

July 29

Scriptures: Read Acts 19 & 20

Key Verse: “And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep.” (Acts 20:9a)

Overview

Did you hear the story about the young Dutch boy whose family had just immigrated to America? The only church in their new town was a vigorous, outgoing little community of committed believers who had an equally energetic pastor. When he preached, he used to wave his arms, full-length, and take large draughts from a pitcher of water placed to one side of the pulpit. The first Sunday the new Dutch family was in attendance, the pastor was especially animated—shouting, drinking water, and waving his arms. Afterwards, the young Dutch boy’s father asked him what he thought of the pastor. “Well”, responded the boy thoughtfully, “it’s the first time I’ve seen a windmill that runs on water!”

Preachers are human too. Even the apostle Paul tended to get long-winded, talking “on and on” (20:9 NIV). In fact, he “kept on talking until midnight” (v.7), and one of his congregation in Troas, a young man named Eutychus, couldn’t take it; he fell fast asleep.

Unfortunately, he was in the worst possible place to be falling into a deep sleep—a second store window! And he fell into deep trouble. He was picked up from the ground, dead. This, of course, provided a hasty and untoward end to Paul’s sermon. He rushed down to the stricken boy, embraced his inert body, and then surprisingly declared, “Don’t be alarmed, he’s alive!”, much to the relief of the crowd. As for Paul, he went back upstairs, had a bite to eat, and continued “taking until daylight”. All night! What a preacher, and what a congregation! I wonder how many others fell asleep that night, staying well away from the windows?

There’s a Paul in every preacher and a Eutychus in every church member, so don’t be too hard on your pastor when he goes a little long in his sermon once in a while. And we preachers well understand if you nod off. Just don’t do what one chronic sleeper in one of my congregations used to do after sleeping through my sermons. He’d greet me blearily at the door as he left, and say with firm conviction, “Marvelous sermon, Pastor. Marvelous.”

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for pastors and for visiting speakers in our church. Keep us wide-awake in order that we may love You with all our minds. Thank You, also, that You still confirm the faith-filled preaching of Your Word with signs following. Amen.