

SLEEPERS



IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

Jonah 1:1-10 *Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.*

Verse 6 *So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.*

And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

Note **verse 6** - especially the words, "O sleeper?" The Lord used these words to speak to my heart about the apathy that many Christians have toward the mandate that God has given us of spreading the Gospel to this sin-sick world. Therefore, we have entitled this message:

"Sleepers in the House of God"

God uses the word sleep several times to speak of spiritual sleep or apathy towards His word.

Romans 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.*

Ephesians 5:14 - *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

1 Thessalonians 5:6 - *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

I see the possibility of several types of *spiritual sleeping* in our lives:

1. Sleep of Complacency (Indifference, lack of interest, unconcerned) - I sincerely hope and pray that no one reading this tract would be affected by this malady. Surely no one in your or our church would be unconcerned about the missions program of their church. Of course I am being facetious. Many Christians are totally unconcerned about the fate of the lost world. People without God's word and without God's message will die and spend eternity in hell - a hell prepared for the Devil and his angels. Are you concerned? What are you doing to reach the lost?

2. Sleep of contentment - (Satisfied with the status quo) - **Charles H. Spurgeon** said this, "*When is the Christian most liable to sleep? Is it not when his temporal circumstances are prosperous? Have you not found it so? When you had daily troubles to take to the throne of grace, were you not more wakeful than you are now? Easy roads make sleepy travelers.*"

Another dangerous time is when all goes pleasantly in spiritual matters. **Christian (Pilgrim's Progress by Bunyan)** *went not to sleep when lions were in the way, or when he was wading through the river; or when fighting with Apollyon, but when he had climbed half way up the Hill Difficulty, and came to a delightful arbour, he sat down, and forthwith fell*

*asleep, to his great sorrow and loss. The enchanted ground is a place of balmy breezes, laden with fragrant odours and soft influences, all tending to lull pilgrims to sleep. Remember Bunyan's description: "Then they came to an arbour, warm, and promising much refreshing to the weary pilgrims; for it was finely wrought above head, beautified with greens, and furnished with benches and settles. It had also in it a soft couch, where the weary might lean." The arbour was called the Slothful's Friend, and was made on purpose to allure, if it might be, some of the pilgrims to take up their rest there when weary." Depend upon it, it is in easy places that men shut their eyes and wander into the dreamy land of forgetfulness. Old Erskine wisely remarked, "I like a roaring devil better than a sleeping devil. There is no temptation half so dangerous as not being tempted. The distressed soul does not sleep; it is after we enter into peaceful confidence and full assurance that we are in danger of slumbering. The disciples fell asleep after they had seen Jesus transfigured on the mountain top. Take heed, joyous Christian, good frames are near neighbours to temptations: be as happy as you will, only be watchful". **"Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."**Luke 22:46*

3. Sleep of Cumbrance - (That which hinders) - Note that God was sending Jonah to preach the Gospel to a great city. That is the very definition of a Missionary - A sent one - and Jonah was certainly an example of a reluctant missionary. Yes, there was something that was hindering him. His very attitude was a cumbrance to him. It hindered him from doing the will of God in his life. God was going to have to do an "*attitude adjustment*" with Jonah.

Cumbrances in a Christian's life might include:

1. Rebellion.
2. Disobedience.
3. Dislike of personal inconvenience.

However, I think Christians today might be cumbered with something a little more subtle: I think that it might be materialism - 'If I didn't give to Missions I could spend that money on: a newer car; a newer house; a newer wardrobe; etc., etc. What is hindering you from giving to the mission's program of your church?

What did the heathen sailor say to Jonah? *Arise, ... Wake up! Wash the sleep out of your eyes. You know what is good for doing that?*

God's word - **The BIBLE**. Get into God's word - it will wake you up.

Matthew 28/Mark 16/Luke 24/John 20/ Acts1:8

We have our marching orders from the Lord.

John 4:35 - Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

How will you do that?

Arise! Wake up - the fields are white!

"Call upon thy God" - We must pray fervently, and God will answer our prayers and show us what we should do. Note that that old heathen sailor said, "*thy God.*" Is HE your GOD? "***If so be that God will think on us that we perish not.***" Without God and His word people perish.

Proverbs 29:18 "*Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*"

Romans 10:17 "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" "*What meanest thou o sleeper*" Don't get caught up in the materialism of this world while people are dying and going to hell without the word. Statistics tell us that there are over 6.6 billion people in this world. How can we reach them?

We can send or we can go; which will it be?

Acts 13:1-5

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [2] As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. [3] And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. [4] So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. [5] And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

Perhaps this little tract has stirred your heart? If so, get involved in missions giving. It will bring **JOY** to your life. For more information contact

