

## **Wake Up!** *Marshall Reid*

Before cell phones with built in alarms were ubiquitous, it was common for travelers lodging at a hotel to request a wakeup call for the next morning. That terminology has since been metaphorically applied to situations where a person has an experience that causes some needed internal awareness – a “wakeup call”. For instance, someone may have a near-death experience that makes them realize the brevity and fragility of life that “wakes them up” and makes them reevaluate their priorities and how they spend their time.

I had a wakeup call in 2005 when I experienced kidney failure that resulted in subsequent dialysis and a kidney transplant in 2006. It was during that time that I began to look at life afresh and decided I needed to change what I was doing with my life – I needed to devote my time to teaching and preaching the gospel.

That’s not the only wakeup call I need to experience, though, for remaining spiritually strong and focused is an ongoing struggle with its ups and downs. Sometimes, wakeup calls are only temporary, and the pulls of this life and the world we live in influence us enough to lose focus again. Of course, wakeup calls are not restricted to dramatic events in one’s life such as near-death experiences. A diligent effort of reading God’s word allows for constant course correction – constant wakeup calls.

Paul spoke of the need to wake up spiritually on multiple occasions. For instance, in Ephesians 5:8-14, he speaks of the Ephesians as those who had once been in darkness but were now part of the light. It is in that context that he quotes from (most likely) a Christian hymn of the day in verse 14:

“Awake, you who sleep,  
Arise from the dead,  
And Christ will give you light.”

He goes on to talk about being wise in the way we live our life, making the best use of our time to serve God, and to not spend our time on foolish and sinful things. Once we wake up from our spiritual stupor, we can’t afford to hit the snooze button and return to our sleep. We must be fully awake and get to work!

Paul gives a similar message to the Romans in Romans 13:11-14 saying that “it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (vs. 11). As a result, we need to “cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light” (vs.12).

Regarding the return of our Lord, he admonishes the Thessalonians to be ever ready. “Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober” (1 Thess. 5:6). We can’t afford to be caught off guard, falling asleep at our post. We don’t know when he’s going to return, so we must always be ready. Busying ourselves with the pleasures of this world, especially those that are sinful, instead of focusing on spiritual matters, cause us to be spiritually blind and asleep. What a sad state to be in when the Lord returns.

Jesus himself used the same warnings in the letter to the church at Sardis in Revelation 3. They were a church that thought they were alive, but Jesus said they were dead. And they needed to wake up to that reality and change. “Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you” (vs. 2-3).

The repeated message to Christians and non-Christians alike is, “Wake up!” I can just see and hear Paul and Jesus taking someone by the shoulders, shaking them, and loudly and firmly saying to the individual, “Wake up! Don’t you see what’s going on? Don’t you see you don’t have much time and that all these things of the world that you love are going to be the death of you?! Focus, man!” Oh yeah...that someone is me.

I need a wakeup call. You need a wakeup call. It’s high time to wake up and get to work in the kingdom.