

LENT 2 SLEEPY EYES

MARK 14:32-42

I'M NOT SURE THERE'S AN ACTIVITY, WHEN SITTING DOWN, IN WHICH I HAVEN'T FALLEN ASLEEP. ... WATCHING TV, READING BOOKS, WRITING SERMONS, WAITING IN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE, ATTENDING CONCERTS, IN THE CLASSROOM, AT BASKETBALL GAMES, FISHING, DURING CONVERSATION, A COUPLE CLOSE CALLS DRIVING OFF THE ROAD AND EVEN ONCE WHILE I WAS EATING!

I'M SURE YOU'VE SLIPPED INTO TO LA-LA LAND A FEW TIMES YOURSELF. PERHAPS AT AN EMBARRASSING TIME OR PLACE. I'M GUESSING YOU CAN RELATE TO PETER, JAMES AND JOHN AS THEY SUCCUMB TO EXHAUSTION IN GETHSEMANE.

THEIR MASTER, JESUS, HAS ASKED THEM TO PRAY WITH HIM. HE'S COMPLETELY INVESTED IN A PRAYER TO HIS FATHER - EMOTIONALLY, SPIRITUALLY, AND PHYSICALLY. HOW ABSOLUTELY HUMILIATING IT MUST BE FOR THE BOYS TO FAIL HIM - HE CATCHES THEM SNORING... THREE TIMES!

HEH, IT HAD BEEN A BUSY, EXCITING, SCARY, CONFUSING, ROLLER-COASTER WEEK FOR THE DISCIPLES. NO WONDER THEY HAVE SLEEPY EYES AND END UP WATCHING THE INSIDE OF THEIR EYELIDS FOR AWHILE.

YOU'VE NODDED OFF DURING PRAYER. AND, TO BE FAIR, WHAT COULD BE MORE SLEEP INDUCING THAN WATCHING ANOTHER PERSON PRAY? THE THREE AMIGOS RECLINE ON THE SOFT GRASS OF THE GARDEN. THE COOL NIGHT AIR IS PERFECT FOR DREAMING; A NAP IS INEVITABLE, NO?

IT IS SINFUL THAT THEY FAIL TO SUPPORT JESUS. IF YOU'RE HONEST, HOWEVER, YOU WOULD HAVE SLEPT, TOO. IF YOU HAD BEEN IN THEIR SANDALS, YOU'D BE THE CULPRIT LEAVING YOUR SAVIOR ON HIS OWN TO BATTLE THE DEVIL, HIS FLESH, AND THE REALITY THAT HE'S ABOUT TO BE FORSAKEN BY HIS FATHER ON ACCOUNT OF LAZY, INATTENTIVE, SLEEP-WALKING SINNERS LIKE YOU!

WE WON'T PLAY SELF-RIGHTEOUS OR BASH PETER, JAMES AND JOHN TONIGHT! THIS MOMENT IN TIME SIMPLY TEACHES US TO IDENTIFY WITH SINFUL HUMAN BEINGS. EVEN AS BELIEVERS, EVEN TRYING OUR BEST, WE FAIL JESUS.

WE ARE SPIRITUAL SLEEPYHEADS. OUR *WILLING SPIRIT* CANNOT OVERCOME THE WEAKNESS OF OUR FLESH. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS UNBELIEVABLE PRAYER OF JESUS, IDENTIFIES HIM AS THE LORD WHO NEITHER SLUMBERS NOR SLEEPS.

JESUS HAS HIS EYES ON ONLY ONE THING - TO FULFILL HIS FATHER'S WILL ON OUR BEHALF. HE BEGAN HIS SAVING WORK WITH A BAPTISM THAT HIS COUSIN JOHN FELT TOO UNIMPORTANT TO PERFORM. REMEMBER WHAT JESUS SAID? *LET'S DO THIS TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

NOW, THE FINAL ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS GOING DOWN. THE WORLD'S SIN IS GOING AWAY; JESUS IS THE PAYMENT. ONLY HE CAN DO IT BECAUSE HE'S THE ONLY ONE ATTENTIVE ENOUGH TO GOD'S LAW TO KEEP IT.

2 HE KNOWS HE'S THE REQUIRED SACRIFICE TO ATONE FOR THE WORLD'S SIN, AND HE'S FOCUSED ON REDEEMING US FOR HIS FATHER. HE MAKES PROPITIATION FOR OUR SLEEPY EYES. HE'S THE COST OF OUR EMANCIPATION.

HE HAS BEEN ACTIVELY OBEDIENT, DOING GOD'S LOVE-THING PERFECTLY BECAUSE HIS EYES ARE WIDE OPEN TO GOD AND NEIGHBOR. NOW, THOSE EYES ARE LOOKING AHEAD TO SUFFERING HELL'S TERROR IN PASSIVE OBEDIENCE. ONLY THEN, WILL HE CLOSE HIS EYES IN DEATH, ENTOMBED FOR US.

MARK PLACES BEFORE OUR EYES THE INTENSE ANGUISH JESUS SUFFERS FOR US. WE SEE HIM IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE SORROWFUL AND TROUBLED, EVEN TO THE POINT OF DEATH. THAT GIVES US SOME INDICATION OF THE POWER OF SIN – IT'S KILLING JESUS ALREADY IN THE GARDEN.

OPEN YOUR EYES AND SEE THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD'S SIN PRESSING DOWN ON JESUS LIKE A LITERARY VISE SQUEEZING THE PLOT OUT OF A STORY. HE FALLS ON HIS FACE IN WEAKNESS AND TREMBLING, BEGGING, *ABBA, FATHER, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE FOR YOU. REMOVE THIS CUP FROM ME.*

THE CUP HE MUST DRINK IS FILLED WITH THE POISON OF HIS FATHER'S WRATH AGAINST SIN - YOUR SIN, MY SIN, THE SIN BLINDED BY HELL. SINLESS, INNOCENT JESUS, WHO LIVES IN HOLY LOVE, FACES OUR JUST DEATH.

IT'S A DEATH CUTTING HIM OFF FROM HIS FATHER; THE CONSEQUENCE OF ADAM'S FALL. EVERY ONE OF US HAS FOLLOWED SUIT...EXCEPT JESUS; HE DOESN'T MERIT DEATH; HE DOESN'T DESERVE TO DRINK THE CUP OF GOD'S WRATH.

HIS PRAYER TO AVOID THE CUP ISN'T BECAUSE HE'S TIRED OF THIS SALVATION PLAN; IT WARNS US OF THE OUTRAGE OF SIN AND THE AGONY OF A HELL WITHOUT GOD! THE PRAYER CONTINUES: *YET NOT WHAT I WILL, BUT WHAT YOU WILL.* HE PRAYED IT A SECOND TIME...AND THIRD.

THE WILL OF THE FATHER FOR HIM, IS TO SUFFER IN ORDER TO SPARE YOU. HE ANSWERED JESUS' PRAYER BY STRENGTHENING HIM FOR THE TASK, AND JESUS, WENT WILLINGLY TO ARREST AS SOON AS JUDAS SHOWED UP TO BETRAY HIM.

ISAIAH HAD FORETOLD IT. *STRICKEN, SMITTEN BY GOD, AND AFFLICTED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS; CRUSHED FOR OUR INIQUITIES; CUT OFF OUT OF THE LAND OF THE LIVING THOUGH HE HAS DONE NO VIOLENCE AND NO LIES ARE ON HIS LIPS.*

HE'S OFFERED UP BY GOD TO SATISFY THE JUSTICE OF GOD. JESUS GOES TO HELL FOR YOU! THE AMAZING GRACE OF GOD IS SEEN HERE IF YOUR EYES ARE OPEN. HE LOVES SO PERFECTLY, THAT HE HAS NO PARTIALITY – HE DOESN'T EVEN LOVE HIS SON MORE THAN YOU; HE DOESN'T EVEN LOVE HIMSELF MORE THAN YOU!

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY DIDN'T STOP WITH THE DEATH OF JESUS. IT POINTED FORWARD TO EASTER, WHEN JESUS APPEARED TO THE DISCIPLES, LOOKED ON THEM WITH LIVING EYES, AND SAID: *PEACE BE WITH YOU.* THEIR EYES GAWKED AT HIS HANDS AND HIS SIDE. NO SLEEPING THAT DAY!

**3 THE SCARS ON JESUS' HANDS REVEAL THE GOOD AND GRACIOUS WILL OF GOD. THE WORK OF PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND YOU IS FINISHED! YOU, A SINNER, HAVE THE ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE THAT GOD HAS NOTHING AGAINST YOU. HE GIVES YOU THE CUP OF SALVATION AND YOU ARE UNITED TO HIS SON FOREVER.**

**YOU, SO WORRIED ABOUT YOUR DAY TO DAY AND SO UNATTENTIVE TO WHAT MIGHT BE THE LORD'S WILL, ARE SAVED FROM YOURSELF BY HIS WILL. YOU, SLEEPY-EYED INSTEAD OF ALERT TO THOSE AROUND YOU, ARE SEEN AS AN INNOCENT CHILD OF GOD – FOR JESUS' SAKE.**

**JESUS REFUSED TO CLOSE HIS EYES TO THE PLAN OF SALVATION. HE REFUSES TO TAKE HIS EYES OFF YOU. ...MAKE IT A LITTLE EASIER ON HIM; STAY AWAKE TO HOW YOU CAN LOVE HIM AND LOVE OTHERS FOR HIM.**

**DON'T BE SLEEP-WALKING THROUGH THIS LIFE; KEEP YOUR EYES ON JESUS AND CONSIDER EVERY DAY WHAT YOU CAN DO AS A FORGIVEN SOUL, HEADED TO THE ETERNAL VISTAS OF GLORY!**

**WHEN YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO SACRIFICE YOUR TIME OR MONEY OR TALENTS IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE TO SOMEONE, LOOK AGAIN TO JESUS IN THE GARDEN SUFFERING FOR THE LOVE OF YOU...AND ALL SINNERS.**

**WHEN THE TRIALS OF LIFE TRY TO BLIND YOU TO THE BLESSINGS YOU HAVE AS A FOREVER CHILD OF GOD; WHEN YOU ARE OVERLOADED BY SORROW OR DISTRACTED BY FRUSTRATING MATTERS; OPEN YOUR EYES TO JESUS IN GETHSEMANE, ENDURING HELL WITH THE AID OF HIS FATHER. HE'S YOUR FATHER!**

**YOU ARE SO LOVED. TAKE IT TO HEART. SPREAD IT AROUND. AND DON'T GIVE UP JUST BECAUSE YOU FALL ALSEEP TOO OFTEN. PETER, JAMES AND JOHN BECAME INVALUABLE TO THE LORD AND HIS CHURCH, NOT BECAUSE THEY HAD PERFECT SIGHT; BUT, BECAUSE THEY KEPT THEIR SLEEPY EYES ON JESUS.**

**THE BOYS WERE INSPIRED BY THE PARDON AND PEACE ASSURED BY THEIR MASTER'S SACRIFICE OF LOVE. THAT SAME FAITH IS AWAKE IN YOUR HEART AND MIND. THAT MEANS THAT NO MATTER HOW YOUR DAY GOES, YOU CAN FALL ASLEEP IN PEACE EACH NIGHT AND ARISE TO SERVE HIM EVERY MORNING.**

**AND, WHEN YOUR EYES EVENTUALLY GO TO SLEEP IN DEATH, BE CONFIDENT THAT THEY WILL OPEN TO EVERLASTING LIFE ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION.**

**AMEN.**