

Acts 20:1-12 Asleep in Church

Intro: Moment of truth: How many of you have ever fallen asleep in Church before?

A) **That's ok – so have I** – I actually heard of one guy who fell asleep during his own sermon. – Pretty Sad

B) Pastors Conference – Morning eat – two sessions
Lunch – afternoon session –

1) Too much eating – little activity – **Bible slipped**

C) Lady named Carol – Church In Oregon – every Sunday front row – nestle up to hubby – head on shoulder.

1) **Techniques – Shout – pond pulpit** –

One man who had a habit of nodding off once sermon started – ear trained – stand!

A) One Sunday Pastor – gave a reverse invitation
Don't care if burn in hell – let him Stand – shot up

B) Looked around – quickly said: **Pastor I don't know what we are voting for.... Only ones.....!**

C) This morning we are going to look at a guy who fell asleep in Church.

D) But I want you know – The focus is not on falling asleep in Church – happens to the best of us.

1) Rather **being asleep in Church** – there is a difference!

RDV.1-6 Setting

Verses •1–6 tell us that after the riot in Ephesus Paul crossed the Aegean Sea into Macedonia,

A) where he encouraged struggling churches, then continued down into

Greece, doing the same.

B)His intent was to sail from Corinth to Jerusalem with an offering for the beleaguered mother church.

C) However, when he learned of a plot to do away with him at sea, he eluded his foes by traveling back up through Macedonia & crossing the sea again into Troas

D)Troas was the city where several years before he had experienced the vision of the man of Macedonia 1) imploring him to “•Come over to Macedonia and help us. •” Acts 16

E)In Troas Paul had a reunion with his traveling companions mentioned in v.4 { Ministry team

1)Troas, adjacent to ancient Troy, was the peaceful setting for the remarkable service described in vs •7–12.

Read v.7-12

Picture the scene: The room is packed – the air is hot in middle east – which would make for a stuffy uncomfortable environment.

A)The word for “•lamps•” in v •8 is literally “•torches. •”

B)The reason there were many lights in the room where Paul was preaching was because **of the rumors** circulating throughout the community ...early Church.

Christians were accused of sexual promiscuity because they always talked about agape love.

A)And They were accused **of cannibalism** because they talked about **eating the body** of Jesus and **drinking His blood** in Communion.

B)For that reason when the early church met together, they lit their meeting halls very brightly in order that anyone walking by could clearly see what was

going on.

C)Have you ever noticed that Inherent within people is the tendency to think the worst....

The hostess of a party called the liquor store. “My name is Susie Smith,” she said. “Please send me a case of vodka as soon as possible.”

Unbeknownst to her, however, she had mistakenly dialed not the liquor store, but her Pastor.

“This is Pastor Jones,” said the voice on the other end.

To which Susie responded suspiciously – “Pastor Jones what are *you* doing at the liquor store?”

So often we impose whatever sin or temptation we struggle with upon others.

THE BIBLE SAYS Titus 1:15. “To the pure, all things are pure, but to the depraved, suspicion and rumors abound .

So the early Church lit lamps – avoid suspicion!

So we can easily imagine a stuffy, oppressive atmosphere in that third-story room.

A)Now it is also worth noting that – Sunday in that culture was a work day.

B)So it is safe to say – this man Eutychus like many others in the room had put in a full days work.

C)That particular night – Paul was a bit long winded the study went **on and on and on**

D)The tenses of the Greek verbs portray poor Eutychus as being gradually overcome despite his **struggle to remain awake.•**

1)The word translated “•sleep•” is the word from which we derive the English word *hypnosis*.

E)Finally the stifling room and the hypnotic flickering of the flames did their work. Eutychus’ eyes shut, he relaxed, **and out he went—**

1)headlong to the pavement three floors below.

Now I have to admit – despite this story having a happy ending I feel sorry for Eutychus, several reasons.

A)first, because he fell asleep on the Apostle Paul,

B)second, because he fell out of third story window

C)But mostly **because Dr. Luke was there** to record the whole thing. {Name Eutychus – synonymous ...sleep

1)Falling out a window { 2,000 yrs have past.

Seriously I have great sympathy for those who have trouble staying awake in church.

A)Some pp work so hard – this is the one time each week where they get to relax.

B)Falling asleep in church really does not concern me. It can happen for any number of reasons, both good and bad.

C)What concerns me are the thousands who go to a Church every Sunday – with their **bodies awake** but their **souls asleep!**

D)Sad reality today is there are Innumerable churchgoers who appear to be perfectly awake but are spiritually asleep.

That is what I want to address this morning – Why some pp who are physically awake AT Church – are actually spiritually asleep IN

Church.

A) Why does it happen & How to avoid it – and how to fix it!

B) Four Reasons why? & How to avoid it.

#1 Some people are asleep because *they have never been awake.*

A) I am familiar with that state because I was once in it myself.

B) Mom dragged me to church – boring!

I was simply present where others worshiped. I was on the outside. I was not alive to spiritual things.

A) A lot of pp today are in that place – go to Church – habit – duty – religious routine

B) Somehow God is going to reward them because they sat thru a hour church service.

1) But it is all boring – not really interested – and there is a reason for that.

1 Corinthians 2:14

“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

EXPLAIN

“•The safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.•”

C. S. Lewis Screwtape Letters

C) Have you ever been truly awake? Would you like to wake up? Born Again- Come alive Spiritually

1) Church will then become more alive than we ever imagined.

#2 Lack of Spiritual exercise.

A)Physically if you eat and eat and eat and never exercise – lethargic, unhealthy.

B)Even just walking – helpful – but if all you did was eat – lay on the couch – go to bed. {Lacking life!

C)The same thing is true spiritually – we need to not just eat – we need to exercise.

1)In Israel, there are two major bodies of water, both fed by the Jordan River:
2)the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

D)The Sea of Galilee is full of life, fish and other creatures abound.

E)The dead sea is completely the opposite - not even single-celled beings can survive in the Dead Sea. Why?

Because, although the Jordan River flows into both, it only flows out of the Sea of Galilee.

A)The dead sea has no outflow - Thus, the Dead Sea is devoid of life because there's input but no outflow.

B)You and I will either be like the Sea of Galilee, giving out the Word, and flowing with life as a result

1)or we will be like the Dead Sea, taking in but, because we don't give out, lacking spiritual life.

**C)The best way to stay awake – be full of life is to give out spiritually!
"Evangelize, or fossilize!" G. Laurie**

1)Make it your habit– what your learning – Share –

D)Start today: Drive home over lunch – Dad – let me tell you what Pastor Rob talked about today.

E) Tomorrow at work – Share – Blog – email a friend
YOU WILL BE HEALTHY – FULL OF LIFE!

#3 Sin, and compromise!

A) Some people have experienced an awakening and are truly Christians but have slipped into a spiritually comatose state.

B) Sometimes we hear of Christians who have fallen to unimaginable depths although they regularly attended church.

C) Though they seemed to listen, they were spiritually and morally asleep.

Samson is the preeminent example of this in Scripture. He began and ended in the faith but messed up big-time in between.

A) A series of compromises giving into his flesh – led him to a place of being completely desensitized to his spiritual condition.

B) It is easy to get the picture of Samson as an oversized Big brawny guy with no brains.

C) Careful study of his life – shows the opposite – clever – smart – remember his riddle?

1) No one could figure out – they had to force his wife into giving the answer – ploughed with my heifer.

But with Delilah easy to think – this guy is an idiot!

A) How many times does she have to lure him asleep – tie up or mess w/ hair – Samson Upon you – before he gets a clue!

B) He wasn't stupid – but sin desensitized him into not being aware of what he was doing – or the risk.

C) That is what sin and compromise does – they desensitize a person into thinking – immune.

1)Not a big deal -

Saddest part of the story of Samson is when he has his final doze on Delilah's lap which by the way was symbolic of his state.

“•He awoke from his sleep and thought, ‘•I’ll go out as before and shake myself free.•’ But he did not know that the Lord had left him•” (•Judges 16:20).

A)Sin desensitizes us, and we soon fall asleep, even in church.

B)Though externally everything may appear fine, sin makes us indifferent and bored with spiritual things.

C)Samson's life reminds us that -Sin left him Blind – Gouged - Bound – and grinding at the mill.

C)If your spiritual slumber is due to sin and compromise – the only way to recovery is to repent. do a U-turn,

1)confess – turn and follow – do first things again.

D)Never too late – Prodigal come home - allow the joy of Christ to refill us.

1)The joy of worship will then flood our souls.

#4 Full of other things!

A)Living in the age of overstimulation!

B)Studies have been done – that talk about when our brains are being fed from too many directions – causes stress, fatigue, and even depression.

According to David Meyer one of the leading experts on the study of multi-tasking in the world today. Article in New Yorker Magazine -

online

A) Meyer and a host of other researchers have proved again and again over the last twenty years, that multitasking, at least as our culture has come to know and love and institutionalize it, is a myth.

B) Myths of multitasking:

1) When you think you're doing two things at once, you're almost always just switching rapidly between them, leaking a little mental efficiency with every switch.

C) Meyer says that this is because, to put it simply, the **brain processes different kinds of information on a variety of separate "channels"**—a language channel, a visual channel, an auditory channel, and so on—each of which can process only one stream of information at a time. If you overburden a channel, the brain becomes inefficient and mistake-prone.

D) The classic example is driving while talking on a cell phone, We live in that age! – Always feeding our minds something!

A) Being Still and quiet – for some only happen when they sleep.

B) Some not even then – Stressful dreams – wake up weary – **Feel like only slept 10 minutes**

C) Problem of all the **over stimulation** is it affects our spiritual senses and appetite.

1) Like eating cookies before dinner – just not that into dinner – no matter how good it is.

Solution:

A) Do a techno fast – watch how your spiritual senses perk up!

B) From there **Modify your intake** – set aside times for quiet heart and

mind before the Lord.

C) Sit and be still – Hear him again!

1) Prepare your heart before coming here – Huge difference in your worship experience.

One last thing before we go! You know someone who has fallen asleep spiritually.

A) How can we play a part to revive them?

B) Perhaps you are working with someone like Eutychus who is spiritually drowsy, or even dead.

C) It might be your husband or your brother, your high-school son or your next-door neighbor.

1) This person, who was once on fire, is now like Eutychus. – Spiritually wiped out.

D) Notice what Paul did:

V10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him."

Those of you who are Bible students – this will remind you of another event 2 Kings 4

A) Shunammite Woman came to Elisha –. whenever he passed through the area, room her House

B) Elisha promised her that, although she was barren and her husband was old, she would bear a son.

1) Sure enough, she conceived and gave birth to a son.

C) A few years later, while working with his dad in the field, the child fell down, crying, **“My head, my head.”** 1) The father ordered servants to take the boy to his mother,

2) but, although she put his head on her lap and comforted him, he died.

D)The Shunammite woman then took her son’s body into a room to prepare him not for burial, but for a miracle.

1)“**Saddle up the donkey,**” she ordered her servants. “We’re going to get Elisha.”

Finding the prophet at Mount Carmel, she grabbed him by the feet and said, “You deceived me, Elisha. A)You allowed this son to come into our family, and now he’s dead.”

B)Elisha responded by ordering his servant, Gehazi, to take his staff and lay it upon the boy.

1)She wasn’t satisfied with that – and said – I am not going back until you come with me.

C)When Elisha arrived, however, he himself lay on the boy—mouth to mouth, eye to eye, hand to hand.

1)And as he did so, Elisha felt warmth in the boy’s body.

Here is what we learn I think from this story – there is a need for personal touch.

A)But here is the tendency —when someone has fallen off the third story because of his own spiritual lethargy or apathy, the tendency is for you and me to say,

B) “Let’s call the church and get the staff on the job,”

1)That is ok – we are willing to do that

C)Remind you – You are the Church – You already know that person – you have relationship.

1)Go to them – love them – embrace them.

D)It is his kindness that leads us to repentance.

1)**They don’t care how much know ... care.**

See that is the message of the gospel – when a physical presence was needed.

A) God Himself came down not on you, but came down to you in the Person of Jesus Christ. Word became flesh

B) His hands were pressed to the Cross for you and me. His mouth cried, “Father forgive them.”

1) His blood, sweat, and tear-filled eyes said, “I love you.”

C) Life and healing – Salvation to all who Believe!

D) Therefore, it is *His* love that motivates us to love others (2 Corinthians 5:14). Compels

1) In *His* love may you find the Eutychuses—those who were once doing well, but who moved to the back and fell off the ledge—and come down not *on* them, but *to* them.

May God grant us the grace to be ministers of resurrection.

May He give us opportunity to touch lives this week.