

Acts 20:7-10

Summer Series 2014: Eutychus

Eutychus: A Lesson on Paying Attention

⁷ On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. ⁸ There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. ⁹ Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. ¹⁰ Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!"

This is going to be one of those dangerous questions that I am going to ask. Have you ever fallen asleep in church? If you have, you quickly wake up and wonder if anyone has noticed. For a few minutes, I want you to think about some people in the Bible and what happened to them as they fell asleep:

- Adam fell asleep and woke up married and missing a rib;
- Samson fell asleep and woke up bald and beaten;
- Jonah fell asleep in the boat and woke up wet;
- Eutychus fell asleep and woke up dead.

All kidding aside, it is hard to pay attention at times. There are all kinds of things that are competing for time in our lives. Even though we may want to pay attention, there is that problem that is going on in your work place that is always on your mind. You are concerned about the challenges that are facing your children. You have just found out some bad news about your health, and no one knows yet. You have an exciting event that is about to happen in your life. Your dream vacation is only a week away. At times, it is hard to focus our attention on the words that God has said to us. Even more dangerous, is when we begin to not pay attention at all to the words of God in our lives. Today, as we finish our look at some of the lesser known people that are found in the Bible, let us take a look at Eutychus and learn a lesson on paying attention.

There is only 1 verse in the Bible that mentions a man named Eutychus. It is the verse found in our text today. His name means "*fortunate*;" and fortunate he was. We don't know anything about this man. We know nothing about his background. We don't know his parents, friends or background. Was he poor? Was he rich? We have no idea. All we know he had probably the ultimate embarrassment happen to him. He was listening to Paul preach for hours. It was getting late – past midnight. Hard as he may have tried, he began to doze off to sleep. Instead of a nod of a head or a snore from his mouth, he fell asleep and fell out of a three story high window.

A number of years ago, you might have remembered that I had stuck my hand into a shoot of snow-blower to unclog it. I nearly lost a finger. Not the brightest thing I had ever done. The worst thing about it was that now there would be hundreds of people that would know that it wasn't the brightest thing to do. How would you like to have been Eutychus? You would forever be known as the man who fell asleep in the middle of a sermon and fell out of a window to your death; probably, a little more than embarrassing. Yet, God was going to use this embarrassing moment to teach a valuable lesson for all of us.

The Apostle Paul was on his way back to Jerusalem for a final visit, but first he stopped in the city of Troas to meet with his fellow believers. Paul gathered in the third floor room of a house that may have belonged to one of them. Paul had so many things he wanted to tell them, and so little time to do it. Luke tells us that: **"Paul spoke to the people because he intended to leave the next day."** With so many lamps burning in that room, the air had become stale in the room and full of smoke. Eutychus was one of those people who wanted to be there. He wanted to hear what Paul had to say to him. He was listening to the words of this great missionary. Instead of hearing Paul's final words, he found himself dead on the ground after a three story fall.

You can almost hear the gasp in the room. All attention now turned to the window and the young man lying on the ground below. Paul hurries down the stairs. He **“threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don't be alarmed,” he said. “He's alive!”**

Some have claimed that this man wasn't really dead at all. Yet, remember who is writing these words of Acts? It was a man named Luke? Do you remember Luke's profession? Luke was a doctor. The word that this doctor uses to describe this young man as **“dead”** is a word that describes a body as a *corpse*. As Paul wraps his arms around this man, new life again runs through his veins. **“Don't be alarmed, he's alive.”**

What better words could a believer ever hear? **“He's alive.”** Isn't that exactly what the Holy Spirit has done with each of us? He has taken us who are spiritually dead, wrapped his arms around us, and says: *Don't be alarmed – you are alive.* That's what Jesus has given to each of us: LIFE, not just life for this world, but life FOREVER.

There's an old story around that speaks about a man who liked to sleep frequently in church. So the pastor devised a plan. During one service the pastor asked his congregation while the man was sleeping, *'All who want to go to heaven, please rise.'* Everyone stood up except the sleeper. Then, at the top of his voice, he bellowed, *'All who wish to go to hell, stand up now!'* Only the sleeper stood up. The sleeper looked around and said, *'I don't know what we're voting on, Reverend, but it looks like you and me are the only ones for it.'*

There might be a little Eutychus in each of us. There may be a time or two when we might dose off. But may we never fall asleep to God and turn our backs on Him and his Promises. And may all looked forward to the day when God says to us in heaven: **“Don't be alarmed, he's alive.”** Amen.