

Wide Awake

1 Thessalonians 5: 1 - 11 (November 19, 2017)

1 Thessalonians 5: 6.

6So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

Historical Context

Paul turns his attention to the favorite hobby of many Christians: speculating about the end times. He reminded his audience that trying to pinpoint the time of Jesus' return was futile. Paul implicitly saw this as God's work alone. This belief contradicted that of many Jews who believed that a righteous life would hasten the coming of the Lord.

Theme: Wide Awake

The movie *Wide Awake* is about a boy named Joshua whose beloved grandfather had recently passed away. One flashback scene shows Joshua telling his dying grandfather that he is scared, and when he asks if he, too, is scared, his grandfather replies, "You know I'll be alright because God will take care of me."

Yet, after his grandfather passes away, we watch as Joshua struggles to find interest in his school and friends. Joshua fears that his grandfather is not – indeed – alright.

He announces that he is going to go on a mission to look for God to make sure his grandpa is okay. So Joshua goes in search for God. And while on his journey, he begins to find some joy through his friends. And he eventually gains empathy for those whom he had least expected, including the not-so-popular annoying kid who longs for attention and the class bully that Joshua later realizes is using his aggression to cover his insecurities and struggles at home. By the end of the movie, Joshua is able to have fun with his friends, and find joys in the world around him. And he finally comes to the conclusion that his grandfather is okay because he had found God. Because God had, indeed, been present in the little things in life, through the people he had encountered, and through the empathy and compassion he had shared with others.

Gospel Story as a Case Study (Matthew 25:14-30)

The parable of the "talents" is a story of investments – wise and not so wise. It is also a story of world views – that of scarcity and that of abundance. When we talk about a theology of abundance, we're not talking about a prosperity doctrine. It's not a matter of trusting God for a new Mercedes or a luxury yacht. Instead, it is a doctrine of expectation that God is present and active in the world and that we need not fear the world around us. It is fear that distracts us from living with expectant hearts. It is fear that keeps us from loving/embracing our neighbor. It is fear that keeps us from dreaming dreams with God. It is fear that keeps us from investing our lives in the work of God. It is fear that leads us to hoard and bury our resources in the ground rather than investing them in the work of God.