

His life is in him . . .  
Acts 20:1-7

Let's look in on some Christians as they worship. The great missionary Paul is there, talking. And talking, and talking. And there, by the window, we see a certain a certain young man named Eutychus; probably a nickname instead of a name, because Eutychus means "lucky," and lucky this young man will prove to be.

He is in worship, eager to hear the greatest missionary who ever lived, St. Paul. And Eutychus intends to savor every word. But it's a third floor room, a little warm up there. And besides, there were many lamps in the room, and lamps use oxygen and, in the delicious translation of the NIV, Paul goes on and on. And he goes on and on and Eutychus finds himself, well, overcome with

sleep. It's funny to us, because we've all been there.

More than once, the Bible gently reminds us that even faithful people can become sleepy in the faith. The disciples fall asleep when Jesus is transfigured, and they fall asleep as Jesus makes momentous decisions in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Eutychus finds himself overcome with sleep. That's not all he finds. He finds himself falling out the third floor window and goes splat onto the pavement.

It is a matter of God's power to awaken the sleepy and give new life to the dead.

So they all rush downstairs, get to Eutychus, victim of sleep,

victim of gravity.

But let's back up a moment and see the greater context. They are gathered there in Troas, on the west coast of what is now Turkey, and they are gathered on Sunday. Sunday, the first day of the week, the day when Jesus rose from death to life, has replaced Saturday as the day of worship.

Resurrection is at the center of what these early Christians believed. And as they gather, they gather to break bread. Bread, symbol of life. More than that, symbol of Jesus' body, broken for us, then risen for us. Jesus body broken unto death that we might rise with him to life.

Jesus. Body broken. Jesus risen to new life. Christians

participating in this life. This is the context of Paul's preaching. As he goes on and on until Eutychus falls.

And they rush down, think he's dead, and maybe he is dead. But Paul says, fear not, his life (spirit is another translation, or life-force) is in him.

His life is in him. Whose life? Eutychus' own life? Of course it can mean that. But the pronoun just sort of floats there. English teachers would say, it has no antecedent.

And could it be that when Paul says "His life is in him," Paul means "Jesus' life." "Jesus' spirit." And if it is, then it is the Spirit of Christ within us, among us, celebrate in worship, celebrated in the breaking of bread, that has raised Eutychus from asleep

to awakened, or even from death to life.

Folks, as we worship on Sunday the Lord's day, as we break bread, we celebrate that the living spirit of Christ is among us and within us as well.

And that means, whatever your journey is today, whatever burdens you bear, whatever sorrows fill your heart with sadness, whatever challenges you face, may your faith be that His spirit lives within you as well.

And this spirit is not just given to the greatest of Christians, but even, if Scripture is correct, to the sleepest of us. That's good news, encouraging news.

Back to Paul at Troas. Having met to break bread, and then evidently talking until midnight, when Eutychus falls asleep and falls out the window, Paul goes back upstairs, preaches until the dawn of a new day. They break bread again, then Paul journeys to new places.

And the young man? They take him home, and in Luke's classic understatement, were not a little comforted.

And perhaps that's when Eutychus got his nickname. Lucky.

But maybe it wasn't luck. Maybe it had something to do with the one whose is celebrated in the breaking of bread, who rose from death to life, and whose life is now within us all.

Amen.