

I wonder sometimes if I am preaching too hard to you every week. When I listen to other teachings from other ministries and see what seems to be growing the church, it seems that giving constant warning and correction is not the popular mode to go. And yet, I feel certain that although it is not popular to let the Word direct our course, it is nevertheless right. I pray you will not be discouraged in the journey, but you will allow the Word to direct your life. Today I'm here to nudge you awake! It's because I love you that I keep poking you the way I do. May you receive it in love. And may it cause you to come fully awake!

## **HE WILL COME LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT...BUT NOT TO YOU**

### ***1 Thessalonians 5***

***1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While 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. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 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. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.***

The day of the Lord is not supposed to be a surprise to the church...Just like going into labor shouldn't be surprising to the lady who is nine months pregnant. You KNOW Jesus is going to come like a thief to those who are in darkness. But you are not in darkness.

Last week we talked about perspective, and how reality looks differently depending on your vantage point. To those in darkness, Jesus' appearing will be a surprise. To those in the light His appearing will be glorious but not a surprise.

### ***2 Corinthians 2***

***14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. 15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, 16 to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?***

The fragrance isn't changing. The issue is whether you are being saved or perishing. We understand this and it plays out in everyday life. If you are within the bounds of the law, you are aren't hindered by the law but protected. It's when you are breaking the law that you perceive it as a bondage. Did the law change? No. Your thoughts about the law determined by whether you are inside or outside of it, they are determined by perspective.

## **FALSE PEACE AND SAFETY**

***3 While 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.***

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The context before the coming of the Lord is this message of false peace and safety. A.W. Tozer said, "Our forefathers conceived the world as a battleground, not as a playground. Contemporary thought, however, is more likely to claim: "We are not here to fight. We are here to frolic". I think this is what I was trying to get at in the introduction.

***Jeremiah 6:13-14***

*For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, everyone dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.*

***Isaiah 57***

*21 There is no peace, says my God.*

***Ezekiel 13:2-4, 10***

*Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel...Then says the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing. Oh Israel, thy prophets are like foxes in the deserts...Even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace, and there was no peace.*

Jesus did not come to bring a superficial peace but a through-and-through reconciliation. I feel more assured the more I study this out! As ambassadors we do not come with a message of false peace. Rather, we come as ambassadors of the King, who will settle for nothing less but the white flag of surrender. He will not co-lead, rather He demands it all. He will conquer and occupy all... or none at all! This is our message. This is the call and commission.

***Matthew 10***

*34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

The reason it's not harsh is because the One who demands all loves most. The devil, who seemingly demands nothing, damns all.

**KEEP AWAKE**

***1 Thessalonians 5***

*5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night.*

This is the call to live spiritually alert lives. To live in the light we have been given. This is the call! We are not people of the night, rather the darkness is gone! We cannot go back into our hobbit-holes as if we have never seen the day. We are called to come out of darkness into His glorious light!!

***Matthew 24***

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*42 Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

The issue is not whether He has provided us light, but whether we loved the darkness.

**John 3**

*19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*

STAY awake. We have been awakened, but we can all go back to sleep. We can all decide we preferred darkness.

**1 Peter 2**

*20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”*

We can all get caught back up into the distractions of life. We can decide that we just want to relax, stop praying, stop pushing, stop contending. We can find a doctrine with swingsets and slides. We can pursue a theology we see-saws. But the our Jesus will remain the Captain of the Host. He’s not our playmate, He’s our commanding officer.

There is a strange doctrine emerging that seems to make void every parable of Jesus. It’s impossible to sin, fall asleep. It’s impossible to lose your first love. I think what makes me most uncomfortable about this new spirituality is that it is seemingly more spiritual than our Leader. If Jesus warns us to keep awake and to keep sober, then I will not form a doctrine that says sleeping and drunkenness are impossible. Let God be true and every man be a liar (Romans 3:4)

**Luke 12**

*35 “Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, 36 and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. 37 Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. 38 If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*

*41 Peter said, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?” 42 And the Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom his master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time? 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 44 Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. 45 But if that servant says to himself, ‘My master is*

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*delayed in coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. 47 And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. 48 But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.*

**Matthew 25**

*1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.*

Over and over again in the parables and discussions of Jesus concerning His second coming, He talks about watchfulness and staying awake. Over and over again He compels to stay ready.

**Matthew 26**

*40 And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

Watchfulness and prayer go hand in hand. Alertness and intercession are the same thing. To think we will be ready without a prayer life is absolute foolishness. He is our safeguard from temptation. You can try and fight temptation all day... and be unsuccessful! But if you pursue Jesus, temptation will flee!

**SOBER MINDED**

I don't recall ever addressing this directly, but the idea of sobriety in our conduct, and in our manner of life as believers is certainly all through the scriptures. In a day where having to define morality and sin, I guess I should not wonder about having to define sobriety.

**1 Thessalonians 5**

*5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 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.*

I don't know how much more plain this can be...don't be drunk. Don't be intoxicated.

**1 Peter 1**

*13 Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that*

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*will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

*1 Peter 4*

*7 The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.*

*1 Peter 5*

*8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

I was watching some sermons where the speaker was speaking jibberish and then encouraging the congregation to “take the Ghost” and then insert a “holy needle into your veins.” What in the world!? This is nonsense and foolishness.

We are children of the day! Let’s not go back to what we came out of to be enslaved all over again. If you got saved from sensuality, then stay free! If you got delivered from drugs and alcohol, stay free! Don’t go back. Don’t turn back. Don’t go back to sleep. Stay awake. Live alert. Build a prayer life!