

FROM SLUMBER TO SPLENDOR

ACTS 20:7-12

Text:

Introduction:

The early church was a church that was on fire and was effective for the cause of Christ. Why are we not being as effective as this early church was? What is missing?

Notice with me some truths in this passage, as we think together on this thought "From Slumber To Splendor.

1. A DEVOTED CHURCH

(Acts 20:7-8) "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. {8} And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together."

- A. An appointed hour
- B. An eager attendance

(Acts 2:46) "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,"

1. Why should I go to church?

(Mat 18:20) "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

(Jude 1:18-19) "How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. {19} These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."

(Heb 10:25) "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Illustration:

It is easy to get a crowd for a feast, festival, funeral or fight but it is hard to fill up the church for preaching or prayer.

C. Close fellowship

(Amos 3:3) "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

1. There is a need for unity in the church.

(Psa 133:1) " Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

(Eph 4:3) "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

(1 Cor 1:10) "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

(Phil 1:27) "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"

(Rom 16:17) "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

2. Anything that disrupts the unity of the church is not of God.

(1 Cor 14:33) "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

D. Word of God Is The Centerpiece

(1 Cor 1:18) "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

(1 Cor 1:21) "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

(2 Tim 4:2-4) "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. {3} For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; {4} And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

These are marks of a devoted church.

2. A DEAD CHURCH MEMBER

(Acts 20:9) "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead."

A. Dangerous position

1. Probably didn't start there.
2. Backsliding is subtle and dangerous.

Illustration:

Airplane and the rat.

An airline pilot was flying his plane one day when he heard a scratching sound behind him. Knowing he was the only one on board, he quickly realized that it must be a rat. He put on his oxygen mask and began to increase altitude until the scratching sounds had stopped. After concluding his flight the pilot searched his plane and found the dead body of the rat next to a hydraulic line that was almost chewed into. He had killed the rat by taking it to an altitude where there was not enough oxygen to sustain its life. Had he not done so that little rat could have taken his life.

Many are flying too low in the Christian life, allowing little things in their life that can defeat or destroy them. Sin cannot live at high spiritual altitudes.

3. It is dangerous to look or place yourself in a position to look out (window) instead of looking unto Jesus.

Many today are not in the world but they are looking out the window and before you know it they are lulled to sleep and find themselves in the world battered and bruised or even destroyed.

B. A Sad Condition (Asleep)

1. A lot of Christians are asleep.

- Disciples

(Mat 26:36-45) "Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. {37} And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. {38} Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. {39} And he went a little farther, 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. {40} And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? {41} Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. {42} He went away again the 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. {43} And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. {44} And he left them,

and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. {45} 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 into the hands of sinners."

(Rom 13:11) "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

C. A Tragic Fall

He was more out than in

1. You cannot control sin it will control you.
2. If you play around at the edge you will fall out.

Illustration: (David) 2 Sam 11

D. A Terrible Conclusion (Dead)

1. This is the condition of many church attendees today.
- No joy, No peace, No zeal, No power

2. There are consequences to backsliding and dying.

(Heb 12:6-8) "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. {7} If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? {8} But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

3. A DELIGHTED CHURCH

A. A genuine reaction

1. Went down (concern)

(Acts 20:10) "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him."

(Gal 6:2) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

2. Embraced (love)

(Mat 22:39) "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

B. A glorious reunion

1. Many after one totally is reconciled have the attitude of the prodigal's brother.

C. A great revival

1. What once was sadness became great joy.
2. Where one once slumbered there is now splendor.

Close:

One night the meeting place of a small ineffective church caught on fire and burned to the ground. Several from the community, as well as from the church, had gathered to combat the blaze, but to no avail! It was a total loss. Looking around the gathered faces, one member saw a local man who had always been opposed to the work of the church and who refused to attend. The church member said to him, "Well, I have never saw you come near this church before." "No" said the man, "but then, I have never seen this church on fire before either."

What keeps God's people from seeing their churches set on fire in old-fashion revival? The answer is God's people. Many are looking out the window of the

world, many are flying to low, and some have fallen out and are completely in the world.