

## Thirsty #4: Awake

**Objectives:** We want to grow in our desire for and effort towards being more aware of the spiritual reality of who Jesus is and of the people around us. We want this to lead to a greater heart for what God wants to do in our lives and theirs.

### Launch

*In 1998, Daniel Simons conducted a visual memory experiment in which the experimenter approached participants on a university campus asking them for directions to a nearby building. While conversing, two assistants carrying a wooden door would step between the participant and the experimenter, momentarily obscuring the participants' view. During the interruption, one of the assistants carrying the door stayed behind to continue the conversation while the original experimenter grabbed the door and walked away behind it. A shocking 50% of participants failed to detect the switch and continued with the conversation as if nothing had happened—talking to an entirely different person.*

- Let's do our own experiment on our personal awareness. Close your eyes and think of the last two or three public places you went to. How many things can you remember about your surroundings? People, things on the wall, conversations you overheard, etc.
- Or how about this, close your eyes and see how many details you can remember of a friend's room. Or try picturing what a friend was wearing yesterday or what you wore yesterday.
- For the memory challenged, how about what does the person next to you have on right now? What do you have on right now?
- What can being alert to our surroundings teach us about some place's or someone's spiritual reality?
- What are some physical hindrances that keep you from being more aware? What are some spiritual ones? (smartphones, self-centeredness, etc.)

*Tonight we are going to discuss the idea of being spiritually awake and sensitive to the spiritual reality that we live in.*

### Explore

#### **Awake: God**

Read these excerpts from Isaiah. (Just read the parts written here, it will be easier to compare this way)

- **Isaiah 51:9** [Israel speaking to God] Awake, Awake! Clothe yourself with strength, o arm of the Lord.
- **Isaiah 52:1** [God responding to Israel] Awake, Awake, o Zion, clothe yourself with strength.
- What is unusual about God's response? (Israel asks God to wake up, but God responds by saying that they're the ones who need to wake up.)

*In the book of Isaiah there is an interesting exchange between the prophet and God. Isaiah, speaking for Israel, tells the Lord to wake up and come to help them. God, in return, basically says, "You wake up! You are the ones who are spiritually asleep."*

*This scripture is actually the Old Testament background to Mark 4:35-41.*

#### **Read Mark 4:35-41**

- What are some observations?
- Why were the disciples not concerned about Jesus sleeping before the storm came? (They felt like they were fine on their own)
- Why did the disciples call out to Jesus to wake up?
- In the midst of their panicking, what lies did the disciples start to believe about Jesus?
- How did Jesus tell the disciples that they're the ones who need to wake up?

*The story in Mark 4 is not about Jesus waking up but about his disciples waking up.*

- In a state of spiritual alertness, what do the disciples see about Jesus that they were not seeing before? (His power, mercy, presence, safety, etc.)
- Why do you think they had been asleep to the reality of Jesus' identity? (Their lack of need was impacting their attentiveness to who Jesus is)
- In what ways do you tend to live unaware of who Jesus is—unaware of his power, unaware of his mercy, unaware of his presence? (It's easy to forget that God is just as powerful and present during the calm/uneventful times as he during the eventful ones.)
- For the disciples, it was a threatening storm. What ways has God used events in your life to rouse you to wake up and turn to him? (Important to note that events can be positive as well as negative. Negative could be a trial, positive could be witnessing someone accept Christ)

### **Awake: People**

#### **Read Mt. 9:35-38**

- What does Jesus see about the crowds? How does he describe them?
- Why does Jesus have compassion for the crowd? (May need to clarify: What does it mean to be 'like sheep without a shepherd'?)
- What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? How is he demonstrating spiritual alertness? (We learn a lot about his compassion. We see him spiritually alert and how that impacts how he sees people)
- How does Jesus' spiritually alertness lead him to pray?

### **Apply**

*Faith and spiritual alertness are connected. We will trust God to do more in and through our lives when we go about our day spiritually alert and expectant.*

- If you are spiritually awake throughout the day, what sorts of things might God show you about the spiritual reality of people at MSU?

- When you've been spiritually aware in your conversations, what kinds of things has God brought to your mind?
- What activities are you most prone to attend to in a state of spiritual slumber, oblivious to spiritual reality? Can you contrast your day with how one looks like if you are more spiritually awake?

*It's doubtful that anyone spends the entire day wide-awake to God and the spiritual world. But a goal of each day is to pursue spending as much time in a state of alertness and expectancy as possible.*

- If you had to assign a number to it, what percentage of the day would you say you spend spiritually awake?

*God's using us can be contingent upon our availability and preparedness. There would be little point in God bringing someone across your path who needs to hear the gospel if you were unwilling or unable to share it with that person.*

- Using the scale below, how would you rate your openness to break from your own schedule and agenda to serve and minister to others?
  - Closed
  - Usually Busy
  - Depends
  - Willing
  - Open
  - Available
- What is a step that you can take this week to become more spiritually awake?
- How will being spiritually awake to who God is and the spiritual reality of others help satisfy your thirst the way God intended?

### **Asking Questions**

*During the break, let's be available to listen to other's spiritual reality. Use this survey, Soularium, to learn about what some one else thinks about God and spiritual topics. Try to*

*ask at least one person to take they survey with you. Don't worry, it's fun, interactive, and uses a lot of interesting pictures.*

*You can go through it with a roommate or floor mate, classmate, or co-worker. Since it's over the break, you can even take opportunities to talk to a family member or hometown friend. When we meet back up over the break, we'll share about who we talked to and what we learned. We'll also pray for all of the conversations we had.*

Tips for leaders:

- You can download the Soularium survey in the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store (search 'Soularium', notice the spelling).
- Tell your group they can use the Bible study as a reason to give the survey.

*As we listen, let's pray that we will seek to be as open and connected to God as we can. Let's ask, "Lord, what do you want me to see and learn here? Do here? Say here?"*

*Let's pray this as a group and continue to pray this for us, individually and as a group, many times throughout the break. Let's continue to ask "Who do you want me to pray for? Encourage? Forgive? Share with?"*