

Stay Awake!

Scripture: Matthew 26:36 – 46

Usually on Maundy Thursday a minister would preach about the Last Supper but I want to focus on the time after the Last Supper. Let us look at the time Jesus went to a garden to pray.

This picture here is a picture of that event.

Have you ever had a time when you could hardly stay awake? As I have gotten older, I have found it is harder for me to stay awake. I seem to be napping more!

First a personal example: my family flew to Phoenix Arizona to see my oldest son who was stationed there. We arrived early in the morning and that evening my sons and I decided to see the latest 'Predator' movie. I went along with them even though I was a little tired from traveling. Oh, half way through the movie I was shook by my middle son who said to me – 'Dad, you are snoring! WAKE UP!' Fifteen minutes later my son woke me up again and told me to go to the lobby and wait for the movie to end. It can be very hard to stay awake sometimes!

Another story about being unable to stay awake. A church group went to NYC to see the Broadway musical – 'Lion King'. There were many families (parents and children) on the bus trip. Into the Shubert Theatre the group went. They had just spent three hours tour Time Square on their own. It was an afternoon matinee at 2pm. The musical 'Lion King' was great but at the end of the first act when Simba was growing up and it was quiet in the theatre, one of the children in the group yelled at her dad. She said very loud – 'Daddy, stop snoring! I cannot hear the music!' Everyone in the balcony sections broke out in

laughter and the people on the ground floor seemed puzzled why the balcony was laughing. The father woke up and guess what? After intermission in the second act he fell asleep again! And the little girl said – ‘Mommy, please let me sit beside you because Daddy is snoring again!’ The balcony crowd again busted out in laughter and the ground floor looked confused again. Sometimes it is very hard to stay awake!

And a final story, a bank employee was in the middle of transferring \$600 from a customer’s bank account to another person’s account when he accidentally took a power nap at his desk. He dozed off while his finger was on the ‘0’ on his keyboard. It resulted in him transferring \$60,000 to the other person’s account. The fallout from the mistake included the firing of the employee and his colleague who verified the transfer. Although the mistake was caught and corrected, the sleepy employee’s lapse and the person who verifies such transactions almost became a nightmare for the bank! Sometimes it is very hard to stay awake!

In our scripture reading from Matthew 26:36 – 46 Jesus warned his disciples that if they did not remain alert, they too would make a costly mistake. Jesus took them to a place called the Garden of Gethsemane, the Garden of the Olive Press which is what Gethsemane means. They went there to spend some time in prayer.

As Jesus prayed, he experienced a grief and sadness such as he had never known in his earthly life. Jesus was so overwhelmed by grief and sadness that Jesus sweated droplets of sweat that looked like drops of blood!

Jesus had asked Peter, James, and John to stay awake to pray and keep watch with him, but they fell asleep. Their failure to watch and pray would leave them defenseless when the real temptation of denying Jesus came calling.

Three times Jesus returned to them to find them asleep. In the hour of Jesus' greatest need, the disciples lacked spiritual vigilance. Three times their ability to stay awake and watch and pray failed them, they fell asleep! It is often hard to stay awake!

On this Maundy Thursday, may we heed Jesus' words to remain spiritually awake by being more devoted to spending time with Jesus in prayer. As we do this, Jesus will strengthen us to resist all kinds of temptations and to avoid the costly mistake of denying Jesus!

So what part of your prayer life needs to be more devoted and disciplined? How can you intentionally spend more time alone with God and not fall asleep?

A good start would be to join your church family tonight at 5pm in the Tabernacle as we go through a Seder Meal under the leadership of Marc and Anne Theriault. Join us to celebrate the 'Last Supper' and to remember Christ's glorious sacrifice for us. 18 people have signed up, why not you? If you live some distance from us in Bethany Beach DE, take some time at supper and do your own communion service and spend some time in prayer.

Let us pray:

Jesus, because we have been spiritually sleeping, we have not been praying. And because we have not been praying, we have not depended on You. We are sorry! Please help us to spend more time with You in prayer. AMEN.