

## “Get Up and Get Dressed”

### **Scripture: Romans 13:11-14**

Graphic: alarm clock, time, armor

Key Verse: 14 ...clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ...

Ask them to: Allow yourself to be prepared this Advent...understand Jesus

### **1) Introduction**

- a) Read Romans 13:11-14
- b) Now, this may not be the typical first Sunday of Advent reading that we are used to...typically, the prophets are announcing the coming of the Messiah...and the message from God's word preaches about being ready and making preparations...
- c) This morning, I'm asking us to consider what Paul is saying when he tells the believers in Rome to wake up! I'm asking us to consider what Paul is saying when he tells the Roman Christians to put on the armor of light.
- d) I'm asking us to GET UP and GET DRESSED...
- e) As some of you know, I am a morning person. My best time of day is from 6am to noon. After that...I start to fade and get tired and can't run like I do in the morning.
- f) And every morning, my alarm clock clicks onto the radio at 5:45am...and we are awakened to John MacArthur in the morning. And when that alarm goes off, even though I'm a morning person, my body and my mind are not ready to wake up. And sometimes, when John MacArthur is preaching about something with which I disagree (he's a big fan of dispensational theology, which I am not), I usually roll over and turn the radio off.
- g) And then I have a decision to make...should I lie here and think or should I get up and read my Bible and pray and get my day started?
- h) It's TIME to get up...it's time to get going...and there's a sense of urgency about it all that makes me cringe. And I know there are others here today that probably have an even greater struggle with getting out of bed in the morning because they are NOT morning people...we simply don't like to be told what to do...and couple that with the fact that it's cold and we're comfortable...it's almost impossible to find a good reason to get up!

- i) But we know that the special time that has been appointed for us to get up has come and we are compelled to do just that...sometimes, the smell of coffee can help...sometimes the dog or cat hurries the process...sometimes our own discomfort ushers up...and we get up!
- j) And eventually we decide what to wear and we get dressed...and I won't touch that one with the ladies here today, will I?

## 2) Getting up

- a) Paul writes to his friends in Rome, (in verse 11) “And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”
- b) Paul is not talking about waking up in the morning to John MacArthur. Paul is talking about being awakened from any spiritual slumber that exists. And he's not chastising the church in Rome...he is introducing a theme for this section of his letter...he wants them to know that a special time has come.
- c) When Paul uses the terms here for time, “the present time” and “the hour has come”, he not merely talking about chronological time...he is talking about a special event...he uses the Greek word *kairos*, which is a specific special time...he's introducing a sense of urgency into what will follow this introduction.
- d) The special time has come for you all to wake up and pay attention.
- e) Because, and here's the key, BECAUSE, our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.
- f) J. Louis Martyn describes Paul's vision as “bifocal”. Paul simultaneously has an eye on two horizons – that which is happening on earth as a result of the enslaving power of sin in the old age and the in-breaking of God's kingdom into this earthly sphere.” (Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul, 1997)
- g) Paul uses the word (σωτηρι, α) (*soteria*) for salvation here, which means deliverance or being brought to safety, but with a emphasis on the final deliverance when Jesus returns and the new heaven and new earth are created. This deliverance is from God's wrath. We sometimes use that word salvation to mean simply that we have accepted Jesus as our savior. But with that comes this ultimate salvation when Jesus returns.

- h) So on one level, Paul is saying that we are closer now to the return of Christ, simply because of time passing, but on another level, he is saying that we are closer now to the time when we will be ultimately saved by the work of God through Jesus and from punishment in judgment.
- i) And so, Paul's plea is to wake up because the time is getting closer and closer...it's this sense of urgency...no time to squabble with our neighbors, but instead be witnesses of what God is doing in the present.
- j) And within this statement, we sense that Paul's expectation is that the Christians in Rome have continued to grow and mature in their faith, preparing themselves for this coming day...

### **3) Putting Aside Sin**

- a) And Paul expands on this in verse 12-13 when he writes, "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy."
- b) Now think about this for a second...when the night is nearly over, and the day is almost here, think about what it looks like outside at dawn, just before sunrise.
- c) When the alarm goes off in the morning these days, it's black outside. Yet, as the sunrise time approaches, the sky begins to lighten and the darkness begins to become daylight.
- d) When this happens, we put aside things that are done at night, like sleeping, and we enter into the light of the new day.
- e) And in that new day, there will be tasks to be done, people to meet, problems to be solved, temptations to be avoided, and sin to be confessed and turned away from...
- f) And when Paul says we must put aside the deeds of darkness, and put on the armor of light, he's not telling us that the sleeping and other things we do at night are bad, but is telling us that the sin in our lives is exemplified and categorized by the idea of darkness and hiding and shadows...things that are typically done in the dark and where no one can see us.

- g) But soon the day will come and to prepare for the day, just like getting dressed in the morning, we put on armor of light, we are made visible and what we do is made visible...
- h) Paul then gives a list of what we shouldn't be doing as a church and as individuals...he lists orgies, drunkenness, sexual immorality and debauchery – things that typically happen under the cover of darkness or lies for those who profess to be Christians. Paul says that these are the things that are to be set aside in this time between night and day...in this time we have been given to prepare for what is coming...time to put aside the sinful ways of darkness and put on the armor of light.
- i) But most incredibly in this list, Paul includes two others sins that are on the same level as the four he has already listed. Along with the ugly sexual sins and filth, Paul adds dissension and jealousy. The New Revised Standard interprets these as quarreling and jealousy.
- j) What is Paul saying? That quarrelling with each other and being jealous of someone else is as bad as having an orgy in my house? Or getting stone drunk? Or being sexually immoral? That's exactly what Paul's saying and he says this because he is talking to the church. And even though sometimes things like sexual sin rock the church, the actions of individuals that routinely destroy churches are more commonly things like dissention, quarrelling, jealousy, gossiping, griping, lying, apathy...these are the things that Paul is asking us to totally get rid of in our lives and especially in the church...
- k) And this goes for every single one of us in the church...every single one.
- l) The armor of light brings all of this into full view of everyone else...and most of the time, the people around you are more than aware of these things in your life than you are, even though you think that they are hidden or that people won't know...
- m) Paul tells us that the special time has come for us to set those things down and pick up the armor of light. And we must do it before the sun rises...
- n) In 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul reminds the church that the Lord will come back and we don't know when it will happen. He says it will be "like a thief in the night"...and he likens it to labor pains that come suddenly to those who are not expecting it, thinking all is well...we must be prepared.

- o) He pleads with them to be sons of light, those who are alert and self-controlled...and he asks them to put on faith and love as a breastplate...and the hope of salvation as a helmet. He reminds them that God did not appoint us to suffer wrath, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- p) To put on the armor of light...

#### **4) Putting on Christ**

- a) But what is the armor of light? What is this thing that we are putting on?
- b) Verse 14 gives us the answer to that...we are clothing ourselves with the Lord Jesus.
- c) Now armor comes up quite a few times in the Bible...for Paul, armor is the spiritual protection we invite when we take the time to allow God to mold us through his word, to pray in the Spirit, and to spend time thinking about God's plan for our lives.
- d) Armor is used for battle, for war. But armor is rarely offensive...armor is what protects the soldier. Many men and women have died in Iraq because the vehicles in which they are riding have had insufficient armor to protect them. Armor is critical to the well-being of those in battle...
- e) In Ephesians 6, Paul again tells us that we are at war with the evil one and the evil forces of this world. And he encourages us to put on the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the shoes of readiness of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (the word of God)...and couple that all with prayer and being awake...
- f) That is what we are called to do in this time of preparation...get fitted with the armor of God...the armor of light.
- g) And Paul rightly sums up the armor of light by saying that this armor we put on is the Lord Jesus Christ.
- h) Everything else in our lives, especially during the month on December, is secondary to the focus of taking on Jesus Christ.

#### **5) Conclusion**

- a) The prophet Isaiah said, in this mornings opening reading, “Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the Lord.”
- b) Being prepared to receive the blessings of Christmas means being prepared to put on Christ...to walk in the light of the Lord.
- c) The prophets had to have faith that what God promised was going to come true.
- d) We have to have faith that what God has promised will come true...that he will transform us when we have faith in him...that we CAN be awakened to something new this Advent...that we CAN find ways to put aside our sin...that we can take on the armor of light, to defeat the enemy and walk in the light of the Lord.
- e) The difference between the prophets of old and us is that we are Easter people...we know the whole story and how it will end...we know the victory and the triumph of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead...being prepared to hear the message of the coming Messiah is so much more meaningful knowing that Christ is part of us...and he knows us...he is praying for us...and we are his...
- f) Find ways this Advent to understand who Jesus is...who he really is...
- g) Today we are welcoming into membership five people who have decided to make a public profession that they are willing to commit to this church and to putting on Christ...taking on Christ...
- h) Today we will take Holy Communion...this is the ultimate way to put on Christ...to understand the sacrifice Jesus made to save us from the punishment for our sin...taking on Christ...
- i) Joining a small group, some of which started meeting this week, is a way to do the things that we are called to do to understand what it means to be like Jesus...to take on Christ.
- j) Think about your own struggles and sin...meditate on Jesus found in the Gospels – how did Jesus deal with the struggles of evil and temptation...invite and feel the presence of God into your life and allow Jesus’ struggles and his call to take up the cross have the full effect in your life.

- k) Getting up and getting dressed is something we do everyday...yet as Christians, we are called to so much more than merely slapping the alarm clock and putting on clothes...
- l) What are you putting on? What is it that you are wearing?
- m) We are called to put on light...to wear the armor of light...to put on Christ in preparation for the salvation that God offers to us by way of the words of the prophets and through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- n) Get up and get dressed, O people of God, for we will walk in the light of the Lord this Christmas!
- o) Let's pray...