



**August 12, 2007**

Preaching: Rev. Eunbae Doh

Luke 12:35-48

## "WE CAN'T SLEEP"

Last month, I traveled to Korea with my family. We met with a lot of friends, family members, and churches. We had a great time. But I was little disappointed with all the people I met because they were doing well without me.

Since I came back from Korea I am still struggling with the time difference. So, I'm having a "sleepless in St. Charles." But that's not what I'm trying to say today under the title of my sermon "we can't sleep".

Let's look at the first line of today's Bible verse.

*"Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit" (Luke 12:35)*

This passage shows us some people who could not sleep. Why were they not sleeping in the night? They were waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him.

When Jesus told this story his disciple, Peter asked this question, "Lord are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"

I do not know why Peter asked this question. But his question helps us to think over our attitude to the word of God. It is true that there are so many Christians and churches, still asking this kind of question. "Why does this word matter to me?" "It is an old story, legend, or tale." "It is just a good life lesson." But, how many times do we think this is the word of God spoken to me? How seriously are we receiving the word of God that we should follow?

If we are not serious, if we think that God is speaking to others but not to us, it means we are sleeping. We are spiritual sleepers. It is really a great joy to see a

sleeping baby. But it is so painful to see a sleeping church, insensible to God's word.

In this story, Jesus encouraged his disciples and also all of us to be like the people in his parable, not sleeping, but watchful, and a faithful servant to serve our master and neighbor.

What does it mean to be the church like that, an awakened church? How can we become a Christian like the watchful servant Jesus asks us to be?

Jesus gave us the answer. Look at the verse 47. I want to read from the NIV version.

*"That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten."*

We can summarize this sentence with three categories,

Knowing his master's will, Getting ready, and Doing what the master wants

Now, I'm going to tell you about these three areas.

First, Knowing the master's will.

Knowing the master's will, I want to interpret this words 'Knowing God's vision'. God's vision makes us to be awaken

Last fall, our church staff and lay leader attended the Act 2 conference at Willow Creek Church. We had an opportunity to listen to great stories from many churches and leaders.

This is a story from a church called The Dream Center in California. This is a really the kind of church, never sleeping church.

It is a vision driven church committed to being open 24/7. The Dream Center is an exciting church, not only on Sunday morning, but at all hours through the week. It has more than 200 ministries, almost all of which are focused on serving the needs of those in the heart of the city. The church is located in the high crime Rampart district near downtown Los Angeles. They have a great ministry called Adopt-a-block. They are visiting their neighbors to find their physical, spiritual needs and respond to their needs, food, clothing, diapers, and even medical issues. Every day, every week couple of hundred people from many denominations, all around the city are coming to Dream Center to serve their neighbor for 24 hours.

How could that happen?

Matthew Barnett, senior pastor of the church, has been called to be a pastor of the church, when he was 20 years. At that time the congregation was no more than a few old timers. Matthew's dream was to be a pastor of mega Church. Sooner or later he realized that his dream was not going to work at that church.

He recalls, "One day God spoke to my heart. It was the first six months of the ministry and our church went from eighteen down to nine people. I wanted to be a success as a young man. God said something to me that changed my life." He said "I want you never think about being a success again. I want you die to your dream of being a success and I want you to live for one great dream, and that is to bless your church and serve your community."

"When God gave me that vision, I forgot about anything that I would accomplish or be, and I immersed myself into the vision of reaching the city with all my heart: finding a need and filling it, finding a hurt and healing it."

"I want you to die to your dream and I want you to live for the vision I give you."

"Dying to our dream, Living for God's dream."

If we have no vision from God, we will perish. If we can not die to our dream, God will not give his dream to us.

The Second point is Getting ready

How can we be ready to serve God and our neighbor? Do we have to save money to feed them? Do we have to build or add facilities to accommodate them?

Let's think about 911. It's staffed for 24 hours a day in case of emergency. They are always on alert status. They are trained to respond to any emergency call

So, how can we be ready 24 hours a day and always trained to serve our God and neighbor?

The Bible tells us how to be ready.

Ephesians 6:13-18

*"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench 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. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.”*

Faith, Prayer, the Word of God, we have to arm ourselves with the whole armor of God. It means we need to be ready with spiritual discipline, reading and studying the Bible, and prayer.

I'm cautious about any good deed and charity without spiritual discipline. That's why I am skeptical about celebrity charities.

Prayer, reading and studying Bible, This is the way we need to be, we need to get ready. Isn't it simple? But it is very hard not because it is hard but because we don't.

Some people ask me this question, what is the biggest difference between American churches and Korean Churches. I know I am not a right person to say something about that because of my short career of cross cultural ministry. But if I have to answer that question, I will answer that the biggest difference is prayer. For Korean churches and Christians, prayer is an alpha and omega. They are people of prayer. They are spending so many hours to pray everyday.

Prayer, reading, studying Bible, what else do we need to do as a Christian? Fellowship? Mission and Outreach? Worship? Yes, But first of all, put your prayer first and read Bible first to keep your relationship with God and get ready to serve your neighbor.

The third point is Doing what the master wants

I remember the T-shirt which our youth groups have worn. On the backside of the shirt, there were the words, "Do something". I like that. DO SOMETHING!! God wants us to do something. But sometimes, we hesitate to do something even though we know what God wants us to do. There will be so many reasons, our many commitments, health problems, and our age. But in many cases, we have a tendency to hesitate to do action, when we feel we are not ready, we are not perfect. Frankly, that is my story. I am a kind of perfectionist. I don't like to do anything without having confidence.

But think about it. Does God want us to be perfect? Remember! God knows who we are. God knows that we are not perfect. God wants to use our weakness.

God calls us to take action now!

Do something God want us to do today!

Do not leave or pass anything for tomorrow.

Even though, this is not the best day of your life,

Worship God with all your heart, mind, and strength,

Love your family, friend and neighbor with all your heart, mind, and strength.

It can be your best day of your life in Christ who calls us to live today like last day of your life.