

Before the THRONES

Inner Court Ministries

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AWAKE!

by Mark D. Spencer

“For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep...” (Acts 13.36) And, **“For it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”** (Ephesians 5.14)

Which of these scriptures best describes your spiritual life right now? Are you actively pursuing the things of God’s Kingdom and of His Spirit? Or are you asleep, living out your life in a spiritual stupor, unaware of the moving of God in view of today’s events?

Much of today’s Church is asleep to the purpose and counsel of her Lord. It is as if we have become spiritually drugged, long gone into a deep stupor that has effectively neutralized our moral determination and spiritual initiative. The Church is called to be salt and light. **“You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its savor, with what shall it be salted? It is thereafter good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven.”** (Matthew 5.13-16) Because of this calling to be salt and light, the Church is in effect, society’s conscience. The standard we raise is to be a plum line of God’s intent for life and living in general—A mirror of practical living and a demonstration of the Kingdom of God. The Church is to be a living example, a microcosm of “heaven on earth.” If we as the Church are found asleep, society has no effective deterrent from decay and ultimate destruction. Because the Church is asleep in many quarters, society has become void of any conscience. Without a living demonstration of the Kingdom, old values are soon forgotten. Soon the downward spiral of man’s depravity begins to infect all of life. We begin to hold a dulled view of reality as we yield to the all-consuming drive to surround ourselves with comfort and ease. We begin to live only for the present, oblivious to our present spiritual and moral responsibilities as well as to our ultimate future judgment.

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“For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep...” (Acts 13.36). David served God’s purpose, not his own. David pursued the will and counsel and purpose of God before his own. This is the reason the Lord’s own testimony concerning David is, **“...I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, who shall fulfill all My will.”** (Acts 13.22).

Our society will never awaken to the things of God's Spirit and Kingdom, unless we, the Church, are first awake and sensitive to them. King David actively pursued God's will and purpose. His heart was after God's heart. He desired all the Lord desired. His life was set upon the purposes and plan of God's kingdom. David's reason for living was to fulfill his God's plan and to establish His kingdom. The thing that separated David from other men was his inner conviction and determination. David was full of failings yet this attitude of the heart continually made him victorious. **"...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite heart, and trembles at My word."** (Isaiah 66.2) David, when confronted by the prophet Nathan over his sin, trembled at God's word, and broke in repentance. (2 Samuel 12.1-13) Do we remain so dulled to sin that when it is brought to the light it has no effect upon us? Or do we like David, with no argument, no self defense, openly acknowledge our sin? This is the man that is awake and alert to the things of God. This man is not a man that is without sin, but one that moves quickly to stay right with his God once sin has been discovered and brought to the light.

We find Jesus laboring in prayer at Gethsemane and His disciples fast asleep. **"And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was, at it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow."** (Luke 22.44-45) The contrast is clearly seen in this passage of scripture. One is laboring in prayer, serving God's

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purpose in His own generation, while the others are found asleep, unaware of the tremendous spiritual forces and heavenly battle that is raging all around them. Jesus' labor in such intensive prayer is a foretaste of His current heavenly ministry. **"But this man, because He continues ever, has an unchangeable**

priesthood. Wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." (Hebrews 7.24-25) Jesus tirelessly makes intercession for us. Even today, He continues to serve God's purpose, never sleeping, ever laboring, ever in intercession for His people.

Our Lord's response to His disciples would be well heeded today, **"Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."** (Luke 22.26) As we arise from our sleep and enter into prayer with our Lord, He gives us light. **"For it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."** (Ephesians 5.14) As we begin to walk in the light as He is in the light, we find ourselves being continually cleansed and led in the way we should go. (1 John 1.7) We begin to find ourselves serving God's purpose in our generation. Temptations loosen their grip upon us. We have entered into prayer, not entered into temptation.

Jesus said, **"I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night comes, when no man can work."** (John 9.4) David **"served God's purpose in his own generation."** (Acts 13.36) Now is the time for us to work. Now is the time to labor. Now is the time to press into the Kingdom! There is still light. There are still a myriad of opportunities before us. We must work the works of Him who has sent us, while it is still day, for the night is coming and our labors will cease.

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There will be plenty of time to sleep and rest once Jesus returns. The harvest is ripening now and the laborers are few. **“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of Harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.’”** (Matthew 9.37-38) Now is the time for us to work and not sleep. Now is the time for us to lift up our eyes and gaze upon There will be plenty of time to sleep and rest once a harvest that is ripening worldwide. Will it be lost? Or will we ‘respond? When a harvest begins in the natural realm, all farm hands labor from before the sun rises until far into the night. Every other activity is curtailed until the harvest has been safely gathered.

Often sleep is at a premium while the precious harvest is being gathered. Normal life is suspended while full attention is given to the gathering of the harvest. The harvest is of first and foremost importance. Once the harvest has been gathered there will be time enough for rest and sleep. **“For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep...”** After David had served the purpose of God he fell asleep.

Our pursuit of personal happiness at the expense of spiritual values has produced a deep spiritual slumber.

Now is the time to serve God’s purpose. Now is the time to labor. Now is time to awake and be active, yet how many are asleep? **“As a door turns upon its hinges, so the sluggard turns upon his bed.”** (Proverbs 26.14) **“He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.”** (Proverbs

20.13) Will we be found as wise sons, laboring while it is harvest, or will we be found sleeping and be disgraced? **“He that wins souls is wise.”** (Proverbs 11.30)

“Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty; open your eyes, and you shall be satisfied with bread.” (Proverbs 20.13) We have come to love sleep. We have come to enjoy our own personal comforts and pleasures and we have come to spiritual poverty. We have pursued our own interests and become bankrupt. **“He gave them their requests, but sent leanness to their souls.”** (Psalm 106.15) Our pursuit of personal happiness at the expense of spiritual values has produced a deep spiritual slumber. This slumber has in turn caused us to forsake our spiritual inheritance for a few temporal babbles.

“For it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: Wake up O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.” (Ephesians 5.14) Only the touch of Jesus can awaken a slumbering Church, but it is our responsibility to tune our spiritual hearing to the wake up call. The call has long since gone out, but it is still not too late to respond!

Time yet remains for us to become wise sons and to serve God’s purpose in our own generation.

A wake!

STANDING ✂ IN THE GAP

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salutes you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers...” (Colossians 4.12)

Prayer is the work of the ministry! It is in prayer that we discover the heart of God. As we labor in prayer, we team up with the Lord of the Harvest, **“pray ye the Lord of the harvest...”** Ministry is the trophy that is merely collected after you have prayed. All genuine outreach is birthed in prayer. True conversions are the prize of true intercession.

Most every evangelical, charismatic, or third-wave Christian would balk against the thought that we gain acceptance in heaven by our works. **“The just shall live by faith!”** And yet our lifestyles betray the words of our lips and the confessions of our creeds. We are, in fact, a people given to the importance of our own works.

Prayer is often nothing more than an after thought, something we do in order to get a spiritual or religious stamp of approval upon that which we have already determined we want to do. No wonder much of our Christian service ends in frustration, anger, and “spiritual burnout”.

We must labor with God, before we can labor for God. Jesus’ labor was in prayer. Our labor must be found in prayer as well. As we learn to labor with Jesus in prayer, we will also begin to reap as He reaps! ‘Lord Jesus, Lord of the Harvest, teach us to labor in prayer with you.’

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