

How to Stay Awake When Jesus Is Calling

by Paul Negrut

The sermon emphasizes the importance of staying awake and alert when Jesus is calling us, and the need to have expectations from God and understand the time in which we live.

Duration: 40:39

Scripture: Matthew 26:36-46, Matthew 26:53-54

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening", "Faith Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a powerful testimony of a man who came to church with the intention of killing his wife. However, as he listened to the message, God transformed his heart and he surrendered his violent intentions. The preacher emphasizes the importance of creating a loving and accepting environment for others to grow in their faith. He also highlights the need for believers to stay awake and alert, expecting God to move in their lives. The sermon concludes with a call to watch and pray, recognizing the challenges and dangers faced by Christians around the world.

Transcript

And we shall read tonight from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 26. And I ask Billy Barton, a dear friend of mine, to do the scripture reading for us tonight. He is an extraordinary young boy who loves the Lord.

I got to know him the last few days, and I invited him to be my partner for the ministry tonight. Thank you so much, Billy. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be very sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here, and watch with me.

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

But the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away a second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and

found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

And he left them, and went away, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed unto the hands of sinners.

Rise, let us be gone. Behold, he is at hand, and doth betray me. Amen.

Let's bow for prayer. Lord, you invited us to spend these nights with you here in the mountains. You have called us to watch and pray.

And we are aware that the same temptation to fall asleep is so near to each and every one of us. Lord, help us to watch and pray these days. And Lord, we pray that you speak to us.

And we pray that your Holy Spirit will open our hearts and our minds, so we hear when you speak to us. Lord, I pray that you cut deep into our lives, and transform our inner man. Make us be like Jesus.

And help us to say, Thy will be done. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Our God is an Almighty God. He is the God of creation. And because He is Almighty God, He can do whatever He wants all by Himself.

Our Almighty God doesn't need your help or my help to do what He wants to do. He did the whole work of creation by Himself. He didn't ask me to help Him.

Just imagine that He would have asked me. And just say to me something like this, Paul. Would you help me and just hold up the sun for me a few days, until I look for a better place for the moon? No, I cannot help Him.

Neither can you. He said the word, and everything came into being. Nothing is impossible with God.

But our Almighty God is a loving Father. And because He is a loving Father, He enjoys His children to join Him. And to be co-laborers with Him.

Can you imagine an Almighty God, who can do whatever He wants by Himself? Inviting us to join Him. I am married to a beautiful lady. Just one wife, once married.

And God blessed our marriage with two beautiful girls. When our youngest girl was just a tiny something there. I did some work in the backyard one day.

And among other things, I had to push a big stone from one place to another. And there she came along. And she placed her tiny little hands on that stone, and she pushed with me.

When the job was done, she ran into the kitchen. With bright eyes and a big smile, she said, Mommy, do you know what I and Daddy did? Mommy, I and Daddy pushed a big stone. Now I could have looked at my daughter and said, Come on Lois, you helped me? You mostly disturbed me there.

But you see, such a remark would have crushed her spirit. And because I am her father, and I love her, I was so blessed to have my little daughter alongside. So I looked at her and said, Thank you, sweetheart.

I am so proud of you. And because I love her, and because I create space for her to come along, she grows, she finds meaning, purpose, she is accepted, and she rejoices. Now you see, our Almighty God is a loving Father.

And He is inviting us to join Him. Just imagine that day, when Jesus was out in the wilderness. And the crowds were there.

He gave them that day a very, very, very long sermon. Have you noticed that sometimes Jesus preached for hours? That day He preached for so long, there was no lunch time, no tea time at four o'clock, and now it was late. And some of the disciples, they were good deacons, they came by and said, Master, enough is enough.

These people are hungry. Why don't you close? And dismiss the crowd with a short prayer. And let them go in the villages around and buy something to eat.

And Jesus is God incarnated. He is Almighty. He can do whatever He wants.

And that day, as a sovereign Lord, He planned to feed the crowds there in the wilderness. Now as an Almighty God, He could have called the McDonald's or the Hardee's into being. And tell everybody, He said, Well, ladies and gentlemen, why don't you have a Big Mac or a biscuit with gravy, whatever you like, and enjoy yourself.

It's all taken care of. Now just imagine for a second that Jesus would have called the McDonald's or the Hardee's into being. Can you imagine one single McDonald's restaurant without this commercial? Jesus and the McDonald's.

Jesus and Hardee's. But that day, Jesus decided to invite a young boy. A young boy that had five loaves and two fish.

Jesus invited that boy and with that lunch, He fed the thousands. Now imagine that boy going home that night and telling his mommy, Mommy, do you know what I and Jesus did? Mommy, I and Jesus fed five thousand. What an extraordinary story.

I and Jesus. Jesus and I. Do you have such a story? Can you tell something that you with Jesus have done? Now in Matthew 26, Jesus is inviting three of His disciples to come along and have a story. It was a great time.

Jesus invited them, Peter, John and James. And they joined Him in the garden and almost incredible. Soon after they joined Jesus in the garden, they went to sleep.

And my message tonight is how to stay awake when Jesus is calling us. How to stay awake. Some years ago, in addition to the church in Oradea, I serve as an interim pastor to a small village church in Romania.

Every Sunday afternoon, from three o'clock to five o'clock, I would go and visit that church. Preach and teach and do the work of a pastor with them, helping them to get through a difficult time. And in that church, there was a very, very interesting man.

For one year, he never came late to church. He was always in time. I do not remember one single time that that man was in a hurry, looking at his watch, and before the benediction, he would be in the parking lot.

No, he was always there, the last one to leave the church. But there was something strange with that man. Whenever I stood up to preach, he turned off and he slept right there in the bench.

Now when I speak, I shout. And there I shouted, and I could not keep him awake. Now you see, that man never missed one of my sermons.

But actually, he never heard one. Whenever I finished my sermon, he was wide awake, right there. Up to this day, I have no explanation for that phenomenon.

Now how can we stay awake? Jesus spoke to his disciples, and he said to them, come and watch and pray with me. When Jesus invited them to watch and pray, he invited them to have new expectations from God. When Jesus invited his disciples to watch, that means be alert, be awake.

Something is going to happen. Be alert, that you see what is happening. Expectations keep us awake.

I do not know how you do things in your country, but in Romania, on special occasions, we have gifts for our children. We have presents for our children. And just imagine, on their birthday, when the presents are there, tell to your children, now, we will not open the presents tonight, you go to bed, and we will open them tomorrow.

Can you imagine that they will go to bed that night? Now why? They have expectations. They expect to see what is there. They know that there is something.

Now the tragedy is that we come before God with no expectations. We come, and we spend hours and days, and we have no expectations. Jesus said, Peter, John, and James, keep watch and pray with me.

And that night, Peter, John, and James, had no expectations. For them, that night was an average night. Do you have expectations? Romania has been under communism for 45 years.

I will tell you more about life under communism tomorrow, and Saturday morning, but many of you know that life under communist regime, for Christians, was not easy. Under the long decades of oppressions, during the long decades when our leaders were arrested and put in jail, when our people were discriminated against, when our children were mocked in public schools, when the media, when police, when government officials, when the whole society was set up against the church, we look up and we ask, how long, O Lord? And we had expectations. We expected God to act.

We expected God to work. And in those long decades, the church was awake and alive. In those decades, our prayer meetings were not boring prayer meetings.

We look up to God and we knew that one day He will move, and we pray that we'll stay awake. You see, in that night, only Jesus stood awake. He spent the night because He went in the garden to speak with God the Father.

And He knew that God the Father will hear, will answer, what are your expectations for your life this weekend? Do you expect God to deal with those hidden sins in your life? Do you expect God to deal with those unbiblical relationships? Do you expect God to deal with those bad habits and bad language? Do you expect God to deal with that careless lifestyle and speech? Do you expect God to deal with your apathy? Do you expect God to do something special for you this weekend? To turn your life around? To transform your heart? Do you have expectations? Peter, John and James didn't have expectations. And

they slept on that great night. So Jesus came to them and found them sleeping.

And He woke them up and said, could you men not watch with me for one hour? Now when Jesus said words, words were not just casual words in His mouth. Every word has very deep meaning. When Jesus said one hour, and before that He said, my hour has not yet come.

Jesus said, do you understand the time? Do you understand the time? Could you not watch with me for one hour? Do you understand the time this evening? For Peter, John and James, that was an average evening. They had so many evenings with Jesus before. And probably they thought that there would be many more others afterwards.

And this evening is just one in the long series of evenings. They did not understand that that was their last evening with Jesus before His crucifixion. Just imagine that Peter would have understood the time.

That that night would be the last night. Now knowing Peter with his temperament, do you think that he would want to sleep? No way. But you see, he didn't understand the time.

In the book of Chronicles, the Bible tells us that among the mighty men of David, there were the sons of Itzhakar. Do you know what their specialty was in the army? They understood the times. And knew what Israel ought to do.

They were specialists in understanding the times. Do you understand the time? Do you understand the time in which we live? Have you asked yourself what is happening at this very time? In Europe, there is such an attack of darkness. That you look upon the continent of the Reformation and the Revivals.

And is under the grip of darkness. Do you know that there are countries in Europe that legalized incest? Do you know that Europe is the trash can of the world? It's so filthy. Do you know what is happening in Eastern Europe? 15 years after communism collapsed.

Do you know what is happening? Pornography is flooding Eastern Europe. On the very day when the Berlin Wall fell down, about 1 million East Germans crossed into what was then West Germany. And West Germany gave to each East German 100 Deutsche Mark.

And then they conducted a survey. What did they do with the 100 Deutsche Mark that each one received? More than half of those money were spent on pornography. Do you know what was the first gift that the country of France gave to Romania after communism collapsed in that blood revolution? A fully equipped clinic for abortion.

Do you know what was the first gift that Italy gave to Romania? A prostitution home. Do you know what is happening now that drugs are flooding in when the young people are caught and trapped into all the filth of the world? Do you know what is happening in the Middle East at this time? How many of our brothers and sisters are under the threat? Risking their lives. What is happening in America at this time? Could you not watch with me for one hour? Now that hour in the garden was a very special hour.

That night, in that hour, something extraordinary happened. God the Son and God the Father spoke with audible voices. God the Son asked.

God the Father and God the Father from Heaven responded. And they were discussing about us. They were discussing about our salvation.

That night, God the Son asked, Father, is there another way? Is there another way? Now we see, we live in a generation that theologians, philosophers, men of religion tell us that all ways lead to God. It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe. In every religion of the world there is the anonymous Christian. This is what they say.

Do you know what was the response of the Muslims? They said that in every religion of the world is the anonymous Muslim. They tell us that it doesn't matter what you believe. Important is to join a religious movement.

I attended once a church meeting in this country. I want to see what is happening there because in the seminary I do teach the doctrine of the church among some other topics. And the sermon that was preached that night was entitled Pathways to God.

Pathways, plural, to God. And the preacher, a very gifted communicator, came and said, you know, men and women, ladies and gentlemen, we are all different. We are not all alike.

Some of us are intellectuals and we are fulfilled when we grasp with concepts and ideas and we engage thoughts and theories. And that is where we are fulfilled and we feel happy. God created you that way and that's your pathway to God.

Some of us, he said, we are contemplative. We feel fulfilled when we contemplate things. Sunset and sunrise.

And we are fulfilled when we contemplate a mountain or the sea or the ocean. God created you that way. That's your pathway to God.

Some of us are activists and we are happy when we do things, get things done and things move around. And God created you that way. And that's your pathway to God.

And he identified six or seven such groups of people and said, now we'll do something. I will ask all the intellectuals to stand up. And the number of intellectuals stood up.

Then all the contemplatives stood up. And all the activists stood up. And all the pessimists and all the depressive, everybody stood up.

And he blessed them and said, just be faithful on your path to God. Not a single word about Jesus. Not a single word about the cross.

Not a single word about the judgment of God. Not a single word about hell or heaven. All ways lead to God.

But do you know who is the one who doesn't know that? God himself. When God the Son asked, Father, is there another way? Is there another way except the way of the cross? God the Father said, no, Son. There is no other way.

You see, there is no other way. God said so. Because there is no other name.

And there is no other cross. And there is no other name in which we are saved. Except the name of Jesus Christ.

And that night God the Father and God the Son discussed about our salvation and the way of salvation. And do you know who slept that night? Those who needed salvation. Those for whom Jesus came to die.

They slept that night. Do you understand the hour? Are you awake tonight? Jesus came to his disciples the third time. And they were still sleeping.

And Jesus went the third time to speak with his Father. And Jesus said something that our brother Jim explains so vividly this afternoon. Thy will be done.

Now you see, to stay awake when Christ is calling you. Have expectations from God. Understand the time.

But be ready to pay the price. Be ready to pay the price. Jesus said, Thy will be done.

Father, I am ready. I am ready to take the cup. I am ready to pay the price.

Now we have to clarify a few things here. That our salvation is completely and exclusively only through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he said it is finished, it is finished.

We cannot add, we cannot take away from that. We are saved through Christ alone. He paid the price.

We cannot pay price or prices for our own salvation. He paid in full. He paid once and for all.

It is a perfect redemption. But you see, there is another price. If I put it this way, Jesus paid the price for our propitiation.

We are called to pay the price for the propagation. He paid the price for our redemption. Now we are called to take that good news, take the gospel, and propagate it.

Take it to the ends of the earth. Now you see, there is a price to pay for that. Are you willing to pay the price? I will tell you more about a great man of God who paid the price in Romania.

But let me tell you tonight about a price that a lady paid in her family. A lady from our area was saved. And her husband was a social drinker when she was saved.

But after that he became an alcoholic. He was such an addicted alcoholic that he would get drunk every night and he would fall on the ditches on the roadside in the little village where they lived. And every night this lady went to collect him from wherever he was.

In mud, in filth, in dust. Grabbed him and took him home from there. On the road home, he spit upon her, he abused her verbally, cursed her, hit her.

She would take him home, take his clothes, wash them clean, feed him, take him to bed and get everything ready for next morning so he can go to job, to work. That went for years and years. And people advised her because you see there are advisors all over the world.

People advised her to divorce him. And she said, no, he is my husband. And I will stay next to him until the last drop of life in my body.

I want to witness to him. I was invited to a revival in that village. And she was there at every prayer meeting.

At the end of that revival, there was a big crowd in that small church. People were standing on the aisles. And before I started the sermon, her husband came and he was at the entrance there.

Very noisy, he was drunk. And he tried to make his way to the front. But he couldn't get to the front because of the crowd.

So he was stuck there in the crowd and he heard the message. When the evening was over and I invited people to come forward, he came forward. He came straight to me there on the podium.

And he reached to his inner pocket and he pulled out a knife. And he said to me, tonight I came to kill my wife here in the church. Because ever since she repented, became a Christian, she humiliates me in the village.

You see, he was a drunkard. He was an alcoholic but he felt humiliated by his godly wife. So he said, I was determined to come and murder her here in the church.

But he said, as I sit there, as I sat there and listened to the message, God changed my life. And tonight, I have to commit to God this knife and my life. And he put that knife on the plankton there and he knelt down and prayed.

Now you see, that lady paid the price. She could have divorced. But you see, so many are dying in the jungle in the Muslim world for Christ.

We are not willing to pay the price at home for those who are closest to us. We are looking for every shortcut to get rid of our family commitments. There is a price to pay there at home.

There is a price to pay for our neighbors. There is a price to pay to go to prison. There is a price to pay to go to another town to start a church.

There is a price to pay to come to Romania or to Russia or to Iran or Saudi Arabia. There is a price to pay. But you see, those who are not willing to pay the price, they will be the first ones to go to sleep.

Those who are willing to pay the price, they will stand awake. They will watch and pray. Not tonight.

We are at the beginning of our conference. Let me tell you what is my expectation. I expect another fresh encounter with Jesus my Lord.

And you see what is my expectation? I am crying out to God for Europe. My dear brothers, Europe is producing so many dark minds, hardened hearts, so many philosophers that are on their way to hell and they drag millions after them. I am agonizing for Europe.

I am praying for Brussels. You know Brussels becomes the capital of Europe. I am praying for Brussels.

The entire policy of Europe now is being made in Brussels. And I am praying for Brussels as the Apostle Paul prayed for Rome in his days. And I pray that God will open the door for me to go and witness and preach the gospel in Brussels.

I pray for the European Parliament, for the European Commission. I pray for the leaders of Europe. I pray for the media in Europe, for the universities in Europe.

I pray for the companies, corporations in Europe. I pray for churches that are dead in Europe. You know for centuries they preached that the Bible is not the word of God, that Jesus didn't die literally, He didn't rise literally, He is not the only Lord.

They preached all these kinds of liberal garbages and now Europe is dead. I pray that God will raise a mighty generation of men that will stand in Europe and proclaim the gospel. I pray for another reformation in Europe.

I pray for another revival. But you see Eastern Europe is equally in spiritual need. 400 million people from Siberia to Albania, 400 million people, 11 time zones, came to political freedom and they are in spiritual bondage.

I hear that cry, whom shall we send for us? Whom shall we send? You know the Muslim world is at our doorsteps. I agonize for that world. I went to some of the Muslim countries to preach the gospel.

My colleagues and our students go 3-4 times a year. I've been to one of those countries and I must confess that I was frightened. I knew all that the fundamentalist Muslim do to Christians, how they come over their revival meeting with machine guns and they just kill everybody there or put bombs and blow them to pieces.

And I was frightened. When I arrived there, I prayed and I asked God to help me get back alive from that country. But the first day when the revival started, a brother walked me through the main city where we had the revival and as I walked through that city, it was just minutes before the imams called the Muslim faithful to prayer from the tower of the mosques.

And I heard in the nearby a brass band playing Onward Christian Soldiers. And I look around and I couldn't see so I asked my brother who is playing. I said our people.

And before long they came after a street corner and they marched on the main street of the city playing Onward Christian Soldiers. And the crowd went after them. And then the young people from that church did something incredible.

They took a huge piece of paper and they drew a huge cross on that piece of paper. Tied up that paper to balloons and let the balloons fly over the city. And you know that Muslims hate the cross.

Now the brass band was playing Onward Christian Soldiers. The cross was flying over the city. And the Muslims who bowed worshipping, they wait.

Now they were looking up. And I asked my brother, aren't you afraid to do this? He said, afraid of what? He said, afraid of what they might do to you. He looked at me and I will never forget what that man told me.

He said, Brother Paul, in this country we have learned there are two kinds of repentance. Dry repentance and wet repentance. Dry repentance does not produce fruit.

It's dry. Wet repentance produces fruit. And wet repentance is wet with tears and blood if necessary.

And we are ready to pay the price. One week of a turning life, turning point in my life. Because of those men who believe in wet repentance.

Now you see, we are here tonight because Jesus paid the price. We are here because he went to the cross. We are here because he cried out, my God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? But there he said, Father, forgive them.

There he cried out, it is finished. And you know, he is at the right hand of the Father now. He has all authority in heaven and earth.

He can do whatever he wants without you and me. Yet he is calling us. He is calling you and he is calling me.

Are you awake? Do you have expectations? Do you understand the time? Are you ready to pay the price? Let's bow our heads for a moment of prayer.

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