

How to Wake Up Your Soul

We've had a great week with VBS, but I'm going to be honest with you. I'm kind of tired. It's been a long few weeks around here and I'm feeling somewhat exhausted. Does anybody else feel that way...just exhausted. And the bad thing is, when you're exhausted, you don't think correctly. Your brain stops working and you do a lot of dumb things and make a lot of dumb decisions.

Story of Michele and the hotel

So, I think we all have had those moments of physical and mental exhaustion. But what about spiritual exhaustion? Have you ever been there? Spiritually, you are just wiped out. I get that way sometimes. And the hard thing is that you don't really know what to do to fix it. Well, this morning we are going to talk about how to go from being spiritually exhausted or asleep to being spiritually awake.

Turn to **1 Thessalonians 5**.

Today we're going to look at how to wake up our souls. But to do that, we've got to do some things. We're going to have to be proactive. It's kind of like losing weight. Some of us are like "I'd like to lose some weight...yeah, I'd like that to happen to me...but, without me doing anything". No, to lose weight you actually have to do something. You have to exercise or watch what you eat. You have to make better decisions.

And sometimes we approach God the same way. We're like "Hey God, I'm feeling a little bit lethargic spiritually, so if you could just fix that, I'd really appreciate it." And God's like "We'll fix it, but you are going to have to be proactive". You are going to have to want it. It's not just going to happen.

And the Bible is full of instances where we are proactive towards our soul and we tell our soul to wake up. We compel our souls to wake up.

**Psalm 43:5 (ESV)-Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?**

**Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.**

The Psalmist is speaking to his soul. He is trying to wake up his soul.

**Psalm 103:1 (ESV)-Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!**

Once again the Psalmist is telling his soul what to do. You are going to praise the Lord.

And so we can do things to help wake up our soul.

The Apostle Paul is the writer of 1 Thessalonians. He is telling this young church about the 2nd coming of Christ and how to be spiritually awake and alert.

1 Thessalonians 5:5-8 (ESV)

⁵ For you are all children^[b] of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

So, how do you wake up a soul? You have to put on 3 things. We have to be proactive.

Verse 8-But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

So, we have to put on FAITH, LOVE and HOPE.

FAITH
LOVE
HOPE

Now, faith is trust or belief.

Pastor Kevin talked about the chair. You can believe that the chair will hold you, but you aren't really showing faith and trust until you sit it in.

Or Pastor Dale's driving. I can believe that Pastor Dale is a good driver, but if I won't ride with him, then I'm not showing faith.

Faith denotes action.

James 2:14 (NLT)-What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions?

True faith is shown by action. So, if you want to wake up a tired soul, then you need to take action. And there is nothing that will wake up your soul like taking great action. When you take major steps of faith, it forces your soul to awaken because you get into situations where you have to totally depend on God. And it's like "God, if you don't intercede here, then it's going to be bad". And many of you have done that and you've seen God do some amazing things and through those experiences, your soul has been awakened.

And when you do that, the other parts of your spiritual life take on new meaning. Your prayer time and Bible study take on a different depth. You can sing that "All we want and all we need is found in You". It takes on new meaning for you. That's faith.

Now we're going to move onto love and this is where we are going to spend most of our time.

I want you write this down-**Expressing Love Wakes Up Your Soul**

Now when the Apostle Paul wrote this verse, he used a very specific word for love. Now many of you know that in the Greek there are 3 words for love.

There's Eros. That's like a romantic love. Paul doesn't use that here. Sorry husbands. You can't go home and say "Pastor Brad said that to wake up my soul I had to show romantic love". Sorry.

Next up is Phileo love. That's a brotherly love. And while Paul was addressing brothers and sisters in Christ, that's not the word he used.

The word he used was Agape. That's the love that God has for us. That's the love that Jesus has for us.

So, loving the way that Jesus loves us will wake up our souls.

4 Ways that Jesus loved

Here's # 1: **Jesus Didn't Discriminate**

If you want to wake up your soul, express a non-discriminating love.

We all discriminate. But Jesus didn't.

Mark 2:15 (NLT)- Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.)

Jesus didn't go to the elite. He had this habit of hanging out with the people that you and I probably wouldn't want to associate with. Tax collectors-were low, bad people. Immoral women-man of Jesus' standing would never have anything to do with women like this. He spent time with the sick and hurting. He touched lepers. His circle of influence probably looked a lot different than ours.

He didn't discriminate. I wish that I could say the same. I wish I loved everyone the same. But, I don't. My motives aren't always pure. Are you ever nice to someone just to get something from them? Or do you ever hang out with people just because it makes you feel better about yourself? It's easy to hang out with people that you like or that you think are cool. But, what about the uncool? What about the people who are hard to deal with?

And it's in these moments where God says to me-**"Brad, are you loving with an Agape love or a Brad love? Are you loving to get something in return?"**

Luke 14:12-13 (NLT)-¹² Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. ¹³ Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

You know who I want to invite-the rich, the cool, the good looking, and the ones who can do things for me.

Loving people without discriminating will wake up your soul. Love people who could never repay you.

China Team/Texas/Mexico Team

So, that's **# 1: Jesus didn't discriminate**

Here's **# 2: Jesus slowed down**

Jesus was never in a hurry. He made time for everyone. He didn't turn people away. He could have. He could have just said to his disciples, "Hey guys, I've only got 3 years to make everything happen. So, I'm going to need you to keep all of these needy people away."

But He didn't. He made time for everyone. In Matthew 8 it says that Jesus **"healed all of the sick"**. All of them.

Not only was Jesus never in a hurry. He was continually present. He was always focused on where He was. I'm awful at that. My brain is always thinking about what's next. I'm talking to people but my brain has already moved on to the next thing that needs to be done.

Agape love is a love that slows down and is continually present.

Here's a way to do this. Ready? **You have to ask people questions**. You can't just listen. If you do that, your brain will move on to the next task.

You've got to be present. And if you do that, you'll discover it's about the person, not the task. And that will wake up your soul.

1: Jesus didn't discriminate

2: Jesus slowed down

3: Jesus Co-suffered with us

Jesus took on flesh and walked this earth. He wasn't like "**tough for you humans**". No, when Christ put on flesh He decided that He would co-suffer with us. Did He sin? No, He was without sin, but He did co-suffer with us.

John 1:14 (ESV)- And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So, what's the big deal with that? Jesus gets and understands our suffering.

Read through the Gospels and you'll see that Jesus had to deal with all types of suffering. And because of that Jesus understands our suffering. He understands our hurts and pain.

Isaiah 53:4 (ESV)-Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows

You say, "**Jesus wouldn't understand my feelings of abandonment**". Sure He would. He knew what it was like to be abandoned (followers).

Jesus knew what it was like to face fear, doubt, anxiety, worry, loneliness, loss, pressure...

Why, because Christ, in His Agape love, chose to not only understand our suffering, but to co-suffer with us.

And I wonder, because Jesus is eternal and outside of time, that as we are currently going through hard times, struggles and valleys that Jesus is suffering alongside with us? We tell Jesus that we're hurting and He says **"I'm hurting with you"**.

And if that's the way that Jesus loved us, this co-suffering love, then shouldn't we love in the same way? Let me just say that I'm bad at this. I'm part of the group that says that compassion and mercy just aren't my spiritual gifts. (Spiritual Gifts Test)

What that really means is that I'm cold hearted and I really don't care and what's next? But that's not Agape love. That's selfish love.

If we truly want to wake up our souls, then we've got to hurt with people. **We've got to get into the trenches of people's lives.** And it will be ugly and messy and time consuming.

And you don't say **"I'm going to pray for you"**. Say **"I'm going to pray with you."** Do you see the difference?

Sometimes it's okay to not know what to say. When you don't, here's what will work. "I'm with you". That's it. Just let them know that they're not alone. It can be the most powerful thing you say.

I'm not sure what's going on right now, but it has been an incredibly difficult season of suffering within the church. There have been so many trials and hurts and pains and loss.

But I see the love that you all have for each other. Many of you are more than just concerned. You are suffering with these people. And it encourages me to want to jump into the trenches as well. And I see some of you who are really hurting and I see you participating in worship (knowing what you're going through) and it just about breaks me. But what a blessing!

And when we walk through life's struggles together, I believe that it awakens all of our souls.

And our souls becoming alive doesn't always mean that everything is happy and exciting. Sometimes it means that there is pain. But, if someone is walking with me through the hard times, it makes it all a little bit easier.

If you want your soul to wake up, then get into the trenches of other people's lives and co-suffer with them.

1: Jesus didn't discriminate

2: Jesus slowed down

3: Jesus co-suffered

4: Jesus told the truth

John 4-Woman at the well

Jesus tells the woman to go get her husband. She says she isn't married (technically true). Then Jesus tells her that she is right. But, she has been married 5 times before and the man she is living with now isn't her husband.

Jesus wasn't mean, but He did confront her on the way she was living. And because of this, things changed in her life and in the life of the village that she lived in.

Agape love tells the truth.

Jesus tells us the truth. The Holy Spirit tells us the truth. He says things like **"Brad, you don't have it all figured out. You have sin in your life. But, I saved you and I have forgiven you. Here are some things to work on"**.

We need to do the same things with each other. We need to be able to tell each other the truth (in love). Sometimes they are encouraging truths, but

sometimes there are hard truths. I've had people in my life who have told me things that I needed to hear that maybe I didn't want to hear.

So, we need to speak truths into the lives of people, but we need to make sure that we're being led by the Holy Spirit and not just doing it because we're upset and or we've just got to get this off our chests.

And remember that all of this is to express a Christ-like love. This isn't done in anger or malice. It isn't out of jealousy or envy. It's done out of love. And if that is not the motive, then I would suggest you keep it to yourself. This isn't your opportunity to unload on people. (Galatians 6-gently and humbly)

In the same way that we need to speak truths into people's lives we also need to be receptive to truth being spoken into our lives.

1: Jesus didn't discriminate

2: Jesus slowed down

3: Jesus co-suffered

4: Jesus told the truth

Each one of these is about how better to connect and deal with people. And that's a big part of what church is here. It's a place and an opportunity to connect and fellowship and have community with each other. So, when you come here, don't hide. You've got to get involved.

Let's go back to where we first started:

FAITH

LOVE

HOPE

Faith is belief with action.

We talked about expressing Agape/Christ-like love.

Hope is a desire for things to happen. Jesus Christ is our hope. He is our hope for salvation. He is our hope for eternal life. Ephesians 1:19—we've been called to hope. Our hope is Jesus.

We've talked a lot about Love, but not much about Faith and Hope. There's a reason for that. I believe that Love fuels our Faith and that Love fuels our Hope.

When my faith is waning or I'm doubting, my faith is fueled by people who express Agape love to me. Or when I'm losing hope, I'm fueled by people who express Agape love to me.

That's why Paul says in **1 Corinthians 13:13 (NLT)- Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.**

So, how do we love each other with a Christ-like love?

1 Thessalonians 5:11- **Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.**

Build each other up. Once again, I'm bad at this.

I'm going to challenge you this week. Find someone and encourage them. Maybe you send them an email or a message on Facebook. Maybe you text them or talk to them face to face. But, do it. And do it as soon as you think about it. If you wait, you'll never follow through.

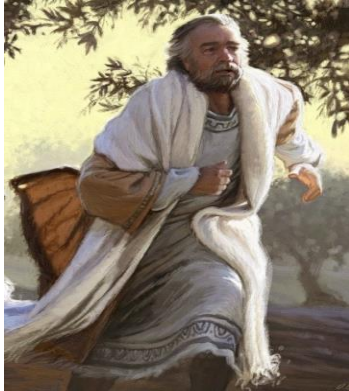
And don't do it for me, or Pastor Dale, or Pastor Kevin. We're easy. Find someone else in the church to encourage.

Why is this so powerful? Because you and I forget that we are loved by God and by other people.

In closing, I want to say that maybe I stretched the truth a little bit earlier when I said that Jesus was never in a hurry. That he never ran anywhere.

Story of the Prodigal Son-Luke 15

Luke 15:20 (NLT)-So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.



The father ran to his son. Who's the father? God is. And He runs.

Often times I've heard people say that God is waiting on you. That he's waiting. No, God is not waiting on you. He's running toward you.