

# Now is the Time to Wake Up

3/6/2005 (AM) - Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

Ro 13:11 *And that, knowing the time, that now [it is] high time to awake out of sleep: for now [is] our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

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The words here are spoken to believers regarding their duties in the world. I would like to consider this subject in three areas: (1) The Realm of the Christian's Sleep, (2) The Rationale for the Christian's Rising out of Sleep, and (3) The Reason the Christian Should Awake.

## I. The Realm of the Christian's Sleep

First, we as believers are asleep in our religion. We do not take our religion seriously. We feel that we have trusted the Lord, so we have nothing to worry about and nothing to do. We have heard about grace so much that we forget about faith and works, those works into which the Lord brought us when he saved our souls.

In this state of sleep as believers we are not in tune with the things of God, so we think it only regular for people to go about sinning, and we say nothing about it. Believers sometimes get so backslidden that they enjoy and join in the sins of the world. Then they make excuses for these sins as if these excuses will excuse them from the judgment of God.

Also in this sleep, believers are indifferent to the world and dress like the world, talk like the world, participate with the world in many worldly things, listen to the world's music, and never give it a second thought. In sleep the thoughts and movements of a person are involuntary. If we do not work at being different from the world, we will certainly be conformed to it. But the Lord told us through Paul that we should be transformed by the

renewing of our mind to present out bodies a living sacrifice unto God.

In the state of sleep, the believer does not want to restore a brother or sister who has fallen away from his steadfastness. To restore a brother takes much spirituality, mental exercise, love and work. The Christian who is asleep does not want to work.

Second, the sleeping Christian is one who is not sensitive to those passing events around them. Even the preaching of the word of God is counted to have very little value. Then when we go to church in this frame of mind, we can expect to experience the spiritual blessings of God. Many believers have lost their desire to see souls saved and to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, Jesus Christ. They have no emotion in the house of God, and they leave the house of God sometimes in a worse condition than when they come, because they are insensitive to God's working in the midst of his people.

Sometimes even preachers and Sunday School teachers will come to the house of God and preach their messages and teach their lessons with little or no emotion or excitement about what God is saying to his people. The subject is dull to them, so it is dull to their hearers. There is an excitement about the word of God, and sometimes it worries me that people do not get excited about it and seem to have a very casual entertainment of it.

Is there any wonder that the worldly believers are unhappy? Is there any wonder the Christians worry so much and seem to be unhappy? Many are engulfed with the cares of the world, and these cares have swallowed up their love for the Lord and their zeal to do the Lord's work.

Thirdly, the sleeping Christian has left his prayer closet. This is a very good way to be asleep as a believer. Just leave your praying and care not whether God is working in your life. Ask others to pray for you, but never pray for others. Seek to pray only when you want

something to consume upon your lust. This will certainly put any Christian to sleep.

Prayer life is a good life. It is the power supply for our Christian lives. Prayer keeps us in tune with Heaven and with God. Do you feel that it is foolish to pray? Never feel as a believer that praying is to no avail. Remember what James said in Jas 5:16 *Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

Prayer will change things in your life so much that you will seem to be a different person. Prayer for others is as good for you as it is for the person for whom you are praying. Let's not sleep and refrain from praying. This is our power source from Heaven.

If we all would determine to pray and would carry out that determination, it is hard to know what God would do for our church. Make a commitment to pray. We need one another's prayers. If you do not pray regularly, begin to pray today on a consistent basis.

Paul tells us to "pray without ceasing." I am afraid that many believers have ceased praying, and this has made our church weak. With prayer, our interest in church attendance and serving the Lord will be keen, and each one of us will find ourselves more dedicated to the Lord and more excited about being God's children. Soon I plan to bring a message on the subject of prayer. Now we will go to the next point

## **II. The Rationale of the Christian's Rising Out of Sleep**

When the Lord saved us, he put light within us. Let's read 2Co 4:6 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* If we do not open our eyes to that glory of God, the light of our soul, then we as Christians asleep. If we do not pay attention to

the light that God has put within us, then we are living in darkness even as believers.

The day is too busy to sleep. There is too much to do for the Lord for us to sleep our Christian lives away. But many are asleep today, not receiving their light from Heaven, not enjoying the light of God's countenance. Every morning we wake up from our physical sleep to take command of the day. Many of us will go to bed late and get up early in order to keep working for the world. We know the need of the hour. We know how important the task is to keep working every day for our families and our retirement. The business of the day is important.

But there is no business more important than the Lord's work. This business calls us each day to awake out of sleep and be busy for the Lord. This is the day of salvation, so we need to awake to it and get busy. Can you hear God's alarm clock? Can you see the brightness of Heaven shining in your eyes as a believer? Can you see his grace shining in your heart? Can you feel the warmth of his wonderful grace warming your heart and making you feel safe? If so, then don't go to sleep. Awake out of sleep and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is so much to do! You may have a brother to approach to ask forgiveness or to say "I'm sorry." If your brothers hears you, you have gained your brother. Don't let that separation remain between you and your brother.

Parents, there is so much to do regarding our children and grandchildren. They need to be taught the word of God as the schools are teaching them so much about evolution and even wrong history. They leave out the stories of the beginning and the stories about the universal flood and about people like Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Daniel. We have a lot to do. Let's awake out of sleep and get busy doing it.

We must teaching our children and grandchildren that they are sinners and need a Savior

and that Jesus is that Savior. We need to pray for our children and with our children and grandchildren. They must be born again, and they need to be reminded to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. One day our children and grandchildren will be grown and go out on their own into the world. When that happens, will we be satisfied that we have done our best to give them what they need to face the wickedness of the world and the temptations of life? We are not to leave this work to the schools or the friends of our children. We are to teach them ourselves. Let's notice Deut. 6:6 *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

Before we old folks all die off and leave our children here, let us be very specific with them about the work of God; let us set an example of faithfulness; let us be faithful to our Lord and to our children and grandchildren to leave them a legacy of honor. It is high time to awake out of sleep!

Also, we need to awake to a field of battle. We are in a war against the principalities and powers in high places. We are soldiers for our Savior. Our enemies are awake and preparing for the offensive. They are in a war to bring destruction to Christianity. They have been working to change laws against our faith. They are changing the definition of Christianity and making it an obnoxious thing in the minds of our youth. They are definitely not asleep. If we go to sleep, they will take over; they will have their way, and we will be the underdog. If that happens, it will be our fault for being asleep. We should talk about our faith, exercise our faith, and give our faith to others through our witness. The apostle John says that many antichrists have gone out into the world, and they have covered the entire earth. They are on

every corner and crevice of the earth. They have a heart of darkness and no light. We are the light of the world. If we asleep, the world cannot see the light. Jesus says that we are not to light our candle and put it under a bushel but to put it on a candlestick that others may see. Luke says it like this in Lu 8:16 *No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth [it] under a bed; but setteth [it] on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.*

While we are asleep, the world is sowing wickedness everywhere. While we are asleep tares are being sown everywhere. The tares choke our Christian witness and influence if we are not aware of them. Yes, the tares and the wheat must grow together, but the wheat must be stronger and thwart the growth of the tares. The way we do this is to let our light shine among men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

With the snares of the Devil all around us, we must be fully awake to see them and to caution our children and our brothers and sisters in Christ about them. We are not ignorant of his devices, but we need not sleep to take them for granted.

We are to put on the armor of God and be prepared for battle, not a battle of fists and bombs and guns, but a battle against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places.

Notice, too, that many wonderful people are perishing. If we are not awake with our faithfulness and our witness, people around us will go down to hell without knowing of the grace of God. Hell is no joke, and Heaven is wonderful. These are two truths that we need to let the world know about. If Hell is a myth, then we can be lazy and fall asleep. But if Hell is real, then we must warn people of its reality and the impending danger of Hell. If Heaven is a myth, then we have no reason to be awake; but if Heaven is real, then we must be awake

to that fact and be sure to let others know about it. It is such a wonderful place. It is so real! Jesus promised that we would go there if we repent of our sins and believe in him and his death, burial and resurrection.

Remember when you fled from the wrath to come? How serious was that? How wonderfully gracious was it when the Lord lifted you up and put you on a solid rock? Was it wonderful enough that you desire to share that experience with someone else? If there is one sinner in your world, it should be enough to awake you out of sleep. It should be enough to make you see that the world needs our Christian witness. Without a Christian witness, we have a broken democracy. Without a Christian witness, we have no freedom. But mainly, without a Christian witness, people die and go to Hell.

Our forefathers were awake to the need of the sinner; can we not be aware? Can we sleep in our generation against such wickedness as the world dishes out? Can we wane in our faithfulness to our God? No! We must now be faithful, and we must awake out of our sleep lest we have a sinner's blood on our hands. Isa 62:6 says, *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, [which] shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence,* Now let's look at Eze 3:18 *When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked [man] shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.* Paul said in Rom. 9:2 *That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:*

How long have you been asleep? Don't you think it is time to awake? It is time for you to get up, look around, and see the need. You may be stunned at your first awakening, because

things are worse than you think. Remember, the night is coming when no man can work. We must work while it is day, while the sun is up, while the day is whiling away. This is the rationale for our awaking out of sleep.

### **III. The Reason We Should Awake**

Now let's read the last part of Romans 13:11 – *for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed*. What better reason to awake out of sleep than to awake to the enriching fact that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Each day we live brings us closer to the prospect of leaving this wicked world and being with our Lord. When you awake out of your sleep, you will feel like a mourning and wandering pilgrim in this world. You will look to Heaven and its grand prospect. Remember Lu 21:28 *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh*.

We are at the dawning of a new day when Jesus Christ will be King, when the earth will be made righteous and where we will live with him for 1,000 years. Wake up and look around you, see the signs of the times, and look up, for your redemption draweth nigh. It won't be long until we will be with the Lord.

Every day, every week, every years we are a little closer to that day. We do not have to worry about that place where lost sinners dwell when they leave this life. We do not have to worry about an eternal place of suffering. We do not have to worry about the fires that burn forever where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Awake to the reality of a real Heaven where our sorrows will be over and our tears will be no more.

Oh, but if you can stay asleep, I wonder about your soul. Can you awake out of sleep? Some are asleep forever. They can't awake out of sleep, because they have not the life to

awake with. They are dead in their sins and trespasses. They need a miracle from heaven; and with the power of the Gospel, they can arise from the dead and live in the light as we do. Pray that God will open someone's heart today. Awake out of sleep, Oh Christian. Pray that God will save. Awake out of sleep and get excited about what God can do to an old dirty heart just as he did for you.

Your body will have plenty of time to sleep when it sleeps in Jesus, when you are gone from this old body and are in the presence of the Lord. You will have an eternity to rest at his feet and enjoy the pleasures of Heaven. Now is the time for us to awake out of sleep. Wake up and see the urgency of the day. We need you. The Lord's work must go on. Awake out sleep, Oh Christian.

Awake out of sleep, Oh Christian  
And look around you today.  
See the need of this urgent hour;  
And show some sinner the way.

Pray to the God of Heaven  
To wake you from your sleep.  
And give you a tiny glimpse  
And make your heart to weep.

May his hand be faithful to guide us  
To open our eyes to the fray  
And get involved in the battle  
To win the war today.

Look at the wonderful prospect  
Of the inheritance we have in the sky.  
And tell everyone that Jesus  
Will come to this earth by and by.

Mourn of your neighbor's condition,  
Lost in sins and undone.  
Tell him of Jesus' salvation  
And how the victory is won.

Awake out of sleep, Oh Christian;  
Keep your eyes on the Lord.  
Spend your time in the prayer room  
And the reading of God's precious word.

It's a wonderful day, sleeping Christian.  
It's a day to rest in His love.  
Awake and work in his business  
And expect a blessing above.