KEEP AWAKE!

Pastor's Message

Joshua 24:1–3a, 14–25 | Matthew 25:1–13

Have you ever been so busy getting ready for something that you missed what was happening right in front of you?

We can spend so much time checking the calendar, watching the clock, and planning for tomorrow that we forget to pay attention to today. Some of us are so busy looking for the signs of the times that we miss the person standing right beside us! Jesus has a word for us:

Stay awake. Be ready. And don't sleep through the opportunities God puts right in front of you.

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells about ten bridesmaids waiting for a bridegroom. All ten bring lamps, and all ten expect him to arrive. But the bridegroom is delayed, and they all get sleepy. When the announcement finally comes, five discover they have not brought enough oil to keep their lamps burning. The lesson is not that we should never get a good night's sleep—some of us would consider that a miracle!

Rather, Jesus reminds us that we must be prepared for God's kingdom. We cannot wait until the last minute to decide that faith matters.

But keeping awake means more than looking toward the sky and wondering when Jesus will return. It means keeping our eyes open to what God is doing in the world today. We can be wide awake at 7 a.m. and still miss the needs around us. We can scroll through hundreds of posts, know what is happening on the other side of the world, and somehow fail to notice that our neighbor is lonely, a family nearby is struggling, or someone in our community could use a helping hand.

Joshua gives us another important part of the message. He asks the people to choose whom they will serve. "As for me and my household," Joshua declares, "we will serve the Lord." He calls them not just to remember what God did long ago, but to live faithfully now. Faith is not simply something we talk about on Sunday. It is something we practice on Monday, Tuesday, and every day in between.

So what does it look like to stay awake?

It may mean noticing the person who has been missing from church and reaching out. It may mean listening patiently, helping a neighbor with groceries, checking on an older adult, welcoming a newcomer, or standing beside someone who feels forgotten.

These may not seem like grand acts, but a lamp does not have to light the whole world to make a difference. It simply has to shine where it is.

Here is the challenge: Don't let the busyness of life put your faith to sleep. Keep your spiritual lamps filled with prayer, compassion, generosity, and love. Be ready for Christ's coming by being present for Christ's people today. And when God gives you an opportunity to make someone's day a little brighter, don't hit the snooze button!

The kingdom of God is coming, and by God's grace, we can help its light shine right here and right now. **Amen.**

-Pastor Thad