

Wake Up Sleepyhead!

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Thessalonians series #11

June 25, 2023

PreSermon Comments

- I've loved serving this church for 8.5 years. Initial plan was for 10 years or so
- Covid and other challenges have taken a toll on my soul, in need of rest and change
 - Paid ministry for 16 years, time to reassess "earn a living" vs. "serve the church"
- Now, it's not about me, so let's get to the Bible

Introduction

Proverbs 4 ¹⁸ The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, shining brighter and brighter until midday.

- Morning people vs. non-morning people | *How Erin Lynn wakes up vs me*
- Light/morning/waking: super common biblical metaphor for right relationship with God
- Not just initial salvation (I saw the light), but walking with God

(big idea) Salvation is not just forgiveness of sin, but an invitation to live our lives fully awake

- Sin makes us sleepy, numb, dead men walking, sleepwalking
- Jesus came to wake us up in the best possible way

Being Alert

1 Thessalonians 5 ¹ Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you.

- Still talking about the end of the age, the pivot from scene 5 to 6
- "No need to write," but once again he's gonna write to them anyway

²For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

- Even more reason to read last week's "rapture verse" in light of **THE** Day of the Lord
- Jesus will return once, and it will be a surprise for many

³While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

- This "peace and security" calls to mind what Jesus said in Luke 17 about his return
 - Eating, drinking marrying, buying, selling, planting fields

John Eldridge Folks, there is no zombie apocalypse...[E]verything Jesus said about his sudden return to this planet assumes the element of surprise. Life is going to look and feel like business as usual until the moment the archangel blows the trumpet and God himself steps in to sweep away evil and start the joy!

Children of the Day

⁴But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

- We're gonna unpack this more, but: faith and hope and love again!
- Also a play on words from last week
 - Last week, "asleep" was a stand-in for dead. Like literally dead
 - But here, he's pivoted to use the word to mean *living in a dead way*
- Dead men and women walking around. They look awake but they're asleep.

Encourage Each Other

⁹For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

- "Who died for us" should trigger the whole gospel message/storyline: Jesus' life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return
- Awake or asleep - Paul pivots back to alive or dead

(big idea) Salvation is not just forgiveness of sin, but an invitation to live our lives fully awake

I. It's really easy to numbly sleepwalk through life

- In this passage, Paul uses darkness/nighttime language, and drunk language
 - Drunk: numb, fuzzed out, not sharp, not alert
- The Bible speaks positively of wine/alcohol in many places
 - (Paul) **1 Timothy 5** use wine for your stomach | *Good Numbing*
 - **Prov 31** give strong drink to one who is perishing | *Good Numbing*
 - **Psalm 104** God gave wine to make the hearts of men glad
- God created a world of incredible pleasure! Food, drink, music, art, sex
 - If your picture of God is that he anti-pleasure or fun, you're not the Bible
 - God created pleasure to a) show us what he's like, and b) to draw us to him

Pleasure is good! But in this fallen world, something tragic happens...

1. The broken world has a lot of pain. So we reach for pain relief.
 - a. It could be alcohol, but so many other things. TV, sex, shoes, food.
2. And then we terminate on the pleasure itself instead of going to the giver
3. Tragic irony: the same pleasures that we turn to to numb the pain, also numb us to divine love. That is what it means to get "drunk at night." To be numb to God's love.

4. In our world, it's easier than ever to be "drunk" or "asleep" or "numb"
 - a. The apps that we use every day have figured out our brain chemistry
 - b. But we like it. Life is too hard. The world is too scary. So we numb.

Remember, the good news is that Jesus came to wake us up. Nobody was more awake than Jesus.

- Not like my dad when I was a teenager :-)

II. Living sober is active work

- When many of us think "sobriety" we think of "not drinking." But anybody who has had to walk through a pathway into sobriety knows that it's a lot, lot more than that
- In the same way, this spiritual sobriety is active, not just avoiding a bad behavior

Seth Haines The opposite of drunkenness is not just not drinking. The opposite of drunkness, true sobriety, is being awake to the divine love of God and the world around you.

Living Sober

⁶So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us **keep awake** and be sober...⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

- Active cultivation of faith: do I trust God?
- Active cultivation of love for God and others: what do I potentially love more than God?
- Active cultivation of hope: what's the worst that could happen, death?

For those of you who have been saved, this alert/alive life is not just "not doing bad things"

- *For some of you, it's sins of omission*

III. Growing together

1 Thessalonians 5 ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

- The point of our gathering(s) is to do this: encourage and build each other up
- Some people get mad about church "getting in your business"
 - Maybe we need to do a better job in our communication.
 - Less "stop doing bad things" | More "that's not who you are, you're of the light"

Conclusion

*Renewal Team project last year: regional idols of comfort and convenience

1. Are you awake?
2. Who does God want you to help wake up?