

WAKEY, WAKEY, RISE AND SHINE

Suzanne Hatch 2/5/2010

A man and his wife were having some problems at home and were giving each other the silent treatment. The next week, the man realized that he would need his wife to wake him at 5:00 AM for an early morning business flight to Chicago. Not wanting to be the first to break the silence (AND LOSE), he wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me at 5:00 AM." The next morning the man woke up, only to discover it was 9:00 AM and that he had missed his flight. Furious, he was about to go and see why his wife hadn't woken him when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed. The paper said, "It is 5:00 AM. Wake up."

What a horrible thing it would be for us to wake up one morning and discover that we have missed it.

When I was talking to God about what to preach on today He really impressed upon me to address the whole area of sleepiness – the spiritual kind!

So we're going to look today at what causes us to lose our alertness and how we get it back!

God is doing something, here in our church, but more widely than that. We've been hearing from different people lately that God is about to do something big in Blenheim – a lot of people from churches around town are saying the same thing. I don't want to miss what God is doing because I am not ready. If you're running late to catch a flight, the difference between being ready and almost ready is missing that flight. Saying to the airport staff "But I was nearly here on time" is not going to help you get on that flight – it is too late.

My Utmost for His Highest, April 18:

"God called unto him and he said, Here am I" Exodus 3:4

When God speaks, many of us are like men in a fog, we give no answer. Moses' reply revealed that he was somewhere. Readiness means a right relationship to God and a knowledge of where we are at present. We are so busy telling God where we would like to go. The man or woman who is ready for God and His work is the one who carries off the prize when the summons comes. We wait with the idea of some great opportunity, something sensational, and when it comes we are quick to cry – "Here am I." Whenever Jesus Christ is in the ascendant, we are there, but we are not ready for an obscure duty.

Readiness for God means that we are ready to do the tiniest little thing or the great big thing, it makes no difference. We have no choice in what we want to do, whatever God's programme may be we are there, ready. When

any duty presents itself we hear God's voice as Our Lord heard His Father's voice, and we are ready for it with all the alertness of our love for Him. Jesus Christ expects to do with us as His Father did with Him. He can put us where He likes, in pleasant duties or in mean duties, because the union is that of the Father and Himself. "That they may be one, even as We are one."

Be ready for the sudden surprise visits of God. A ready person never needs to get ready. Think of the time we waste trying to get ready when God has called! The burning bush is a symbol of everything that surrounds the ready soul; it is ablaze with the presence of God.

Tom has been preaching about the Holy Spirit over the past few weeks. What has really been on his heart is that we need to learn how to 'host' the Holy Spirit. In order for us to be able to host Him we need to recognize Him and to recognize Him we need to be alert, not sleeping.

Rom 13:11-12. And do this understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over, the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.

Eph 5:8-14. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴ 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 shine on you." (I wonder if this verse is where the saying "wakey, wakey, rise and shine" comes from!)

1 Thess 5:6-7. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

In the natural order of things, we sleep during the night and are awake during the day – unless you're lucky enough to be a shift worker. But it's not easy is it, being awake at night and asleep during the day?

Isn't it interesting that these three passages link being awake, or alert, to day and light, and being asleep to night or darkness? They also link slumber to deeds of darkness. Are we then, more prone to slipping into those things when we are spiritually sleepy? These verses would indicate that we are. All the more reason to be alert!

Mark 14:32-42 - Gethsemane

They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”³³ He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled.³⁴ “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.”

³⁵ Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him.³⁶ “*Abba*,^{1a} Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

³⁷ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?³⁸ Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

³⁹ Once more he went away and prayed the same thing.⁴⁰ When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

⁴¹ Returning the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.⁴² Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

I want to look a bit deeper at verse 38 – *watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.*

It’s thought that Jesus wasn’t talking about temptation in a general sense, but that they could be tempted to run, or fight (as Peter went on to do when he chopped the guards ear off!), or be totally broken by what was about to happen and get stuck in despair and hopelessness. Jesus knew that what they were about to face was going to be a huge test and to get through it they needed to be very alert and connected to God.

The meaning of the word ‘watch’ in this passage is ‘gregorette’. It actually describes a spiritual posture, like that of a leopard lying in wait. The opposite of this word means spiritual sleepiness or laziness. It can be anything that moves our focus from God’s strength to our own.

When I was researching this topic the other day I came across a scale to measure levels of consciousness in a comatose person. It is quite amazing to look at and compare it with our spiritual lives.

The article defines a normal state of consciousness as either the state of awareness or alertness that most of us function at when not asleep, OR, one of the stages of normal sleep that a person can easily be awakened from.

Abnormal states of consciousness can be seen in Grady Coma Scale:

Grady Coma Scale

Grade	State of awareness	Responds appropriately to:		
		Calling name	Light pain	Deep pain
I	Confused, drowsy, lethargic, indifferent and/or uncooperative; does not lapse into sleep when left undisturbed	Yes	Yes	Yes
II	Stuporous; may be disoriented to time, place, and person; will lapse into sleep when not disturbed; or belligerent and uncooperative	No	Yes	Yes
III	Deep stupor; requires strong pain to evoke movement	No	No	Yes
IV	Exhibits <i>decorticate</i> or <i>decerebrate</i> posturing to a deep pain stimulus (rigidity, clenched fists etc)	No	No	No
V	Does not respond to any stimuli; flaccid (limp)	No	No	No

What would these states look like if we called this a Spiritual Coma Scale?

Spiritual Coma Scale

Grade	State of awareness	Responds appropriately to:		
		Calling name	Light pain	Deep pain
I	Confused, unmotivated, indifferent, difficulty following commands, doesn't lapse into sleep (deeds of darkness) when left undisturbed. (see notes below (1))	Yes	Yes	Yes
II	Needs continuous prodding, no direction, will lapse into 'deeds of darkness' when not disturbed, belligerent and uncooperative (2)	No	Yes	Yes
III	Almost unresponsive to God and others, but will respond to a piece of 4x2 (3)	No	No	Yes
IV	Rigid, hard-hearted, has shut God out, does not respond well to being challenged (4)	No	No	No

		Responds appropriately to:		
V	Limp, lifeless, totally unresponsive to God and others (5)	No	No	No

1. This person is in a bit of trouble spiritually, has probably just become a bit complacent but doesn't go off the rails and just needs to plug into God more.
2. Has perhaps lost some hope or direction and is finding comfort in worldly ways, maybe has a foot in both camps. Still loves God though and will eventually respond to Him.
3. Has pretty much stopped hearing from God, but will recognize Him when He pulls out the big guns! Needs a big wake up call.
4. Many have become very discouraged in their walk with God and find it easier not to try than to be disappointed again. May have shut God out so they can enjoy sin without feeling guilt.
5. Repentance, repentance, repentance!

The level of consciousness determines how functional or dysfunctional a person is. So it's probably important for us to be aware of what causes abnormal levels of consciousness.

Possible causes:

1. **Blocked connection**

A group of neuronal connections in our brains modulate our levels of alertness and wakefulness. If a lesion is present and is large enough it could block one of these connections.

Is there anything blocking your connection with God that could be affecting your level of alertness?

2. **Toxic disturbances of the brain**

Toxins in our spiritual life could be busyness and stress. Are you taking time to rest? How do you 'detoxify'? Do you let your stress and worries out by talking to God or do you pretend they are not there and wait for them to become toxic?

3. **Poison ingestion**

We've all heard that saying 'you are what you eat'. Well you are also spiritually what you eat spiritually!

What are you feeding on? If it's poisonous do you really think it won't affect your relationship with God? You may not see it right away but over time your alertness will be dulled big time!

4. Infection

Unforgiveness and bitterness. These sit there like a wound and fester and grow and are toxic and poisonous to your walk with God.

5. Head injury/trauma

Sometimes when something happens to us that is beyond our ability to cope with we shut down. If we don't ask for help at that time, we are in danger of staying shut down.

I wonder if this had anything to do with why the disciples went to sleep at Gethsemane. The whole situation was way beyond their strength to deal with which was why Jesus told them to keep praying. It says 'they were sleeping because their eyes were heavy'. Their hearts were heavy too, too heavy perhaps to know how to respond except to lie down and go to sleep. It says 'They didn't know what to say to Him'. Were they in a state of confusion and disorientation?

If we are not fully awake and alert, we may miss out on something God is wanting to do. It goes further than that. We may be causing someone else to miss out too. It's not just about us. It's about those who God is wanting to minister to through us – at work, at church, at home, at school.

Sometimes when I come to church I get this strong sense that if I was to ask God for a prophetic word or picture, he will give me one. So I don't ask. I know – bad, bad, bad. But I know that if I ask and He gives me something, then I will have to step out in obedience. So I rationalize it by thinking if I don't ask then I won't be responsible. But God blew apart my rationalization a couple of Sunday nights ago, when I got that sense again, and I kind of half opened myself up to the possibility. That was all it took – bam – there it was! Oh no! Now I have to speak it out! So I did the internal battle thing for a while and then thought maybe I'd missed the opportunity. Then God pulled out the big stuff. He reminded me that when we stand before him on judgement day it's not our sin we will be held accountable for – Jesus has taken care of that. We will be accountable for what we have done with our lives, our gifts and our words. He went one step further to show me what it would be like if He was to show me the person that night that needed to hear the Word He gave me and how it would affect them if I did or didn't share it. I got the point by that stage... I didn't want to rob anybody and be held accountable for that.

I now believe that when I get that sense, it is God knocking on the door of my heart. I can no longer rationalize like I did before, because if I don't ask Him what He is saying, I am effectively saying "No God, I won't open the door, stay out!"

Rev 3:20. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. Do you want to dine with God? Well you need to open the door.

Mark 13:33-37. ³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁴ Its like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

³⁵“Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’

Again, the word ‘watch’ in this passage means that of a spiritual posture – like a leopard lying in wait.

Vs 34 – each has his assigned task. What is your assigned task when you meet here on a Sunday? When you go to work or school tomorrow? Are you listening for it? Will you be awake and alert enough to see or hear what God has assigned you?

I could give you five keys on how to wake up and become more alert – but really it just comes back to basics. How’s your bible reading? How’s your prayer life? How’s your church attendance? It’s the basic stuff that we let slip and then we wonder why our senses are dulled.

I’ll finish with this quote:

"If all the sleeping folks will wake up, and all the lukewarm folks will fire up, and all the disgruntled folks will sweeten up, and all the discouraged folks will cheer up, and all the depressed folks will look up, and all the estranged folks will make up, and all the gossiping folks will shut up, and all the dry bones will shake up, and all the true soldiers will stand up, and all the church members will pray up, and if the Savior of all will be lifted up . . . then we can have the greatest renewal this world has ever known." --*Richard Cardinal Cushing*

That’s a lot of ‘ups’ that need to happen!!! And all those ‘up’s involve us doing something.