

## High Time To Awake Out Of Sleep

**Robert Murray M'Cheyne:**

**IN THESE WORDS**, Paul tells believers that it is waking time; and I would just tell you, dear friends, the same. It is high time for you to awake out of sleep. There is a condition among Christians which may be called sleeping; like the ten virgins, they slumber and sleep. Ah! I fear there are many sleeping Christians among you. It is waking time, believer. Do you know what time it is? You do not seem to know how near sunrise it is.

I will now show you what it is to be sleeping Christians. It is to be one that has come to Christ, yet has fallen asleep in sin. Like the church at Ephesus, they have left their first love: They do not retain that realization of Christ's preciousness—that freshness of believing. They have forgotten the fresh grasp of a Savior. So it is with some among yourselves. You may have seen your sins; yet you have lost that fresh conviction of sin you once felt so deeply. You do not see such a beauty in Jesus. The more we look at Him, just the more we would look again. Earthly things pall upon the taste; but it is not so with things divine—they grow sweeter the more often you use them. So every time you look at Jesus, He grows more precious. The rose is sweet, yet it loses its smell; but the lovely Rose of Sharon grows sweeter and sweeter. Earthly apples lose their taste; but the apple tree does not so—*"Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love."* Sleepy Christians, you have lost taste for the apples. Oh! it is not time for you to sleep any longer. Believer, if you sleep on, you will soon doubt if ever you have come to Christ at all.

To awake out of sleep, then, is to see that divine things are realities. When you are half asleep, you see things imperfectly. Ah! you are not affected by divine realities. Now, what is it to awake out of sleep? To awake out of sleep is to see sin as it is—your heart as it is—Christ as He is—and the love of God in Christ Jesus. And you can see all this by looking to Calvary's Cross. O! it is an awful thing to look to the Cross and not be affected, nor feel conviction of sin—nor feel drawn to Christ. O! I do not know a more sad state than this. O! pray that you may be wide awake. Dear friends, our life is like a river, and we are like a boat sailing down that river. We are drawing nearer and nearer to the shores of eternity. Some may have believed for forty years. Ah! your salvation is nearer than when you first believed. Your redemption draws nigh—the redemption of your whole soul—your complete redemption. And the time is coming when we will get it—you will be saved, and then the last stone will be put on with shoutings of *"Grace! grace! unto it."* Then will the crown be put upon your heads, for you will be more than conquerors.

Dear friends, I do not know how far the day is spent. This is a dark, dark time; but the day is breaking—the shadows are fleeing away. The river Euphrates is drying up—that shows the day is breaking. The Jews, God's ancient people, are bringing in, and that shows the day is far spent.

And it is also high time for unconverted men to awake out of sleep. O, sinners! you are fast asleep, you are lying dormant—dead. O, sleepy souls, it is high time you should awake. Do you know what angels said when they went to and fro upon the earth? They told the Lord, *"Behold, all the earth sitteth still and is at rest."* Ah! you are fast asleep. God has given you the spirit of slumber. Do you not remember the message to Amos—*"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion?"* And that is the case with many of you. When you come to this house, you are in a place where Jesus has called sleepy souls, and where He has been found of very many. O, sleeping souls; it is high time for you to awake. You are living in a dream. Every Christless man will find at last that he has been dreaming. Ah! the time is coming when you shall find that your following after gold is but a golden dream. And is there no pleasure in a dream? Who has not felt that there is pleasure even in dreams. But, ah! you must awake. Like a man condemned to die (and many of you are condemned already), he dreams of home, of his wife and children, of freedom and pleasure; but, ah! he awakes by the toll of the death-bell, and he finds that—behold it was but a dream!

Now, unconverted men, you are taking a sleep; but, like the man, you will awake from a bright dream to a bitter reality. Dear friends, I often think when I look to your houses as I pass along, and when I look in your faces, that ministers are like watchmen—they see the fire and they give the alarm. Many of you are in danger as one in a burning house. Sometimes you wonder at our anxiety for you. Sometimes you say, *"Why are you so harsh?"* O, poor soul! It is because the house is on fire. O, then, can we speak too harshly?—can we knock too loudly at the door of your consciences? I remember what a woman once told John Newton on her deathbed. She said, *"You often spoke to me of Christ; but O! you did not tell me enough about my danger."* O! I fear many of you will tell me the same. O! I fear many may reproach me on a deathbed, or in hell, that I did not tell you more often that there was a hell. Would to God I had none to reproach me at last; God help me to speak to you plainly. It is high time to awake out of sleep, sinner: for now your damnation slumbers not. Dear friends, it is now more than three years since I first spoke to you, though it just seems like a day since I first came beseeching you to be reconciled to God—beseeching you to come to Jesus. Every day that passes is bringing you nearer to the

judgment seat. Not one of you is standing still. You may sleep; but the tide is going on, bringing you nearer death, judgment, and eternity.

Dear friends, another reason for awaking is, your condemnation is still getting greater and greater. When I first came among you your guilt was not so great as now. "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" (Rom. 2:4-5). Do any of you know that you are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath? You are laying up in the bank. You are laying up wrath for a coming eternity. Will this not convince you that it is high time to awake out of sleep? It is time tonight to put on the Lord Jesus. It is high time, sleeper. It is the very time. Will you not awake? Ah! I can tell you one thing—you will find it all true at last, that you have treasured up wrath against the day of wrath. Every sin is a drop of wrath; which, like a river dammed up, gets deeper and deeper and fuller, until at last it bursts forth. O! are there not many misers of wrath here? Do you not see that it is high time for you to awake out of sleep before you have an infinity of wrath laid up? Awake now, and it may be all taken away. There is one ready to take it away if you will but apply to Him. Sinner! Awake!

Another reason is, that opportunities of awaking are passing away. Now, I do say there are times of awaking. There is a time when the ark is passing by your houses; if you allow it to pass, you will find one day, when you would step in, that you will be overcome by the angry waters. You remember the little man of Jericho, Zaccheus. Jesus was passing through Jericho on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified. It was the last time He was to pass that way; it was the last time Zaccheus could see the Savior. When Jesus was to pass, lest he should be lost among the crowd, he climbed up into a sycamore tree. Jesus passed, looked up, and said, "Zaccheus, come down; for today I must abide at thy house." O! had he not come down that moment from the sycamore tree—had he not made haste and come down—he would have come down and gone to a lost eternity. Had he not that hour closed with Jesus, he would have gone to that place where there is no voice of mercy, for Jesus passed by for the last time. And I do say, sinner, if you do not come down from your sycamore tree, and receive Christ tonight, you may not be permitted tomorrow. Now is the accepted time. O! come to Him now. O! you will rejoice forever if you entertain Him joyfully tonight. Sleepy sinner! now awake. It is high time to awake; for the time is at hand when there will be no Bible—no more offers of mercy. We have many precious ordinances now, but they will all come to an end. Our Thursday evenings will soon come to an end too. O! make haste, then, and come down, and Jesus this night will abide in your house. He is saying, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Had Zaccheus slept, he would never have seen Jesus; if you do not awake, alas! alas! for the day comes when you shall wail because of Him.

Amen.