

22nd February 2024

Awaken

**“We want our sound to go into the soul of the audience,
and see if it can awaken some little thing in their minds.**

‘Cause there are so many sleeping people.’”

Jimi Hendrix, on ‘The Dick Cavett Show’ (1969)

The final book of the Bible, “The Revelation of St John the Divine”, is a strange one. It’s an “apocalyptic” book in which, through visions and wonders, John seeks to prepare the people for “the end times”.

And he has warnings from God for the people of the Churches. To the Church in Laodicea, he says: “Look at you! You’re neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, God is about to spit you out of his mouth.” Powerful stuff, indeed!

To the Church in Philadelphia, he writes. “You know I’ve put before a door that no one can shut. I know you don’t have a lot of strength. Yet you have kept my word and haven’t denied my name. So, keep at it. The door is still open for you.” Well done them!

And to the Church in Sardis, he says: “Wake up! You’re dying on your feet. Get your strength up before it’s all wasted. There’s a lot of unfinished work God sees around you.” A wake-up call to a slumbering Church.

There are warnings for us all in there, of course, admonitions to do better. Being lukewarm is not a good thing, especially in the face of inequality and injustice. Even if we struggle to keep going, and our strength is low, we can encourage each other. There are still new doors of opportunity. And – the core of my theme for today – waken up! Be aware of what’s around you. There’s unfinished business! Waken up to possibilities! Waken up to the cries of the needy! Waken up to action.

As the late Jimi Hendrix suggested fifty years ago, there needs to be “some little thing” that’s awakened in our minds before it’s too late, because there are *still* so many sleeping people around. The Lutheran pastor, Phillipp Nicolai, wrote as the opening of his 16th century hymn,

*Wake, awake, for night is flying,
the watchmen on the heights are crying.*

So, waken up to the needs round about you, folks. Why are there so many sleeping people when some little thing still needs to be done?

A prayer for today

A little time awake; a little thing to do; a whole lot achieved in God’s name. Amen