

“Walking With Eyes Wide Shut”

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The epistle lesson for today is taken from the 5th chapter of the book of Ephesians, verses 14 through 20. I'll be reading from the New Revised Standard Version. “‘Sleeper, wake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’ Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is God’s word for God’s people. Thanks be to God. Lord bless the reading, hearing, and understanding of your word today. Amen.

Last week we talked about dressing for success, being tenderhearted and kind to one another. When we put on these godly qualities it’s a formula for success in relationships. These are the qualities that God works in us from the inside out; it’s a process. It’s a process that God commands as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit and are changed into the likeness of God. The transformation that God works in us as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit is meant to be a daily change. It’s something we have to continually keep a watch over. For example, what’s our attitude? Are we responding selfishly? Are we hoarding for ourselves instead of giving to others? Do we insist on our own way? These are all things that

emanate outwardly from an attitude within our hearts. We can't change the things that hurt others and ourselves until we change the inside.

Has anyone here ever walked in their sleep? I did once. I was babysitting next door to the house I grew up in. The kids were in bed, so I figured, oh, I'll just lay down here on the couch and rest my eyes. Well, the next thing I knew I was being shaken by my dad trying to wake me up. He was wondering why I wasn't next door babysitting. I told my dad, "Well, the parents came home so I came home."

The next day I told the parents what I remembered about the evening before. I told them, "After laying down on your couch to rest, I fell asleep. Then I went out your back door, walked crisscross to my front door (which I never used), went inside, brushed my teeth before hitting the sack (and I never brushed at night), and then got into my PJ's and fell asleep." Little did I know the parents hadn't gotten home when I decided to get up from their couch. I remember getting up. I also remember tripping over a toy in my neighbor's living room and almost falling off of my parents front porch steps, and doing all kinds of things I never did I was sleepwalking. It's like this. My eyes were open, but I couldn't really see—not really.

If you'd seen me walking around you might have thought I was a little different, but you'd never have guessed I was sound asleep. It's an interesting phenomenon because the sleepwalker will go through the motions, but they aren't really aware of what they're doing or maybe even aware of where they're going. This is how sleepwalking is—our eyes are wide open, and we look awake, but our minds are in a completely different place. The amount of light sleepwalkers have is limited, and they can fall very easily.

Probably more Christians, and maybe us as well, are doing this very same thing. They look and talk like they know God, and they talk about serving God. But they're just going through the motions—kinda like sleepwalking. For example, if we read what *God* says about tithing or even giving a weekly offering—do we decide to leave that commandment out of our lives? Or, if we read what *God* says about godly wisdom, and if we don't think we want to incorporate that into our lives do we leave that out of our response to God's commands?

It's important we look more closely at our lives and admit that we don't have the option to change what God says to do. We can't decide to just obey part of God's words—the ones we find convenient. We might ask ourselves the question, “What does God's word say, and have I understood it correctly?”

Verse 15 says we're to “be careful how [we] live, not as unwise people but as wise.” The word careful in the Greek has the basic meaning of accurate and exact. It carries the idea of looking, examining, and investigating something with great care. It also carries the idea of staying alert. Well, imagine that *you* might be one of those spiritual sleepwalkers we're talking about this morning. I think all of us at times are responsible in some way to not responding to God as we should.

Light represents the knowledge of God's word or the wisdom of God that a believer has allowed to affect their lifestyle. In some areas of our lives we're determined to not let much of God's light in. We've decided to do what we want. We're not careful and alert. How many areas of your life are you sleepwalking through?

Believers are never immune to slipping back into foolish ways of behaving. The way we slip back is by not believing God. We decide to do what we want. We figure the choices we make won't have that much if any influence on our lives or our family's lives. To the extent we don't accept any part of what God says is the

extent to which we're foolish. Most foolish behavior isn't realized until years after we've made that choice.

Last week we talked about being *quick* to observe *our* weaknesses, and *quick* to overlook and make allowances *for the shortcomings of others*. There's really no excuse to live foolishly when God's wisdom belongs to us. I guess if we could look into a crystal ball and see the consequences of our behavior we wouldn't make some of the choices we do. So isn't it easier to allow God's wisdom to penetrate our thinking and hearts?

When we're sleepwalking we're not alert, and we're not being careful. We're just going through the motions. So what's the antidote for spiritual sleepwalking? Verse 17 gives the answer. "Understand what the will of the Lord is." When we continually pursue God and are filled with the Spirit everything changes. When life throws a curve ball, we pray our way through, and we continually grow spiritually closer to God. To pursue God wholeheartedly is the antidote for walking around with eyes wide shut.

Are you spiritually sleepwalking? Wake up! Pursue God with more zeal, and find out what God wants from you in your life. Walk in the wisdom of God's light. Ask God to give you a willing spirit and an intimate relationship with him. Let's pray. God of all, create in us a new heart. We open up to your wisdom. Change our hearts as we cooperate with your spirit. Shine your light on us we pray and in this light, chase our selfish desires away as we seek to know you and learn to do your will. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.