

# When The Sheep Sleep

Matthew 26:31-49

## INTRODUCTION:

As we continue to turn our focus to the new year of 2022, I want to ask us a question upfront: Do you grow weary of doing God's business? I don't at first expect everyone to throw their hands up and say, "Yes! That's me!!" Because we know that we shouldn't and many of can quote the verse of Paul to the Galatians:

### **Galatians 6:9-10**

So, let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

But the truth is sometimes we lose our spiritual focus, and we do. We lose our zeal and excitement and passion and desire to pursue the things of God when God needs us in the fight of life the most. We forget to take a breath. We forget the responsibility we have under God to do what He has called us to do with good cheer, and the longing of worship. We forget that it should never be in our own strength, but often forget is just what we do until we find ourselves burnt out and self-centered. When we do such things, we often overlook the effects it has, not just on ourselves, but the ripple effect around us. The main ripple effect to be aware of is how it effects our relationship with Christ.

This morning I want to look at a passage of Scripture where the Sheep, the followers of Jesus, let down the Shepherd because they were more interested in themselves than they were the need of our Savior in His darkest hour. When we sleep in doing the will of God it has lasting effects that we must take responsibility for, and we must own our own participation. It is easy to blame others but our greatest change is just around the corner of being able to admit our own failures and loss of focus.

**Matthew 26:31-49**

<sup>31</sup> On the way, Jesus told them, “Tonight all of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say,  
‘God will strike the Shepherd,  
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’

<sup>32</sup> But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there.”

<sup>33</sup> Peter declared, “Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you.”

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me.”

<sup>35</sup> “No!” Peter insisted. “Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!” And all the other disciples vowed the same.

### *Jesus Prays in Gethsemane*

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, “Sit here while I go over there to pray.” <sup>37</sup> He took Peter and Zebedee’s two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. <sup>38</sup> He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

<sup>39</sup> He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

<sup>40</sup> Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, “Couldn’t you watch with me even one hour? <sup>41</sup> Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!”

<sup>42</sup> Then Jesus left them a second time and prayed, “My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done.” <sup>43</sup> When he returned to them again, he found them sleeping, for they couldn’t keep their eyes open.

<sup>44</sup> So he went to pray a third time, saying the same things again. <sup>45</sup> Then he came to the disciples and said, “Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest. But look—the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup> Up, let’s be going. Look, my betrayer is here!”

### *Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested*

<sup>47</sup> And even as Jesus said this, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests and elders of the people. <sup>48</sup> The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: “You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss.” <sup>49</sup> So Judas came straight to Jesus. “Greetings, Rabbi!” he exclaimed and gave him the kiss.

- **Sleeping Sheep are poor companions to the Shepherd**

**Ronald E. Ramsey**

Jesus knew the importance of spiritual companionship, and so he sent his disciples out two-by-two.

**Note:**

The Church, because of our weaknesses, need each other in fellowship.

- **Sleeping Sheep Are More Apt to Fall into Temptation**

**A.B. Simpson**

Temptation exercises our faith and teaches us to pray.

**John Wesley**

As the most dangerous winds may enter at little openings, so the devil never enters more dangerously than by little unobserved incidents, which seem to be nothing, yet insensibly open the heart to great temptations.

- **Sleeping Sheep Don't Defend the Savior Well**

**John 13:34-35**

<sup>34</sup> So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. <sup>35</sup> Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

**CONCLUSION:**

So, my question to you dear friend, are you spiritually awake? Or are you asleep while Christian activity goes on all around, while the world deepens itself in its evil ways, but you, even though physically present, have spiritually departed to attend your own needs rather than those of the Savior's will. Are you spiritually asleep?

Listen to **Psalm 57:7-11**

<sup>7</sup> My heart is confident in you, O God; my heart is confident.  
No wonder I can sing your praises!

<sup>8</sup> Wake up, my heart!

Wake up, O lyre and harp!

I will wake the dawn with my song.

<sup>9</sup> I will thank you, Lord, among all the people.

I will sing your praises among the nations.

<sup>10</sup> For your unfailing love is as high as the heavens.

Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

<sup>11</sup> Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens.

May your glory shine over all the earth.