

Recap of last week, first 6 verses:

Travel itinerary details

Paul goes back over to Macedonia and makes it pretty much everywhere he has been before. He picks up a crew along the way, then heads back toward Jerusalem.

Ends up taking about a year, but we don't get a ton of details of what happened during this time at least here. It's like a montage or like the Indiana Jones travel bit, with the airplane and the lines you know?

On the first day of the week, we assembled to break bread. Paul spoke to them, and since he was about to depart the next day, he kept on talking until midnight.

(ESV translates it speech, a number of translations give more of an impression that he was talking with them. Conversing, teaching, discussing. I don't think we want to assume it was like this service is right now – Paul standing at a front of a room, everyone facing him, and only he talked. Either way, it was long)

There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were assembled, and a young man named Eutychus [most people think he was like 10-12 years old] was sitting on a windowsill and sank into a deep sleep as Paul kept on talking. When he was overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead. But Paul went down, bent over him, embraced him, and said, "Don't be alarmed, because he's alive." After going upstairs, breaking the bread, and eating, Paul talked a long time until dawn. Then he left. They brought the boy home alive and were greatly comforted. (Acts 20:8-12)

Of all the encounters and situations they must have experienced with all these churches in Macedonia over the last year. Why stop the pace here and highlight this interaction?

As I searched for these answers I found myself getting pretty frustrated.

Look to others for insights or perspectives as part of my process, submit to the Holy Spirit

Such a huge range of interpretations, most of them felt like they had some kind of agenda to be honest. Most of what I see villainizes one or the other and gets what I can only describe as real "readers digest-y" about it. It's cute, it's light, it's laughable, and it isn't very helpful.

Finding what other people say – "preachers preach too long," "kids these days, am I right?"

Why did Luke write this?

No such thing as filler episodes in the bible

Luke's reason for putting it in here can be understood more fully by understanding how his original audience would have seen it. One helpful thing to understand is:

Ancient view of sleep:

- physical
- death
- Greek gods that supported the same, Hypnos and his brother, death
- Irresponsible human behavior, a complacency

Other places where this theme is seen:

Thessalonians, Corinthians, Ephesians – wake up, stay alert

Parable of the 10 virgins Matthew 25

Six times in Mark chapter 13 Jesus says to stay awake and be alert

Garden of Gethsemane

With that in mind, through that lens, why is this in here?

I think point that is to be taken is the same one that the earliest readers were supposed to take:
Don't fall asleep!

Wake up, or stay awake, don't get lazy, don't get sleepy, be alert and attentive to what God is doing.

That's what Paul has been doing during the first six verses, and now we have a real life example.

I would like for us, through this lens, to notice a few things about what happened here.

Where did it happen: In a setting you might not expect – conditions were great. We cannot assume that since our environment is good, that means we are immune to spiritual sleepiness.

How did it happen: He was overcome with sleep – slipped into sleep. I feel like I can identify with that more than ever. I'm developing my dad ability to fall asleep anywhere.

The couch story

We don't blow our lives up in a moment. It's a steady slipping of bad choices and compromises. Isn't that how it goes with our faith?

What happened: he died

The stakes are not low. Sleepy faith leads to death, every time.

We let sin run our lives. We miss what God is doing. We grow cold to His work and His return.

We get unprepared for His return – that was the point of the parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25 where there was similar language about keeping our lamps lit and not falling asleep.

So it seems pretty obvious that at least one of the reasons Luke put this in here is as a warning.

But I believe it also serves as an encouragement to us as well. This could have been a tragedy, but look at how things pan out here. He brings him back to life.

If we are meant to also see this through a spiritual lens, then this is good news for us because ...

If that's you – you're tired, cold, whatever – There is hope for you.

You are not a lost cause, but you won't wake from your slumber without an outside power source.

We try to do it on our own, we can't. We try to logic our way out of it, but we can't.

We need the power of the HOLY SPIRIT to wake up and stay awake.

We need Him in this new thing He is doing. We will not be able to stand on our own.

It's such a joke to think that we will find what we need by just digging deep down. We must look outside of ourselves.

Coffee story. I need it, like actually ...

So what do we do with this? Is there some sort of action step?

Paul, after this, takes a walk. Sends the ship on the coast, and meets them at the next city they are visiting because he wants to walk.

I'm not making any kind of theological statements about what happened here. But maybe this is a worthwhile example to follow as we try to keep awake and remain alert.

This week, take a walk.

To close our time, let's take communion together, just like these people did. Make us aware and alert to Your presence, Lord. Celebrating the new life ...