

SLEEP NOT
NO. 1022

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

“Let us not sleep, as do others.”
1 Thessalonians 5:6

WE do not usually sleep towards the things of this world. We rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, for Mammon’s sake. In this age of competition, most men are wide enough awake for their temporal interests. But so is it, partly through our being in this body and partly through our dwelling in a sinful world, that we are all of us very apt to sleep concerning the interests of our souls.

We drive like Jehu for this present world, but proceed slowly for the world to come. Nothing so much concerns us as eternity and yet nothing so little affects us. We work for the present world and we play with the world to come. Quaint old Quarles long ago likened us to roebucks as to earth and snails as to heaven. And then he oddly enough rebuked this fault in rugged verse—

*“Lord, when we leave the world and come to Thee,
How dull, how slug, are we!
How backward! How prepost’rous is the motion
Of our ungain devotion!
Our thoughts are millstones, and our souls are lead,
And our desires are dead:
Our vows are fairly promis’d, faintly paid,
Or broken, or not made.*

*“Is the road fair, we loiter; clogged with mire,
We stick or else retire;
A lamb appears a lion, and we fear
Each bush we see’s a bear.
When our dull souls direct our thoughts to Thee,
As slow as snails are we;
But at the earth we dart our wing’d desire,
We burn—we burn like fire!”*

A piece of news about a fire in another continent makes a sensation in all our homes, but the fire that never shall be quenched is heard of almost without emotion. The discovery of a gold-field will affect half the markets in the world and send a thrill through the public pulse. But when we speak of that blessed city where the streets are of gold, how coolly men take it all, regarding it as though it were a pretty fiction and as if only the things which are seen were worthy of their notice.

We sleep when heavenly things and eternal things are before us. Alas! that it should be so. Even those choice spirits which have been awakened by the Holy Ghost, and not only awakened into life, but aroused into ardor, have to complain that their fervor very frequently is chilled. I was recommended to try a pillow of hops to obtain sleep during my late illness, but I find now that I want a waking pillow rather than a sleeping pillow. And I am of the same mind as that ancient saint who preferred a roaring devil to a sleepy devil.

How earnest, how diligent, how watchful, how heavenly ought we to be, but how much are we the reverse of all this. When in this respect we would do good, evil is present with us. We would have our hearts like a furnace for Christ, and behold, the coals refuse to burn. We would be living pillars of light and fire, but we rather resemble smoke and mist.

Alas! alas! alas! that when we would mount highest, our wings are clipped, and when we would serve God best, the evil heart of unbelief mars the labor. I knew it would be seasonable—I hoped it might be profitable if I spake a little to you tonight, and to me in so doing, concerning the need that there is, that we shake ourselves from slumber and leave the sluggard's couch.

I intend to take the text in reference, first, *to those who are born again from the dead*, and secondly, in reference to *those who are still in the terrible slumber of their sin*. And I shall gather my illustrations tonight from no remote region, but from the selfsame Word of God, from which I take the text. The text says, "Let us not sleep, as do others." We will mention some "others," whose histories are recorded in Scripture, who have slept to their own injury, and I pray you let them be warnings to you.

I. First, to those of you who are THE PEOPLE OF GOD, let me say, "Let us not sleep, as do others."

1. First, let us not sleep as *those disciples did who went with their Lord to the garden* and fell asleep while He was agonizing. Let us not be as the eight who slept at a distance, nor as the highly-favored three, who were admitted into the more secret chamber of our Lord's woes, and were allowed to tread the precincts of the most holy place where He poured out His soul, and sweat as it were great drops of blood.

He found them sleeping, and though He awakened them, they slept again and again. "What, could ye not watch with me for one hour?" was His gentle expostulation. They were slumbering for sorrow. Though our Lord might in our case make an excuse for us as He did for them—"The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak"—let us endeavor, by His grace, not to need such an apology, by avoiding their fault. "Let us not sleep, as do others."

But beloved fellow Christians, are not the most of us sleeping as the apostles did? Behold our Master's zeal for the salvation of the sons of men! Throughout all His life, He seemed to have no rest. From the moment when His ministry began, He was ever toiling, laboring, denying Himself. It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him.

Truly He might have taken for His life's motto, "Wist ye not that I *must* be about my Father's business?" So intent was He on saving souls, that He counted not His life dear to Him. He would lay it down, and that amidst circumstances of the greatest pain and ignominy—anything and everything would He do to seek and to save that which was lost.

Zeal for His chosen church, which was God's house, had eaten Him up. For His people's sakes He could bear all the reproaches of those that reproached God, and though that reproach broke His heart, yet still He persevered and ceased not till salvation's work was done. He was incessant in toil and suffering, but what are we?

There is our Lord, our great Exemplar, before us now. Behold Him in Gethsemane! Imagination readily sees Him amid the olives. I might say, that His whole life was pictured in that agony in the garden, for in a certain sense it was all an agony. It was all a sweating, not such as distils from those who purchase the staff of life by the sweat of their face, but such as He must feel who purchased life itself with the agony of His heart.

The Savior, as I see him throughout the whole of His ministry, appears to me on His knees pleading, and before His God agonizing—laying out His life for the sons of men. But brethren, do I speak harshly when I say that the disciples asleep are a fit emblem of our usual life? As compared or rather contrasted with our Master, I fear it is so.

Where is our zeal for God? Where is our compassion for men? Do we ever feel the weight of souls as we ought to feel it? Do we ever melt in the presence of the terrors of God which we know to be coming upon others? Have we realized the passing away of an immortal spirit to the judgment bar of God?

Have we felt pangs and throes of sympathy when we have remembered that multitudes of our fellow creatures have received, as their eternal sentence, the words, “Depart ye cursed into the everlasting fire in hell, prepared for the devil and his angels”? Why, if these thoughts really possessed us, we should scarce sleep. If they became as real to us as they were to Him, we should wrestle with God for souls as He did, and become willing to lay down our lives, if by any means we might save some.

I see by the eye of faith, at this moment, Jesus pleading at the mercy seat. “For Zion’s sake,” He says, “I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest.” And yet, we around Him lie asleep, without self-denying activity, and almost without prayer—missing opportunities, or when opportunities for doing good have been seized, using them with but a slothful hand and doing the work of the Lord, if not deceitfully, yet most sluggishly.

Brethren, “let us not sleep, as do others.” If it be true that the Christian church is to a great extent asleep, the more reason why *we* should be awake. And if it be true, as I fear it is, that we have ourselves slumbered and slept, the more reason now that we should arise and trim our lamps, and go forth to meet the Bridegroom.

Let us from this moment begin to serve our Master and His church more nearly after the example which He Himself has set us in His consecrated life and blessed death. Let us not sleep then, as did the disciples at Gethsemane.

*“O Thou, who in the garden’s shade,
Didst wake Thy weary ones again,
Who slumbered at that fearful hour,
Forgetful of Thy pain;*

*“Bend o’er us now, as over them,
And set our sleep-bound spirits free;
Nor leave us slumbering in the watch
Our souls should keep with Thee!”*

2. A second picture we select from that portion of the inspired page which tells us of *Samson*. Let us not sleep as that ancient Hebrew hero did, who, while he slept, lost his locks, lost his strength, and by and by lost his liberty, lost his eyes, and ultimately lost his life.

I have spoken under the first head of our slumbering in respect to others, but here I come to ourselves. In our slumbering with respect to ourselves, Samson is the sad picture of many professors. We are about to sketch a portrait of one whom we knew in years gone by. He was “strong in the LORD, and in the power of his might.”

Years ago, the man we picture—and it is no fancy portrait, for we have seen many such—when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, he did mighty things. And we looked on and wondered, yea, we envied him and we said, “Would God we had an hour of such strength as has fallen upon him.” He was the leader among the weak and often infused courage into faint hearts. But where is he now?

All our Israel knew him, for his name was a tower of strength. And our enemies knew him too, for he was a valiant man in battle. Where is this hero now? We hear little of him in the fields of service where once he glorified his God and smote the enemies of Israel. We do not meet him now at the prayer meeting, or in the Sunday school, or at the evangelist station.

We hear nothing of his seeking for souls. Surely he has gone to sleep. He thinks that he has much spiritual goods laid up for many years and he is now taking his rest. He has had his share, he says, of labor, and the time has come for him to take a little ease. It is our loss, and his peril that he has allowed himself to fall into such a drowsy condition. O that we could bestir him!

*“Break his bonds of sleep asunder—
Rouse him with a peal of thunder.”*

Alas! carnal security is a Delilah always. it gives us many a dainty kiss, and lulls us into tranquil slumbers which we imagine to be God's own Peace, whereas the peace of fascination and of satanic enchantment is upon us. Yes, we have seen the good man—we could not doubt that he had been both good and great, yet we have seen him lying asleep.

And perhaps, some of us who have never been so distinguished or done so much, though, nevertheless, in our own small way we have done something for God, and yet we too lie in Delilah's lap. Blessed be His name who has not suffered us to lead quite a useless life. But possibly we are degenerating and beginning now to take things more easily than we did.

In our fancied wisdom we half rebuke what we call our "juvenile zeal." We are prudent now and wise—would God we were not prudent, and not wise—and were as foolish as we used to be when we loved our God with zeal so great that nothing was hard and nothing was difficult, if we were called upon to do it for His name's sake.

Now, what do I see in Samson while he lies asleep in Delilah's lap? I see peril of the deadliest sort. The Philistines are not asleep. When the good man slumbers and ceases to watch, Satan does not slumber and temptations do not cease to waylay him. There are the Philistines looking on while you see the razor softly stealing over the champion's head.

Those locks, bushy and black as a raven, fall thickly on the ground. One by one the razor shears them all away till the Nazarite has lost the hair of his consecration. I am terribly fearful lest this should happen to ourselves. Our strength lies in our faith. That is our Samsonian lock. Take that away and we are as weak as other men, ay, and weaker still—for Samson was weaker than the weakest when his hair was gone, though aforesaid stronger than the strongest.

By degrees, it may be, Satan is stealing away all our spiritual strength. Oh! if it be my case, I shall come up into this pulpit, and I shall preach to you, and shake myself, as I have done aforesaid, and perhaps expect to see sinners saved, but there will be none. And possibly, some of you also, when you awake a little, will go forth to preach in the streets or to seek after men's souls as you have done before, but alas, you will find the Philistines will bind you and that your strength has passed away while you slept.

Your glory has gone—gone amidst the deluding dreams which lulled you—gone not to come back except with bitterest grief, with eyes, perhaps, put out forever. Many backsliders will die thanking God, if ever their strength returns to them, and perhaps it never may till their dying hour. Oh, brethren! warned by what has happened, not to Samson only, but to many of the Lord's greatest champions, "Let us not sleep, as do others."

3. Now we change the picture again. It is the same subject under other forms. You remember our Savior's parable concerning *the tares and the wheat*. There was an enclosure which was reserved for wheat only, but while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the good seed.

Now, you who are members of the church of Christ need not that I should enter into a full explanation of the parable. Neither is this the time, but it will suffice to say that when false doctrines and unholy practices have crept into a church, the secret cause of the mischief has usually been that the church itself was asleep. Those who ought to have been watchmen and to have guarded the field, slept—and so the enemy had ample time to enter and scatter tares among the wheat.

Now, my last illustration spoke to you of your own dangers, this ought to appeal to you with equal force, because it concerns dangers incident to that which is dearest to you, I hope, of anything upon earth—namely, the church of the living God. An unwatchful church will soon become an unholy church. A church which does not carefully guard the truth as it is in Jesus, will become an unsound church, and consequently, a degenerate church.

It will grieve the Holy Spirit, and cause Him to remove His power from the ministry, and His presence from the ordinances. It will open the door for Satan, and he is quite sure to avail himself of every opportunity of doing mischief. I believe that the only way after all in any church to purge out heresy in it, is by having more of the inner life. By this fire in Zion shall the chaff be burned up.

When the constitution of a man is thoroughly sound, it throws out many of those diseases which otherwise would have lingered in his system. And good physicians sometimes do not attempt to touch the local disease, but they do their best to strengthen the general constitution—and when that is right, then the cure is wrought.

So, here and there, there may be a defalcation in the one point—that of doctrine, or in the other—as to an affair of practice, and so it may be necessary to deal with the disordered limb of doctrine or you may have to cut out the cancer of an evil custom. But as a rule, the main cure of a church comes by strengthening its inner life.

When we live near to Jesus, when we drink from the fountain-head of eternal truth and purity, when we become personally true and pure, then our watchfulness is, under God, our safeguard—and heresy, false doctrine, and unclean profession are kept far away. Sleeping guards invite the enemy. He who leaves his door unlocked asks the thief to enter. Watchfulness is always profitable and slothfulness is always dangerous.

Members of this church, I speak to you in particular, and forget for the moment that any others are present. We have enjoyed these many years the abiding dew of God's Spirit, shall we lose it? God has been in our midst and thousands of souls—ay, tens of thousands of souls have been brought to Jesus, and God has never taken away His hand, but it has been stretched out still—shall we, by sinful slumber, sin away this blessing?

I am jealous over you with a holy jealousy. Trembling has taken hold on me, lest you lose your first love. "Hold fast," O church, "that which thou hast received, that no man take thy crown." Our sins will grieve the Spirit. Our sleepiness will vex the Holy One of Israel. Unless we wake up to more earnest prayerfulness and to closer fellowship with Christ, it may be we shall hear the sound such as Josephus tells us was observed at the destruction of Jerusalem, when there was heard the rustling of wings and the voice that said, "Let us go hence."

O Lord, though our sins deserve that You should forsake us, yet turn not away from us, for Your mercy sake! Tarry, JEHOVAH, for the sake of the precious blood! Tarry with us still! Depart not from us. We deserve that You should withdraw, but oh! forsake not the people whom You have chosen! By all the love You have manifested towards us, continue Your loving-kindness to Your unworthy servants still.

Is not that your prayer, you that love the church of God? I know it is, not for this church only, but for all others where the power and presence of God have been felt. Pray continually for the church, but remember this is the practical exhortation arising out of it all—"Let us not sleep, as do others," lest in our case too, the enemy may come and mar the harvest of our Master by sowing tares among the wheat.

4. Only one other picture, and a very solemn one, still addressing me to God's people. We are told that while the bridegroom tarried, *the virgins* who had gone out to meet Him slumbered and slept. O virgin hearts! "Let us not sleep, as do others." When the cry was heard—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh," they were all slumbering, wise and foolish alike.

O you wise virgins who have oil in your vessels and lamps, "Sleep not, as do others," lest the midnight cry come upon you unawares. The Lord Jesus may come in the night. He may come in the heavens with exceeding great power and glory before the rising of another sun. Or He may tarry for awhile, and yet though it should seem to us to be long, He will come quickly, for one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

Suppose, however, He were to come tonight? If now, instead of going along to your homes and seeing once more the streets busy with traffic, the sign of the Son of Man should be revealed in the air, because the King had come in His glory and His holy angels with Him, would you be ready? I press home the question.

The Lord may suddenly come—are you ready? Are you ready? You who profess to be His saints—are your loins girt up and your lamps trimmed? Could you go in with Him to the supper, as guests who

have long-expected Him, and say, “Welcome, welcome Son of God”? Have you not much to set in order? Are there not still many things undone? Would you not be afraid to hear the midnight cry?

Happy are those souls who live habitually with Jesus, who have given themselves up completely to the power of His indwelling Spirit—who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes. “They shall walk with him in white for they are worthy.” Wise are they who live habitually beneath the influence of the second advent, looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Son of God.

We would have our window opened towards Jerusalem. We would sit as upon our watch-tower whole nights. We would be girt to go out of this Egypt at a moment’s warning. We would be of that host of God who shall go out harnessed, in the time appointed, when the signal is given. God grant us grace to be found in that number in the day of His appearing, but “Let us not sleep, as do others.” I might say, let us not sleep as we have done ourselves. God forgive us and arouse us from this good hour.

I feel as if I do not want to go on to the second part of my subject at all, but were quite content to stand here and speak to you who love the Lord. Brethren and sisters, we must have an awakening among us. I feel within my soul that I must be awakened myself, and my own necessities are, I believe, a very accurate gauge of what is wanted by the most of you. Shall our season of triumph, our march of victory, come to an end? Will you turn back after all that God has done for you?

Will you limit the Holy One of Israel? Will you cease from the importunities of prayer? Will you pause in the labors of zeal? Will you bring dishonor upon Christ and upon His cross? By the living God who sleeps not, neither is weary in His deeds of love, I beseech you, slumber not, and be not weary nor faint in your mind. “Be ye stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

II. I must pass on to the second part of our subject. I have now to speak TO THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE NOT CONVERTED.

And if I felt as I ought to feel, it would be sorrowful work even to remember that any of you are yet unsaved. I like to see these little children here. I pray God they may grow up to fear and love Him, and that their young hearts may be given to our dear Lord and Master while they are yet boys and girls.

But I overlook them just now, and speak to some of you who have had many years of intelligent hearing of the Word and are still unsaved. Pitiable objects! You do not think so, but I repeat the word, Pitiable objects! The tears which flood my eyes almost prevent my seeing you.

You fancy you are very merry and happy, but you are to be pitied, for, “The wrath of God abideth on you”. “He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Son of God.” You will soon be where no pity can help you and where the Lord Himself will not help you. May God give you ears to hear the words of affectionate warning which I address to you now! “Let us not sleep, as do others.”

I beg you not to sleep, as did *Jonah*. He was in the vessel, you remember, when it was tossed with the tempest, and all the rest in the vessel were praying, but *Jonah* was asleep. Every man called upon his god except the man who had caused the storm. He was the most in danger, but he was the most careless. The ship-master, and mate, and crew, all prayed, every man to his god, but *Jonah* carelessly slept on.

Now, do you not some of you here live in houses where they all pray but you? You have a godly mother, but are yourself godless. John, you have a Christian father, and brothers and sisters, too, whom Christ has looked upon in His love, and they pray for you continually. But the strange thing is, that your soul is the only one in the house which remains unblest, and yet you are the only one who feels no anxiety or fear about the matter.

There are many of us in this house who can honestly say that we would give anything we have if we could save your souls. We do not know what we would not do, but we know we would do all in our power, if we could but reach your conscience and your hearts. I stand often in this pulpit almost wishing that I had never been born, because of the burden and distress it brings upon my soul to think of some of you who will die and be lost forever.

Lost, though you love to listen to the preacher! Lost, though you sometimes resolve to be saved! We are praying for you daily, but you—you are asleep! What do you, while we are preaching, but criticize

our words, as if we discoursed to you as a piece of display, and did not mean to plead as for life and death with you, that you would escape from the wrath to come.

Observations will be made by the frivolous among you during the most solemn words, about someone's dress or personal appearance. Vain minds will be gadding upon the mountains of folly, while those, who are not, by far, so immediately concerned, are troubled and have deep searchings of heart about those very souls.

I believe God is going to send a revival into this place. I have that conviction growing upon me, but it may be that though the gracious wave may sweep over the congregation, it will miss you. It has missed you up to this hour. Around you all the floor is wet, but you, like Gideon's fleece, are dry and you sleep though the blessing comes not upon you—sleep though sleep involves a certain and approaching curse.

O slumbering Jonah, in the name of the Most High, I would say to you, "Awake thou that sleepest, and call upon thy God. Peradventure, he shall deliver thee, and this great tempest shall yet be stayed." Yea, I would put it above a peradventure, for they that seek the Lord shall find Him, if they seek Him with full purpose of heart.

Let us change the illustration now and take another. You remember *Solomon's sluggard*? What did he? It was morning and the sun was up—ay, the dawning of the day had passed some hours and he had not yet gone forth to labor. There was a knock at his door and he opened his eyes a little. He listened and he said, "Leave me alone."

"But will you never get up?" "Yes, I will be up soon, but I want a little more sleep—only a little." Then came another knock, for his master would have him in the field at work, but he turned over again and he grumbled within himself, and said, "A little more slumber." He slept hour after hour. Yes, but he did not mean to sleep hours. All he intended was to sleep five minutes, but minutes fly rapidly to men who dream.

If at the first onset he had known that if he fell asleep he would slumber till noon, he would have been shocked at such abominable laziness. But what harm could it be just to turn over once more? Who would deny him another wink or two? Surely there can be no fault found with one more delicious doze?

Now, there are in this congregation persons who have said to themselves many times, "That appeal is right. My conscience gives assent to that Gospel demand, it shall be attended to very soon. I must, however, enjoy a little pleasure first—not much. I do not mean to risk my soul another twelve months, but we will stay till next Sunday. Then I shall have got over certain engagements which now stand in my way."

Well, sirs, you know, some of you, that it has been Sabbath after Sabbath, and then it has grown to be year after year, and still you are saying a little more sleep and a little more slumber. I met one the other day—I do not see him here tonight, but I generally see him on the Sabbath. I think he heard the first sermon I preached in London—that is many years ago now.

And that man loves me—I know he does, and I can say I love him. But if he dies as he is, he is a lost man. He knows it. He has told me so and he has said, "Pray for me." But oh! what is the benefit of my praying for him if he never prays for himself? It is grievous to know that many of you are in the same dreadful way of procrastinating and putting off.

You would do anything to help the church too, and if you knew that I needed anything, you would be among the first to do it for me, such is your kindness. You are kind to your minister, but you are cruel to your souls. You have held your soul over hell's mouth for these twenty years by your continual delays and indecisions. Yet you never meant it.

No, you thought long ago that you would have given your hearts to Christ. One of these days I shall have to bury you, and it will be with no hope of your future happiness, for it has always been, "A little more sleep, and a little more slumber, and a little more folding of the hands," till your "poverty shall come upon you as one who travelleth, and your want like an armed man."

Alas! it shall be eternal poverty, and the armed man shall be the arch-destroyer from whom none can escape! O young man and young woman, do not procrastinate. Delay is the devil's great net and it is filled with exceeding great fishes. Yet does not the net break. Oh that you could break through it. May God help you to do it, for to you I would say, "Let us not," in this respect, "sleep, as do others."

Again, the picture changes. Do you remember the story in the Acts of the Apostles of the *young man* who sat in the third loft while Paul was preaching? It could not have been a dull sermon, I should think, but Paul preached till midnight. That was rather long. You do not allow me such liberal time. And when Paul preached on, Eutychus went to sleep, until he fell from the third loft and was taken up dead.

It is true that Paul prayed and he was restored to life by a miracle, but I have known many an Eutychus fall dead under the Word, but he was never known to live again. I do not mean that I have known many go to sleep in the house of God and fall from the third loft, but that this, that they have heard the Word, and heard the Word till they have been preached into sleep of the deepest kind, and at last preached into hell.

If we by our preaching do not wake you, we rock your cradles, and make you more insensible every time we warn you. The most startling preaching in a certain time ceases to arouse the hearers. You know the great boiler factories over here in Southwark. I am told that when a man goes inside the boiler to hold the hammer, when they are fixing rivets, the sound of the copper deafens him so that he cannot bear it, it is so horrible. But after he has been a certain number of months in that employment, he hardly notices the hammering—he does not care about it.

It is just so under the Word. People go to sleep under that which once was like a thunderbolt to them. As the blacksmith's dog will lie under the anvil, where the sparks fly into his face, and yet go to sleep, so will many sinners sleep while the sparks of damnation fly into their faces. Horrible that it should be so.

It would take an earthquake and a hurricane to move some of you stolid ones. I wish they would come if they would stir you, but even such terrors would be of no avail—only the trumpet which will arouse the dead will ever awaken you. Oh, dear hearers, remember that to perish under the Gospel ministry is to perish with a vengeance.

If I must be lost, let it be as a Zulu Kaffir or as a Red Indian, who has never listened to the truth. But it will be dreadful to go down to the pit with this as an aggravation—"You knew your duty, but you did it not. You heard the warning, but you would not receive it. The medicine was put to your lip, but you preferred to be diseased. The bread was placed before you and the living water, but you would not take them. Your blood be on your own heads."

Oh, may this never be said of any of us! May we never sleep under the Word as do others, lest we die in our sins. And as I told you the other Sunday night, I think that is one of the most dreadful words in the Bible where Christ said twice, one time after another—"If ye believe not that I am he, *you shall die in your sins.*" To die on a dunghill, or in a ditch, or on the rack, or on the gallows, is nothing compared with this—to *die in your sins!* To die in your sins! And yet this will be your lot if you continue much longer to sleep, as do others.

Another picture. Not to detain you too long. Do you remember in David's life when he went with one of his mighty men at night into *Saul's* camp, and found the king and his guards all asleep? There were certain men of war who ought to have watched at Saul's bed to take care of their master who lay in the trench, but no one was awake at all.

And David and his friend went all among the sleepers, treading gently and softly lest they should wake one of them. Till, by and by, they came to the center of the circle where lay the king, with a cruse of water at his bolster and his spear stuck in the ground. Little did he know, as he slept so calmly there, that Abishai was saying to David—"Let me strike him; it shall be but this once."

How easily that strong hand with that sharp javelin would have pinned the king to the ground. One only stroke and it would be done—and David's enemy would pursue him no more forever. Methinks I see you, O you sleeping sinners, lying in the same imminent peril. At this moment the evil one is

saying—“Let me smite him. I will smite him but this once. Let me prevent his hearing the Gospel this night. Let me thrust the javelin of unbelief into his soul but this once, and then the harvest will be past, the summer will be ended, and he will not be saved.”

Slumbering sinner, I would fain shout as the thunder of God, if thereby I could arouse you. Man, the knife is at your throat and can you sleep? The spear is ready to smite you, and will you still doat and dream? I think I see the angel of justice who has long been pursuing the sinner who is rejecting Christ, and he cries—“Let me smite him! He has had time enough. Let me smite him!”

Or as Christ puts it in the parable, there has come one into the vineyard who has looked at you, the barren tree, and seen no fruit. And he has come these three years, and now he is saying, “Cut it down! Why cumbereth it the ground?” O mercy, stay the axe! O God, bid the enemy put by the spear, and let the sleeper wake, not in hell, but still on mercy’s plains, where there is a Christ to forgive him and a Spirit to sanctify him.

Imploringly, I, your brother, beseech you tonight to turn unto the living God. Even now in this your day, attend to the things which make for your peace—

*“To-day, a pardoning God
Will hear the suppliant pray;
To-day, a Saviour’s cleansing blood
Will wash thy guilt away.*

*“But grace so dearly bought
If yet thou wilt despise,
Thy fearful doom with vengeance fraught,
Will fill thee with surprise.”*

The last picture is this (may it never be seen in you)—there went once into a tent, which he thought to be friendly, a mighty man who had fought a battle and lost the day. Hot of foot and full of fear, *Sisera* came into the tent of Jael to ask for water and she gave him milk. She brought forth butter in a lordly dish. He drank, and then, all weary, he threw himself along in the tent.

He is a photograph of many ungodly men who have gone where they thought they had friends, for sinners think sinners their friends, and think sin their friend—and they have asked for pleasure and they have had it. And now, after having had their fill and eaten butter in a lordly dish, they are tonight in contentment, sleeping in supposed security.

They have gone into the house of the evil one to find pleasure, and they are going there again tonight, and they will continue there, and try to find rest in the house of their enemies. Sometimes it is the house of the strange woman, often it is the settle of the drunkard, or the chair of the scorner, where men think to rest in peace.

Oh, hark you, man, and beware! Fly the ways of the destroyer—fly from the haunt of the strange woman—fly as for your very life every den of sin. For lo! she comes stealthily, the tent pin is in her left hand and in her right hand the workman’s hammer. Many mighty has she slain aforesaid, for she hunts for the precious life and her chambers lead down to death.

If you sleep on but another night or even another hour, the destroyer may have done the deed, and you may be fastened to the earth forever—the victim of your own delusions. I may be in error, but I think I speak to some man tonight who must now immediately change his ways or else the jaws of hell will close upon him.

I do not desire to speak my own words or my own thoughts, but to speak as the divine wind blows through my soul. And I think I am warning someone tonight of whom, if he turn not, it will soon be written, as of another in the Book of Proverbs, “He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteneth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.”

In the name of the Ever Blessed and Most Merciful, “Turn thee! sinner, turn thee! Why wilt thou die?” Your course is destruction and is near its end. Awake! Why sleep you? Sleep to others is dangerous—to *you* it is *damnable*. Awake, arise, or be forever ruined. May God’s grace bestir you!

Some of you tonight are like Lot and his daughters in the burning city. You must flee, you must flee at once out of Sodom, or you will perish in it. Behold, we would put our hand upon you tonight, and press you to flee, the Lord being merciful unto you. His servants and His Spirit constrain you to make haste.

Linger not. Look not back. Hesitate not. To your knees! To your knees! “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near.” To the cross! To the cross! There is your shelter, the mountain where the only refuge can be found from the vengeance of God. Behold the wounds of Jesus, God’s beloved Son given for the guilty, slaughtered for the sinful—

*“There is life in a look at the crucified One;
There is life at this moment for thee!”—*

and for all who look.

But it may be that if this night you look not to Jesus, His cross may never appear before your eyes again, for they will be sealed in death. Ere long, Jael’s tent pin shall have passed through Sisera’s skull. The sin shall have destroyed the sinner. The sin that is unto death shall have shut up the spirit in despair. Oh, may God, who is mighty to save, turn you to Himself at this moment.

“Sound the trumpet in Zion: sound an alarm in my holy mountain,” seems to ring in my ears and I would fain sound that alarm to God’s saints and to sinners too. May He call many by His grace and awaken us all. And His shall be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
1 THESSALONIANS 5**

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.