

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

In The Grip of God's Grace

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Romans 13:11-14 - "Understanding the Times"

Romans 13:11-14, *"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."*

New Living Translation: Romans 13:11-14, *"This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires."*

In Matthew 16, the leaders of the people had come to Jesus to ask for a sign from heaven ...

Jesus answer:

Matthew 16:1-3, *"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"*

It's the same today, but we too, fail to understand the "times" we are living in.

We ought to be like the little boy whose family clock malfunctioned and struck fifteen times, so that he rushed wide-eyed to his mother crying, "Mommy, it's later than it's ever been before!"

Paul wants us to *understand the times* that it's later than it's ever been before.

Notice verse 11a, *"And that, knowing the time..."*

Literally, “understand our times!”

“time” is speaking of the kind or nature of the time.

What kind of time is it?

It’s the last days – dark days (vs. 12)

Remember, morning is coming – the day is at hand, (vs. 12)

In understanding the times, what are we to do?

Three things:

I. Wake Up (vs. 11-12)

Romans 13:11-12, “*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*”

1. *now it is high time to awake out of sleep* (vs. 11b)

Illustration: Jesus and the disciples sleeping in the garden.

- its speaking of spiritual apathy and lethargy
- there are to many sleeping Christians today
- its time to wake up!

Can’t we sleep just a little bit longer?

No!

Why?

2. *our salvation nearer than when we believed.* (vs. 11c)

3. *The night is far spent*

What is night?

What is day?

Application:

- don’t let the world, flesh, or the devil lull you to sleep with the sweet siren’s song.
- It’s time to wake up

- The day is dawning
- Life is short, we're not getting any younger.

II. Cast Off (vs. 12b-13)

Romans 13:12b-13, "...let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."

In view of the times we live in, and the nearness of the Lord's coming; what should we do?

cast off the works of darkness

let us therefore cast off

Its not, let someone cast off.

To cast off suggests a definite and complete act – it's the picture of putting off old clothes.

We are to wake up and cast off the sins of the old life.

Like what?

1. *rioting and drunkenness*, (orgies and drunkenness)

put off empty and harmful pleasures – 'the party life'

2. *not in chambering and wantonness*, - feels no shame

Sexual immorality and debauchery

Don't live for sexual immorality

All kinds:

- pornography
- adultery
- homosexuality

It's not God's best!

C.S. Lewis – We are half-hearted creatures, fooling around with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered us. Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by

the offer of a holiday at the sea, we are far too easily pleased.

3. *strife and envying* – dissension and jealousy

People who just can't get along.

Notice the context: it's unloving

Illustration – Lazarus

John 11:43,44, *"And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."*

Remember that our salvation is nearer than when we believed!

Purifying Hope: 1 John 3:3, *"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."*

Don't let the sins of the past come creeping back into your life.

Notice verse 13, these sins are not *becoming* (KJV – honesty)

N.L.T., *"...shining armor of right living. Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see."*

A dry cleaning establishment advertised its services with these words, "if your clothes aren't becoming to you, they should be coming to us."

III. Put On (vs. 14)

Romans 13:14, *"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."*

In this verse we find the secret of holy living in the last days.

1. *put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*

What does that mean? I thought we put on Christ when we were saved?

Yes and no!

Yes, in the sense you did put on Christ when you were saved.

But what Paul means here is that we are to put Him on as to our attitude and actions.

The image of taking off and putting on clothing is symbolic of our thoughts and behavior – its *sanctification!*

We put on the Lord Jesus Christ by drawing on His strength, aligning our thoughts on with His, and yielding our wills to His will, as revealed in the Bible.

Put on His: power, presence, purpose and His pattern – its being filled with the Holy Spirit!

2. *let us put on the armour of light.* (vs. 12b)

There's a battle going on – wake up, cast off & put on!

Ephesians 6:13-18, *“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”*

- belt of truth
- breastplate of righteousness
- sandals of peace
- shield of faith
- helmet of salvation
- sword of the Spirit (the Word of God)
- all prayer

1 Thessalonians 5:9, *“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,”*

Notice the words in Ephesians 6:13, *“having done all, to stand.”*

Have you?

A.W. Tozer – The Christian life is a battle ground not a play ground.

3. *make not provision for the flesh, (vs. 14)*

Don't plan ahead to feed the flesh.

J.B. Phillips – “give no chances to the flesh to have its fling.”

Most sinful behavior results from wrong thoughts and lustful desires left alone to linger in your minds.

In Matthew 5:29, Jesus said, *“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”*

The Conversion of St. Augustine

Some time in the year 386, Augustine, his mother Monica, his son Adeodatus, and several friends, were spending time in Cassiciacum, a small village near Milan. While outdoors, Augustine heard the voice of a child singing a song, the words of which were, "Pick it up and read it. Pick it up and read it." He thought at first that the song was related to some kind of children's game, but could not remember ever having heard such a song before.

Then, realizing that this song might be a command from God to open and read the Scriptures, he located a Bible, picked it up, opened it and read the first passage he saw. It was from the Letter of Paul to the Romans. Augustine read:

Not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual excess and lust, not in quarreling and jealousy. Rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh. --Romans 13: 13-14

Reading this scripture, Augustine felt as if his heart were flooded with light. He turned totally from his life of sin. He was Baptized by Ambrose during the Easter Vigil April 24, 387. His friend Alypius and his son Adeodatus were Baptized at the same time.

Later, reflecting on this experience, Augustine wrote his famous prayer: *You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.* He went on to become a powerful influence on the spirituality and theology of the Christian Church.

http://www.midwestaugustinians.org/saints/s_augconversion.html

Do you know what time it is?

- wake up
- cast off

- put on

Jesus is coming soon!