

How the Enemy Has Slowly Lulled the Church to Sleep

You've heard it said the enemy doesn't fight fair. Well, that's a spiritual warfare understatement if I've ever heard one. The devil is a dirty fighter—and he's just as subtle as he is dirty. He never sleeps or slumbers, but he works to put us to sleep through apathy, complacency and waves of weariness.

Indeed, Satan has been working since the Second Great Awakening to put the church back into a deep sleep. He had some stops and starts. The Azusa Street Revival, the birthplace of the modern Pentecostal Movement, revived the saints at the beginning of the 20th century. But that slumbering spirit crept back in unawares.

Although Pentecostals and charismatics are the fastest-growing segment of the church in the 21st century, the enemy effectively lulled much of the church to sleep a long time ago—even Pentecostals and charismatics. We were sleeping when prayer was taken out of schools, and we were sleeping when abortion was legalized. Some segments of the church are waking up and fighting in the culture wars, but the majority is still listening to the enemy's lullabies (see Judges 16:19).

Modern-Day Samsons

We're like modern-day Samsons, seduced and lulled to sleep by devilish Delilahs and losing our power to combat the enemy's onslaught. Of course, we haven't really lost our power. But by compromising with the spirit of the world, much of the church has effectively and willfully taken off its armor and laid down its weapons because it makes it more comfortable to sleep through the noise of sin that's erupting all around us.

Many in the church have taken off the belt of truth and

embraced lies that it's OK to practice homosexuality or to neglect prayer or to lie around with people to whom you're not married. Many in the church have set down the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and picked up pornography. Many others have traded church service for occultic entertainment like Harry Potter or danced to the demonic beats of modern music.

Many in the church have taken off the breastplate of righteousness, compromising who they are in Christ to avoid conflict in the workplace—or in the church, or even in the pulpit. Lay members laugh at dirty jokes to fit in or turn Sunday morning worship into a worldly event, or preach a nice, kind message to keep tithes up. Many have traded their shoes of peace for some chic fashion designer's shoes of the season while neglecting to bring an offering to God. Oh, sure, many are still wearing helmets of salvation, but they sometimes wish they could hide that hat because they don't want to seem uncool in a contemporary society that shuns Christ.

Embracing Harlotry

Much of the church is playing the harlot—forsaking the Bridegroom for sin. Harlotry was ultimately Samson's downfall. The Bible says Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there and had sex with her (Judges 16:1). Samson was literally sleeping with the enemy as he followed the passions of his flesh rather than the God he served.

Then he met Delilah, with whom he fell in love—but her motives toward him were not pure. The Philistines—enemies of Israel—offered her 1,100 pieces of silver if she could persuade him to share the source of his great strength so they could overpower him, bind him, afflict him (Judges 16:4-5). She asked him time and time again, and he lied to her time and time again, foiling the enemy's plans to capture him until finally she wore him down and he told her the truth.

This is a key strategy of the enemy. Daniel 7:25 reveals the enemy wearies the saints but we know that those who wait on the Lord shall not grow weary (Is. 40:31). Samson didn't wait on the Lord. He allowed the devil's words to press him "so that his soul was vexed to death" (Judges 16:17). That's what we do many times—we allow the enemy's persistent words to vex our hearts until we fail to fight back. But that's another article...

Samson's Deception

After she got what she wanted from Samson—just a little compromise—she was able to lull him to sleep on her knees. He was sleeping so deeply that a man came in and shaved off seven locks of his hair. The Bible says then she began to torment him, and he lost his strength.

When the Philistines broke in, he thought he could break free as in times past—but he was deceived. "Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison" (Judges 16:21-22).

Samson compromised. Samson was lulled to sleep by his enemy. Samson was left completely blind. That's the condition much of the church is in today. But there is good news. We can pray for another Great Awakening. We can pray that God will wake us up and give us another chance. We can pray like Samson did:

"O Lord God, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!" (Judges 16:28). Samson repented. Samson defeated the enemy of his people. Samson died doing the will of God. If Samson can do it, so can we. It starts on our knees, making an appeal to heaven for a compromising nation that needs to turn back to God. Amen.

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