

Sleeping on the job

*We need to obey Jesus
the first time*



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Let's look at the Bible. In the Gospel of Mark 14, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray to His Heavenly Father. He said to His disciples Peter, James and John in verse 34-35 (NKJV), ***"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch."*** He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. We see here that the Lord Jesus Christ was fighting the battle of His life. He went to pray to the Father and upon His return, found the disciples sleeping. He further said to them ***"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*** (Mark 14:38, NKJV)

Are we still sleeping and resting? That is the question the Lord asked His disciples in verse 41, after He had come the third time to find them sleeping and resting. I want to say, with great sadness in my heart, that many members of the church are sleeping! We are not watching and praying as we should. We are living in the last days and people are desperate for the truth; we do not have time left on this earth to be told the same things multiple times before we listen.

We need to obey Jesus the first time.

After the Lord awakened the disciples for the third time, the enemy was already in their midst. There is an old saying, which is actually very true, ***"The road to hell, is paved with good intentions."*** Often we make plans: tomorrow I will do this, tomorrow I will do that; but remember the thief comes only to steal, to kill and to destroy (John 10:10). But Jesus came to give us an abundant life, but that requires hard work. Rolling up our sleeves and being sensitive to what the Lord has called us to do.

There were ten virgins who took their lamps and waited for the bridegroom to come, but only five were ready (wise) while the other five were slack (foolish). Just before the bridegroom came, the five foolish virgins realized they didn't have enough oil in their lamps and asked the wise to help them, but they couldn't because they didn't have enough to share. So the foolish went off to buy some oil and, while they were buying oil, the bridegroom came and closed the door. They foolish virgins were left outside. (Matthew 25:1-13)

As a farmer, I know that there is a time for planting and a time for reaping. If we are slack with our planting, the season gets underway and we cannot get our tractors and our implements into the ground because it is too wet. On the other hand, if we also take too long to harvest our crop, we find the spring rains come and they spoil the crop. Similarly, in the Word of God, there is no excuse for laziness or for sleeping on the job! In the Book of Proverbs 24:30-34 (NKJV), ***"I went by the field of the lazy man, and by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; and there it was, all overgrown with thorns; its surface was covered with nettles; its stone wall was broken down. When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction: a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest; so shall your poverty come like a prowler, and your need like an armed man."*** In other words, there is no future for a man that sleeps on the job!

A good farmer will never be found sitting in his house drinking coffee, during the middle of the day, when his workers are out working by themselves.

When I was a young man, an old farmer told me not to drive around the edge of my maize crop but to stop the pickup, get out and walk through the field every single day. Walk through one way and then walk through it the other way, checking it out from the inside-out. He further asked me if I checked my cattle every day and, of course, I said yes; to which he remarked, ***"Well you should check your crop every day too and every day you will find something that needs to be seen too. Maybe an area where the fertilizer has not worked, or maybe another area where there are excessive weeds, and it all needs to be sorted out so that you can have a bumper crop."*** The man who sits in his pickup and drives around his farm, never ever getting out, is a lazy man. His days are numbered, because he's only inspecting the outside and neglecting the inside where most of the crop is growing!

So, as Jesus asked His disciples to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation because the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak; as Christians, you and I need to be disciplined – both spiritually and physically. We need to eat, sleep and exercise well. We need to do everything as unto the Lord and He will lead us into the victory that is already ours!