

1 **The Insomniac Christian**

- Why We must always be on Alert!

2 **Serta Time!**

- Imagine this -- It's been a long, exhausting day filled with work, obligations, meetings, errands and responsibilities.
- You were up early and plowed through your “to do” list at work, then you got the kids to their activities and threw some sandwiches together to eat on the run.
- Eventually, you made it home only to find more chores to do.
- Finally, the day comes to an end, and what do you want to do? Fall into bed, relax as your eyes get heavy, and gently slip into a deep, refreshing sleep.

3 **High Alert**

- But wait! Sound the alarm! Jesus says in our text tonight, "Stay awake!"
- Even as we struggle to keep our eyes open for one more moment, Jesus seems to scoff at sleep as he commands us to keep alert and to be watchful.
 - “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” (Matthew 24:42-44)
- Apparently, there is no rest for the weary.
- So then what is a sleep-deprived Christian supposed to do?

4 **Not Enough Sleep**

- So then how are we to stay awake when we already live in one of the most sleep-hungry nations in the world?
- Our 24/7 society with its endless supply of news, social media and entertainment on-demand allows us to stay up way past our bedtimes as we enjoy posting on Facebook or watching endless cat videos on YouTube.

5 **Not Enough Sleep**

- The lack of sleep is taking a toll.
- Employers in the United States complain about workers who doze off in front of their computers or who even fall asleep while operating machinery, which endangers them and everyone around them.
- Job performance is suffering because workers show up overtired.
- And now Jesus wants us to "stay awake" even longer?!
- How are we supposed to do that?

6 **Randy Gardner**

- In 1965 (some sources say 1964), Randy Gardner set the world record for the most consecutive hours staying awake.
- His feat became sort of the gold standard for staying awake, and it was quickly broken by others including
 - Tony Wright of Cornwall (266 hours),
 - Jim Thomas of Fresno (266.5 hours), and
 - Toimi Soini in Hamina, Finland (276 hours)

7 **Sleep is Important**

- 266 hours is about 11-and-a-half days!
- Most of us are getting weary after 11-and-a-half hours. Which is a good thing, because scientists tell us that sleep is a vital component of overall good health for humans.
- Although scientists don't know exactly why sleep is good for us, they know why the lack of it is bad for us.
- Skipping sleep can lead to loss of memory, high blood pressure, obesity, slurred speech, impaired decision making ability, and an increased risk of heart attacks.

8 **Negative Effect of too Little Sleep**

- Eight Effects of Sleep Deprivation
 - Lower stress threshold.
 - Impaired memory.
 - Trouble concentrating.
 - Decreased optimism and sociability.
 - Impaired creativity and innovation.
 - Increased resting blood pressure.
 - Increased food consumption and appetite.
 - Increased risk of cardiac morbidity.

9 **Too Much Sleep**

- Effects of sleeping too much . . .
 - Headaches & Irritability
 - Hypersomnia & low energy, and memory problems.
 - 21% more likely to become obese.
 - Increases the risk of diabetes.
 - Miss important points in Pastor McCowan's sermons.

10 **Wake Up**

- Jesus is not literally commanding a lack of pillow time.
- Instead, Jesus is saying, "Wake up! Look around! Be aware!"
- In other words, Jesus is saying, Don't go through life like a sleepwalker, without seeing or noticing what's going on all around us.
- It's time for us to open not only our eyes, but also our spirits so that we can be aware of how God is moving and guiding us through our lives.
- Why? Because the times are evil.

11 **Asleep at the Switch**

- Jesus is warning against being "asleep at the switch," an expression that originated in the railroad industry.
- It refers to someone who has missed something important, has not noticed some critical detail or who might be placing themselves or others in danger because of a lack of attention.
- If an engineer dozes off while tending the switches (controls) that guide the train, it could easily cause a crash.
- It's vital to "stay awake."

12 **“Watch Out”**

- Last week in Jamie’s sermon, she highlighted why we should be diligent in growing our faith and maintaining our passion for serving the Lord.
- As she mentioned in Matthew 24, there is a day that is coming when a great persecution will break out and many will turn from the faith (vs. 10).
- This will be known as the “Great Falling Away” and will primarily be centered in the Middle East where people will be forced to take the “Mark of the Beast” and swear allegiance to the Antichrist.
- In fact, this will be so bad that apostate Christians will betray and hand other Christians over to the authorities who will imprison them and put some to death.
- According to Jesus, only by standing firm will one be saved.

13 **The Armor of God**

- In Ephesians, the Apostle Paul also instructs us to stand firm.

- Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. (Eph 6:13-17 NIV)
- With this in mind, be alert . . . (Eph 6:18 NIV)

14 **Fall into Temptation**

- Even though I believe that most of intense persecution of believers in the last days will be primarily centered in the Middle East, events all around the world could be effected as well, as the world economy may be turned upside down.
- Nations may institute “Marshal Law” to deal with riots and fights over limited resources.
- To have access to these resources, governments may have to nationalize banks, take over all investments and redistribute income and resources depending on one’s political loyalty.
- Hard strapped for cash, loyal communities may revoke churches’ tax exempt status—forcing many congregations to close their doors.
- Many who are spiritually weak and have neglected the maintenance of their faith, might not be able to control their flesh and fall into temptation and do evil.

15 **Fall into Temptation**

- In Matthew 26:41, Jesus tells his disciples to do two things, so that they won't fall into temptation. What are those two things?
- He tells them to “Watch & Pray!”
- “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.” (Luke 22:46 NIV)
- In the Lord’s Prayer, there are three prayer requests. 1) Give us our daily bread, 2) forgive us our trespasses, and 3) lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.
- How many of us spend 1/3 of our prayers on asking God to help us to stand firm in the faith and not to fall into temptation?

16 **God’s Grace to Stand Firm**

- If we were to pray and ask God for help to stand firm, what things would be asking for?
 - Lord, help me to stay within my Christmas budget.
 - Lord, help me to avoid getting into arguments with my visiting in-laws.

- Lord, help me not to hold on to offenses and unforgiveness so that I don't repay evil with evil, but overcome evil with good.
- Lord, help me not to get so busy with the holidays that I ignore you.
- Lord, wake me up so that I can keep my spiritual fervor shining and show me all the miracles you're accomplishing in my life.

17 Advent

- Jesus commands us to be watchful and to expect the unexpected.
- Jesus talks about a God who will surprise us by coming when we're not looking or arriving in a guise that we do not expect.
- This powerful Advent passage reminds us to be aware that the God who came into the world as a baby, so many years ago still wishes to enter our lives today.

18 Advent

- Too often we find ourselves with the innkeepers who turn away the Christ with the words, "no room."
- Our minds are full, our calendars are packed, our expectations are low, so we're not actively looking and seeking for the living Christ in our midst.
- We're too busy and our minds are too occupied; without even noticing we push Jesus away.
- And Jesus cries, "Wake up!"

19 Honoring the Advent Season

- Just as employers implore their workers to make changes in their lives so that they can be more alert during office hours, Jesus calls us to be aware of the changes we need to make in our lives.
- What miracles are we missing simply because we are too distracted to notice?
- What blessings are we passing by because our minds are consumed with endless details?
- Are we blindly stumbling through our lives unaware of God's presence all around us?

20 Don't Be Caught Off Guard

- Just as most people were caught off guard at Jesus' first coming, so will people be at his second coming.
- However, if we are diligent to the things of God and keep ourselves watchful and alert, we will not be caught unaware.
- Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. (1 Th 5:1-3 NIV)

- While Christ’s second coming will come as a “thief in the night” for most, it will not be so with us—who are walking in the light and have the “mind of Christ”—discerning all things.

21 **We Are Not in Darkness**

- But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. (1 Th 5:4-6 NIV)
- For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. (1 Th 5:7-8 NIV)
- For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Th 5:9 NIV)

22 **Conclusion**

- If we are diligent and disciplined in our Christian walk as outlined in the Bible, we will indeed be abiding in Christ—walking in the Spirit maintaining a clean conscience toward God.
- The byproduct of such faith is the mind of Christ, which gives us the ability to judge right from wrong and truth from error.
- In other words, living for God makes us alert to discern the devil’s evil schemes, so that we won’t fall into temptation.
- As the Apostle Peter says, Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Pet 5:8 NIV)
- Alertness is not about staying up all night, it is the result of us being diligent and consistent in our spiritual walk with God.
- Let us encourage each other, therefore, to grow in our knowledge of God, so when evil does come, we’ll know exact what to do. AMEN!