church and do all the rituals without obedience and love for the Lord.

Jas 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Many professing Christians are sound asleep as they as an apathy in the church today, if someone is sick, or ill they don't care as long as they are healthy. When someone is persecuted they don't care as long as they are not persecuted, many are self centered as they only think of themselves first.

If something happens to their body they feel it very good as they are conscious of themselves but not of others. They stand at the very edge of hell but they tremble not. The anger of the Lord is burning against them but they fear not.

They drink from the worldly cup of pleasure and are intoxicated with the world. They sing the worldly music and dance to the tune of the world. They dream of the world, the American dream of having everything not realizing that this life is only a dream.

"For me to live is Christ." (Philp 1:21) but for many for me to live is the world.

Remember when Jesus went with his disciples to pray. Jesus told the disciples, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." Our Lord agonized in prayer and when he came back he found the disciples sleeping.

The sleeping saints have no power to resist temptation. Their moral strength is departed. They have the temptation for lust, greed and not content what they have, like a bird in the trap they are caught by the enemy of this world. They are unable to resist the passions of this world. They say they cannot resist temptation; of course you cannot as you are asleep. Oh! Spirit of the living God wake up the sleeper.

The sleeping saints are inactive. They are active in the world. They wake up early go to work come home, turn on the TV and watch their flesh likes to see. But inactive in the Lord. But they give the excuse by saying they have no time for the Lord. They cannot spend one hour a day with the Lord but have time for themselves.

There are many professing Christians are inactive as they are asleep. Sinners are perishing daily people are dying and going to eternal fires of hell but sleeping saints go to church and wish the pastor would feed them with spiritual food, they are spiritually overfed but have no desire to distribute tracts to those who are perishing. They just sit and eat the bread from the pulpit and ask for more and more.

Even Herod love to hear John the Baptist, there are many who love to hear the preacher but Herod was not a Christian.

Mr 6:20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

They like to eat but do not want to plough the field. They want to drink the wine of the Lord but do not want to work in the Lord's vineyard.

Many live to themselves and think of themselves but the scripture say, no man live to him self but to the Lord.

Oh! What amount of sleeping we have done in the churches; if churches are awake they can preach the gospel to every corner of the earth. You know the truth of the gospel but you would not tell. The death bell is ringing as the sinners are taken to hell while you professing Christians are enjoying the meat of God and going to sleep.

You are called the light of the world but there is no light shining from you. You are the salt of the earth but the salt has lost its flavor. Our cities are filled with crime as sin is spreading through out this nation while many professing Christians are fast asleep.

The sleeping saints and the devil loves it, he will make you even more comfortable so you can sleep more. This is the greatest sin of doing nothing. Go and tell others what the Lord has done for you.

Any time the Bridegroom will come, will he find you asleep, is your candle burning! Do you still have enough oil in your lamps? Remember the story of the ten virgins. Five were wise and the other five were foolish, two different types of people in the church. One is alive hungry for God, growing in the Lord, worshipping him, serving him and watchful. The other is in the church but sleeping. Living a careless life, a lose type of life, these were the procrastinators, they are very excited and busy when it comes to worldly things but very lazy and spiritually asleep.

They live under the light of the gospel and they know the dangers of hell and they really wants to go to heaven, yet they live a very careless lifestyle. Some are dull, sluggish and slothful in the spirit. They hear strong sermons but they are asleep. They don't talk of the Lord or spiritual things in their daily life. How do you live at home? Is the Lord center of your home? Are you constantly looking to him like the five wise virgins? Is your heart full of him? Are you living near to the cross or to the world? If you live near to the world you will speak of the world, but do you live near to the cross? Then do you speak things of Jesus?

Many are just loitering in God's vineyard, they are just spectators. If you think that hell is behind you and the devil is behind you looking to devour you, how can you sleep? May be the devil is saying you can sleep baby, you are mine.

When you are driving on a straight and a broad it can make you sleepy. So easy roads can make you sleepy. There is a saying, easy roads makes sleepy travelers. May be you are taking the broad road of comfort, which gives much satisfaction to the flesh but sleepy in the spirit. If the roads are narrow and winding you cannot go to sleep. Jesus said to take the narrow road which leads to life.

When everything is going well and pleasant many fall into sleep. Christians cannot sleep the devil and his demons like hungry lions waiting on the road; they will watch out and be sober. Christians cannot sleep if he is waging war with the world, the devil and the flesh, soldiers are alert. But for many life is good, everything is going smooth sailing but they are at the brink of hell as they are fast asleep. Puritan Ralph Erskine said, "I like a roaring devil better than a sleeping devil." There is no temptation half so dangerous as not being tempted.

How can you sleep if you meditate on heavenly things? There are heavenly gates wide open waiting for you. The angels in heaven are getting excited waiting for that moment you will leave this earth, there is a mansion waiting for you, there is a golden crown waiting for you and how can

you sleep when you think of these things. You should be excited alive to God. A crown is given not for spectators or loiterers but for those who took part in the race not for those who slept in the church. Remember Samson lost his hair of strength while sleeping on the lap of carnal security. There is a perishing world around us and sleeping is cruel and eternity is so near at hand, it is only a foolish, mad man will sleep. Oh! God wake those who are sleeping with your thunder and lightening.

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