Emmanuel Ev. Lutheran Church—Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Pentecost 24
November 8, 2026
Sermon by Pastor Daniel Gensmer
Nap time is over

Rouse yourself! Rouse yourself! Get up, Jerusalem!
You have drunk the cup filled with the Lord's wrath from his hand.
You drank it. You drained the chalice, the cup that makes you stagger.
18 There is no one to guide her from among all the sons she bore.
There is no one to take her hand from among all the sons she raised.
19 Those two things are happening to you.

Who will grieve for you?
Devastation and destruction and famine and sword!
Who will comfort you?
20 Your children faint and collapse at the corner of every street,
like an antelope in a net.
They are full of the wrath of the Lord,
full of the rebuke of your God.
21 Therefore hear this, you afflicted woman,
a woman drunk, but not from wine.
22 This is what the Lord God says,
your God, who will contend for his people.
Look, I am taking the cup that makes you stagger out of your hand,
the chalice, the cup filled with my wrath.
Never again will you drink from it,
23 because I will place it into the hand of your tormentors,
who have said to you,
"Lie down so that we can walk over you."
You made your back like the ground
and like the street for those who walked over you.

1 Wake, awake!
Clothe yourself with strength, O Zion.
Put on your beautiful garments,
Jerusalem, you holy city,
for never again will the uncircumcised
and the unclean enter you.
2 Shake off the dust.
Get up and take your seat, Jerusalem.
Loosen the chains from your neck,
you captive daughter of Zion.

3 Yes, this is what the LORD says.
You were sold for nothing,
and you will be redeemed without money.

4 Yes, this is what the LORD God says.
In the beginning, my people went down to Egypt to stay there for a while.
Later Assyria oppressed them without cause.

5 Now what do I have here? declares the LORD.
Indeed, my people have been taken away for nothing.
Their rulers howl with mockery, declares the LORD.
My name is continually despised all day.
6 Therefore my people will know my name.
So on that day they will know that I am the one—
the one who is saying, "Here I am!"

—Isaiah 51:17–52:6

So I sleep like a rock. Not every time, but more often than not, once I hit that REM cycle, there is nothing that is going to rip me away from my dreams. Not my alarm that is on its 3rd go-around, not my wife trying to get me to turn that alarm off, not my hungry daughter in the middle of the night. And trust me, I am working on it. Because when she cries in the middle of the night, she needs her bottle; she needs her diaper changed. And when that alarm goes off in the morning I need to wake up! And yes, I am sure my sleeping antics are probably a bit of a nuisance for my wife Rachel, but sleeping through those critical moments for my daughter could be problematic. But spiritual sleep is far more dangerous. It's not like my daughter is going to wither if I am a minute or two too slow getting her bottle. But in all three of our readings today, God is calling us to wake up, because nap time is over. It's time to wake up to our sin, and open our eyes to God's grace. Nap time is over.

This was basically God's message here twice in our Sermon reading for this morning. We first have God saying, "Rouse yourself! Rouse yourself! Get up Jerusalem." And then after Jerusalem was confronted by the utter consequences of her sins, God once again calls out to them, "Wake, awake!" This time, God turned their attention to their hope. And there is a difference in how God told Jerusalem that "Nap time was over" in both of these instances. First, Jerusalem needed to see the disaster her rebellion had brought upon her. Then she needed to lift her eyes and see what her God was going to do for her.

At first, Jerusalem, God's holy people, were sleepwalking through life. They had rejected their God, and resorted to lives of debauchery and wickedness. And God rang the alarm over and over again. He sent prophet after prophet to his people, demanding that they wake up from their sinfulness, that they see the consequences of their sin, and that they see the judgment that was coming.

Like a person with bad morning habits, the Jews opted to snooze God's powerful alarm by hurling stones and silencing his prophets with the sword. And just like a person who has snoozed their alarm one too many times, they eventually run out of time. Babylon was coming, and their reckoning was here. That's why Isaiah announces to Jerusalem, not another warning, an announcement: "You have drunk the cup filled with the LORD's wrath from his hand. You drank it. You drained the chalice, the cup that makes you stagger… Who will grieve for you? Devastation and destruction and famine and sword! Who will comfort you? Your children faint and collapse at the corner of every street… your tormentors who have said to you, 'Lie down so that we can walk over you.' You made your back like the ground and like the street for those who walked over you."

There was no escape from this catastrophic cataclysm of consequences. The Israelites made their bed, and now they were laying in it, sound asleep. The damage had been done. Babylon was coming, and Jerusalem was about to experience the full weight of her rebellion. God made sure that Jerusalem understood that "naptime was over."

And it wasn't just a warning for Jerusalem: that was their judgment day coming in the form of Babylon, but the ultimate Judgment Day is still coming, and we are even closer today than we have ever been… Jesus has come. These are the final days. And God's servants are still ringing the alarm! It's time to wake up. Nap time is over. We need to open our eyes to our sin and its consequences, because the Devil is hard at work trying to keep us asleep.

The Devil is one of the most effective anesthesiologists out there. You know those doctors that are supposed to numb you to pain, and put you to sleep for a surgery? But the Devil's tools are different; his scalpel is sin, his drugs are your pleasure, and he performs surgery on your soul. Think about how numb we are to the sinfulness that surrounds us, it's clear that the devil's drugs are working, because once upon a time, the images we commonly see on our televisions and phones would have been called porn. The fellowship we used to share with fellow believers, bearing each other's burdens, has been replaced by gossipy groups growing grudges for one another. And although ambition is good, the Devil has used that drive to erode our contentment for the gifts God has already given us.

But the Devil isn't just changing what we tolerate; he's performing a diabolical surgery on our souls. He's castrated our appreciation for the marriage bed, turning God's beautiful sacred gift into a personal source of gratification. He's severed our love for one another, replacing compassion with contempt, patience with bitterness, and forgiveness

with grudges. And he has blinded our souls to the blessings God has poured out so that our hearts fill to the brim with dissatisfaction.

And what's the result? A warped relationship with the God who created us, broken relationships with the people he's placed in our lives, and a distorted relationship with the very blessings he's given us. The sins that used to shock us are now commonplace, because the Devil's anesthesia has put you to sleep. And we don't even recognize that we are no longer free. Jerusalem had been captive to Egypt, to Assyria, and to Babylon. But our captivity is far worse. We are not simply captive to another foreign power, but to the Devil himself. And he wants to drag us with him to his home in Hell.

So wake up! Nap time is over! It's time to face the music and see the consequences our sin has wrought upon us! Wake up! We have drunk the cup filled with the LORD's wrath from his hand. Like Jerusalem, we drank it. We drained the chalice.

And like Jerusalem, after waking up to the harsh reality of their rebellion, maybe we look around our lives and see the utter desolation our sin has left behind. Maybe it's not the Babylonian army waging war against you, but an onslaught of shame, a barrage of guilt, and lonely helplessness. But your God doesn't merely call you to wake up to the reality of your sin, but to the grace of your God. Because nap time is over. So snap out of it and see the grace of your God on display.

Look at what God says about that cup of wrath you gulped down. In chapter 51:22 he says, **"Look, I am taking the cup that makes you stagger out of your hands, the chalice, the cup filled with my wrath. Never again will you drink from it."** How could God make such a declaration? Listen carefully to Christ's prayer in Gethsemane… "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." And again Jesus bowed his head and prayed fervently… "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to pass from me unless I drink it, may your will be done."

It was God's will that Jesus would gulp down every dreg from that cup of wrath. It was God's will that Jesus would willingly give himself into the hands of his captors and go to that cross in our place. It was God's will that Jesus would experience hell itself as he gulped down every ounce of wrath that cup contained for you until, with one final gasp, Jesus raised his head and announced, "It is finished," He drained the cup once and for all. And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit for you. Never again will you drink from it because there was nothing left to do!

So wake up! Snap out of that spiritual depression and meet the gaze of your Savior. Because he has an announcement for his people today, "You were sold for nothing, and you will be redeemed without money. That's the announcement! Jerusalem had been sold into captivity. She had nothing to offer, no possible way she could buy her freedom, no power at her disposal. But that didn't stop her God. God didn't need Egypt's permission to free the Israelites. God didn't need Assyria's permission to crush them. God didn't need Babylon's permission to return Jerusalem. No, there was no negotiation. God was going to redeem his people because he promised to be their God. And God doesn't need the devil's permission to break you free from the chains of sin he has set around your neck.

You had nothing to offer him. You couldn't buy your way out of captivity. You couldn't bargain or negotiate. So God did it himself. Not with gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Jesus. Jesus paid for you with his life. Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath till it was gone. Jesus took your place on that cross. And now you are free. So wake up! Nap time is over! Open your eyes to the grace of your God. Because God has one final announcement. "Wake, awake! Clothe yourself with strength, Zion! Put on your beautiful garments, Jerusalem, holy city!"

Do you see what God is doing? The people who had been stripped of dignity now put on beautiful garments. The people laying in the dust and walked upon are told to get up, shake off that dust and take their seat. They had chains before, but they are now loosened. Their God has come to set them free.

And today, your Savior has done the same for you. You aren't the Devils prisoner anymore. God doesn't negotiate with your guilt, your shame, or even your death, because Christ has redeemed you and has conquered your sin.

And there is one final beautiful nugget in that last verse here today that gives us a glimpse of life on the other side of that coming Judgment Day. We will know God's name, he will be the one saying, "Here I am!" God doesn't abandon you. He doesn't send help from a distance. He comes to you! He welcomes you into the New Jerusalem, where he will dwell with you forever. No more sin, no more sorrow, no more death. Just you and God.

So wake up! Nap time is over! Your Savior drank that cup dry, broke your chains, and promises to bring you home. And even now, through his word, God assures you: "Here I am!"