

# **Sermon on Thursday 12 March at Calton Court Holy Communion by Rev. Bill Church**

*Readings: Ephesians 5. 1-14 & John 8. 12*

"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light."

After quite a bit of stern moralising, Paul finishes with this stirring and enigmatic challenge. He puts it as a quotation: "It is said". But nobody knows where it comes from.

Not from scripture, although Isaiah urges his readers to awake, and Paul in Romans says, "Now is the time to awake from sleep", and in Psalm 132 David vows that he will not sleep until he has made a house for God (which, of course, he fails to do, leaving it to his son Solomon to achieve). So maybe it is something from another unrecorded sermon from Paul, or words that the Ephesians would recognise, maybe from a hymn or liturgy.

"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead".

This could be a celebration of resurrection, of rising from the dead with Christ. It could be a warning against old-fashioned laziness, the sin of sloth. Or it could be an exhortation to arise from the sleep of sin, to wake up, look around and check out what is wrong with ourselves and those around us – to look at the world in the light of Christ. To sort reality from foolish dreams, to reveal indifference and couldn't-care-less attitudes, to see those whom we have been ignoring or overlooking.

In Paul's letter, he emphasises that it is Christ who must be the source of the light - "He will give you light the Christ". And the light of the one who said, "I am the light of the

world" is light which illuminates our path, which makes clear the shadowy figures of dusk, which shines into dark corners that we might prefer hidden, which - like sunlight - disinfects and powers growth.

"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead and Christ shall bring you light!"