

Series: Romans
Title: The Day Is at Hand
Text: Rom 13: 11-14
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God prepares his pastor to preach certain passages. He makes us preach from experience. Our Lord first rebukes and comforts his pastor. When you hear a pastor say that he is preaching to himself, it so true. So remember that as I preach this message.

Scripture speaks of different kinds of sleep. One is the sleep of death. When Christ returns scripture says that some will be asleep while some will be awake, meaning some will have already died physically while others will still be alive physically. Also, scripture speaks of the sleep of being spiritually dead in trespasses and in sins. This is the sleep God awakes each of his elect, redeemed children from by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. The other kind of sleep in scripture is the sleep referred to in our text today. It is a true believer who has fallen into a spiritual slumber. He is a true sanctified child of God. Yet, he has fallen asleep spiritually rather than being awake and alert and watchful to hear God's word and obey.

Throughout scripture we see believers physically sleeping when they should be awake to show us that they were spiritually asleep. For example, Jonah disobeyed God. He found a ship going to Tarsus and paid the fare and fell fast asleep. Then God sent a severe storm to wake Jonah up. "So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not" (Jon 1: 6). When God wakes his child spiritually, first God sends a trial like the storm he sent Jonah. Also, God sends his pastor to preach the word of God telling God's child to awake, which was typified by the shipmaster who told Jonah to awake.

Another example of spiritual sleep portrayed by physical sleep is when Christ's apostles slept physically in the Garden of Gethsemane. Christ "cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:40-41). This is why a believer must be on guard not to fall asleep spiritually—it is that we enter not into temptation/trial. When a child of God begins to slumber, God gives us a very rude awakening with a severe trial. When God awakes his child it is in irresistible power. Then God's child will awake. If there is a child of God in a trial right now it is to awake us. Our text not only admonishes us to awake, it tells us why and it tells us what to put off and what to put on.

Romans 13: 11: 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. 12: 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. 13: Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

Proposition: Before God uses us to serve him in his kingdom God wakes us up and makes us put off the sin in which we slumber, while making us put on Christ our strength that we might be able to serve God as we ought.

KNOWING THE TIME

Romans 13: 11: And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep:

There is a sense in which every believer knows what time it is. We know this is the day of grace, the Gospel day, the day of salvation. This we know because Christ has come and given us light.

2 Timothy 9: Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10: But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

Yet, there are times in our lives when we fall asleep. It can be due to us making provision for our flesh in personal sin. Spiritual sleep can be due to "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in" which "choke the word, and" we "become unfruitful" (Mr 4:19). There are many ways God's saints can fall into spiritual slumber. Every sanctified believer is still a sinner in our old man. Therefore, it is so easy to be lulled into spiritual sleep in this life. The frightening thing is that we can be spiritually asleep and not know it! But whatever the case God is the only one who can wake us up. He has to make us know "*that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.*"

Have you ever been asleep and the alarm clock failed to go off? You awoke and were startled when you see how late you were. That is when you knew it is high time to awake out of sleep. It was urgent! When God our Father wakes up his child it is with irresistible power. Then we awake. Then we see how urgent it is that we must awake out of our spiritual sleep.

Have you ever been in a state physically where you were almost asleep but you were still awake? So when you heard someone call for you, you made excuses to yourself why you can't get up? As believers we do that very same thing toward Christ. We are awake spiritually. The Spirit of God has regenerated us. We are not dead in sins. But we sleep spiritually. Therefore, when we hear Christ speak in our conscience, we make excuse in order to justify ourselves in whatever it is we are doing contrary to his will. When we are in that place, Christ awakes us so that we see he has been far removed from us and

we did not know it. We see this in Song of Solomon. This is Christ's bride who is asleep spiritually in the slumber of the flesh, though she is awake spiritually by regeneration. Read this passage several times so that you take in each word.

Song of Solomon 5: 2: I sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is* the voice of my beloved that knocketh, *saying*, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, *and* my locks with the drops of the night.

"I sleep, but my heart waketh." That is often our sad state. Yet, Christ comes calling us to open to him. But being in our slumber we make excuses for not obeying Christ's voice.

Song of Solomon 5: 3: I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

These excuses take many forms. But each one is us disobeying the clear word of God. We make our excuses for going on in our sin and rebellion though in our conscience we know what we are doing is directly against God's word. This is how we know we are asleep spiritually, we will not obey the voice of Christ to do as he commands in his word. But bless God, he will not take no for an answer from his bride. Christ awakes us!

Song of Solomon 5: 4: My beloved put in his hand by the hole *of the door*, and my bowels were moved for him. 5: I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped *with* myrrh, and my fingers *with* sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. 6: I opened to my beloved;

But the trial is not over. Christ awakes us to show us that while we have been asleep—having our focus on our flesh, having our focus on others, having our focus on this world rather than on Christ—we find we have become far removed from Christ.

Song of Solomon 5: 6:...but my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and* was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

Then Christ sends his pastor—his watchman, the keepers of the walls—with a sermon from God through which Christ rebukes us and chastens us with the gospel.

Song of Solomon 5: 7: The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

When we have been awakened and wounded and stripped of our veil, the Spirit of God makes us long for Christ with great desire. Listen to the urgency and love with which the bride speaks.

Song of Solomon 5: 8: I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I *am* sick of love.

Oh, that Christ would wake us. Oh, that Christ would make us sick for his love. He said you will find me when you seek for me with all your heart. My prayer is that Christ come and awake us and make our inward hearts yearn for Christ and his honor.

REASONS TO AWAKE

Romans 13: 11:...for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12: The night is far spent, the day is at hand:

One reason we need to awake is *because* "*now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*" Christ is our Salvation. He alone is our Savior from our guilt by Christ being our Righteousness. Christ alone is our Savior from our sin-nature, from the devil, from this world, by Christ being our Sanctifier and our Sanctification, our Redeemer and our Redemption. He is the Captain of our Salvation. Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Our Savior is our Salvation. Christ is All and in all.

We are nearer to dying and going to be with Christ than when we first believed. And we are nearer to Christ's return than the day we first believed. And no one knows when either one will be. Christ said,

Matthew 24: 42: Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43: But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Would we want Christ to return and find us asleep? With no oil in our lamps like the foolish virgins? Would we want him to return and find us overtaken in sin under a wicked spirit? Walking contrary to God's word? We are nearer to meeting Christ our Salvation than when we first believed. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Pet 3:14).

Another reason it is high time to awake is "*The night is far spent, the day is at hand.*" One, this means, we are no longer children of darkness. If we have been born of Christ the Light then we are children of light. That means the darkness is gone, the day is at hand.

But also, there are times in a believer's life when the Lord is about to use us in a greater or different way. A new day is about to dawn. But first the Lord sends a trial to wake us up, to teach us the night is over; it is the dawning of a new day.

Several things have happened to me lately that I have been trying to understand spiritually. One, the Lord has sent sickness to brother Don who has been a father to me in the gospel: he is very, very ill, limited in his ability to serve the Lord as he has and this has been heartbreaking to me. At the same time, the Lord has sent me a severe trial: God has made me see my own personal sin against him, made me abhor it and repent from it. Three, in the midst of this trial, I received several calls toward the end of the week from pastors that I highly respect who each basically told me that the time seems to be coming for me when God will use me to serve my generation like I have never done before. Then, with all this on my heart, I sat down to study the next passage in Romans and these words jumped off the page—"*the night is far spent, the day is at hand.*" I have no idea what the Lord will do. But I am convinced that all of this has been the Lord waking me up and saying to me, "Clay, you have slept long enough, a new day has dawned."

For the Lord's child every trial is to wake us up to obedience to the Lord. If there be any brother or sister suffering a trial from the Lord, I pray the Lord would bless the trial to their hearts, as well as to ours, to make us all wake up that God might use us mightily in his kingdom.

PUT OFF AND PUT ON

Romans 13: 12...Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13: Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

When God awakes us, he effectually makes us put off some things and put on some things.

First, what does Christ make us cast off?—In verse 12 he says, "*Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness.*" The Spirit of God lists a few works of darkness in the second part of verse 13 "*[Walk] not in rioting and drunkenness*"; it means not in reveling and partying, being drunk with alcohol or drugs; God says it is high time to cast off these works of darkness. He says in verse 13, "*not in chambering and wantonness*" which are sexual sins. It is high time to cast off the darkness of sexual sins. Again he says in verse 13, "*not in strife and envying.*" It is high time to cast off fighting amongst brethren in Christ.

Of course, Paul cannot give the whole catalogue of our sins so he generalizes what we are to do. He says in verse 12 and 14, "*Let us walk honestly, as in the day...and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*" If what I am doing is according to God's word then I am *walking honestly as in the day*. But if what I intend to do or am doing is contrary to God's will revealed in his word then *I am making provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts of my flesh*.

Please understand when a believer walks contrary to this word there is a very real spiritual warfare between our flesh and our spirit. The devil appeals to our flesh by pointing out how others ought to treat me. Every time that I have been offended by what another said or did to me it was *the lust of my flesh* thinking I deserve better, every time. It is me needing to be awakened spiritually to see that I deserve nothing but hell. It is God's grace alone by which he put me in Christ and redeemed me from all iniquity making me the righteousness of God in Christ. It takes God instructing his child in the heart before we understand spiritually that we have been asleep. But when Christ purges the heart spiritually then physical changes follow. We will "*cast off the works of darkness...and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*"

Secondly, this outward work begins when first the Spirit of God makes us put on something spiritually in our heart. First, "*and let us put on the armour of light.*" The armour of light is the whole armour of God. We need this spiritual armour because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood. It is not my brother or sister that I am wrestling against though that may be all we can see while we slumber in sin. In reality we need this spiritual armour because we are wrestling against spiritual enemies, the wiles of the devil.

Ephesians 6: 11: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. 13: 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. 14: Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15: And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16: Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17: And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19: And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20: For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

God makes us put on the armour of Light by making us, in the new heart, put on Christ the Light—"*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.*" This is growth in grace and knowledge of Christ. Only Christ can grow us through the Holy Spirit; only Christ can wake us and make us put on Christ. When God wakes us up and makes us put on the Lord Jesus Christ then he makes us abhor our sin and repent from it, that we might serve Christ as we ought. I pray that is truly what Christ is doing in our midst with each of us.

Amen!