

Wake o sleeper Ephesians 5:6-21 13th Sunday after Pentecost Aug 19, 2018

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you. Ephesians 5:14

Awake, o sleeper

Dear friends in Christ, awake o sleeper. Hard to think of a better title for a sermon, one with a more immediate application. Stay awake for the sermon. But as much fun as it would be to speak of the evils of taking a nap during the sermon, that isn't what the text is talking about directly.

Awake, o sleeper, and rise from the dead. Do we see a promise of resurrection here. That death is no more than sleep to our God, that all are alive in him, that we will rise bodily when he calls us on the last day, just as Christ rose on the third day. Again, all true. But not what Paul is talking about today.

Paul tells us to walk as children of light. He tells us to take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness. That judgment is coming on sons of disobedience and neither we nor our works should be found among them. Walk as the wise, making use of the times, for the days are evil. Words that we can all agree with. But words that we can all agree with and pass over. So Paul tells us to Awake, O Sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine in you.

How easy it is to hear the comfortable words of the sermon and go to sleep. How easy to hear Jesus loves me and say I know this and ignore whatever else is said. Driving in the sun, with the radio on a mostly empty road during the warm afternoon, how easy to close my eyes. But that would be deadly. At that point sleep is death. Awake O sleeper.

And how much the world is dead in sin. How much it chases after Gods of wealth and sex and security. And how easy it is to say we have no part if we don't cheat our business partners on our taxes, if we say its just a racy joke or a little internet porn but we our marriage is strong, if we look to our work for our security in retirement but we don't really not look to God. How easy to just close our eyes to rest in the transitory joys of the world. How much we feel like we are doing good because we take only half a slice instead of skipping desert. And that probably works fine for desert, but not so good for the evils of the world. Awake, o sleeper.

Christ will shine in you. We are light. Walk as the wise. Make the most of every opportunity, for the days are evil.

We were talking in bible study Thursday about when have we failed to reflect Christ because of fear. At work, where even when we talk at lunch, I want people to think I am focused on work, not on religion. As a customer in the restaurant, where I want to make sure I can eat at peace. And suddenly I am putting my reputation or my stomach before Christ. I don't need to say everything or everything right, but how do I get through 3 years of a job without mentioning Christ to anyone. How can I eat each week at the same restaurant and never share Christ. How can I decide my cashier will have to see Christ somewhere else. Awake o sleeper.

It is hard. So encourage each other to witness Christ. Awake o sleeper is an early christian hymn. Sing songs and hymns and spiritual songs. Lift up Christ before each other, and lift him up before the world. The sleep of the world is death in sins. Awake o sleeper, and arise from the dead. And Christ will shine in you.