

# Romans

**Scripture reading:** 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10

**Sermon Title:** It is time

**Sermon Text:** Romans 13:11-14

**Key verse:** Romans 13:14

<b>MAIN IDEA:</b> The time has come to put aside the deeds of darkness and put on Christ.
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It is time to wake up (v.11)

It is time to lay aside the deeds of darkness (v.12-13)

It is time to put on Christ (v.14)

***NOTE:** This manuscript is provided as a courtesy. It is not followed word for word during the message. This document is not developed for publication; there may be grammatical errors throughout. Unfortunately, there is not always time to proof read. I choose to use my available time for studying, finding ways to explain the truths of Scripture while keeping a balance of time for visiting and discipling people in the church. Thanks for understanding.*

## INTRODUCTION:

Let's read our text:

**Romans 13:11-14** <sup>11</sup> Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

Since the beginning of Chapter 12, the Apostle Paul has been telling us how we are to live our lives. For two chapters we have been studying a general overview of Christian ethics in light of being saved by the gospel. We have learned how to love one another, love others, be subject to the governing authorities, and fulfill the law by being loving people.

Do this, is like saying, finally, let me finish this off. Some translators begin verse 11 with the word and, "And, do this". This is the conclusion of the discussion on general Christian ethics. Put into practice all that has been said, including this last instruction.

We find the emphasis in these verses placed on holiness; a bookend with the opening statement which tells us to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice and not to be conformed to this world.

The main idea of the text is this:

**MAIN IDEA:** The time has come to put aside the deeds of darkness and put on Christ.

Do this, knowing the time. Christian, it is time.

What is it time for?

## IT IS TIME TO WAKE UP (VS. 11)

**Romans 13:11**<sup>11</sup> Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

Do this, knowing the time. Obviously, Paul is not talking about the actual time or the hour. He is talking about knowing about eschatology; the times which we live.

In God's economy there are two times: this present age and the age to come.

The age to come is talked about in the Old Testament as the Day of the Lord. This is what we read about in 1 Thessalonians 5, our Scripture reading this morning. In Thessalonians and Romans 13:11, Paul is talking about the time for salvation is closer than we believed.

The time of salvation is the time of God's final accomplishment in human history. We are not fully saved until we see Jesus face to face. It is the time of the Great Judgment, when God separates the wheat from the tares; the sheep from the goats. That hour is approaching and it is closer than we think.

For those who are not saved, the Day of the Lord is a frightening day. It is talked about by many of the prophets.

- *Joel* tells of the mighty trumpet sound and the stars failing to shine (chapter 2).
- *Isaiah* says on that day the heavens will tremble, and the earth will be shook out of place (chapter 13).
- *Ezekiel* describes sinners mourning over their iniquity as God reveals Himself and they are in fear, but it is too late (chapter 7).
- *Obadiah* says “the house of Esau will be like stubble” (chapter 1) which means the Muslims will be judged.
- *Zephaniah* describes “a full and sudden end will be made for all the inhabitants of the earth” (chapter 1).
- *Malachi* describes a burning of sinners to ashes (chapter 4).
- *Zechariah* prophesies the Day of the Lord ushers in the reign of Christ the King and all the people will worship Him and those that don’t will suffer eternal punishment (chapter 14).

If you have not received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you have great reason to be very afraid. The Bible is not something to scoff at. All of its predictions have come true. Fear God and repent.

If you have received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, the Day of the Lord is a glorious day of salvation. We may look forward to that day.

Some might read this verse and think Paul didn’t know what he was talking about. He is saying to the church in Rome, in the year 56AD, watch out guys, Jesus is coming soon, it is almost the Day of the Lord; salvation is nearer than you think.

Some will scoff and say, “It wasn’t as near as you thought Paul! Here we are almost 2000 years later and it still hasn’t happened.” We still hear this type of thing all the time. We’ve been hearing the End is near for 30 years now, maybe longer.

Was Paul wrong in expressing this to the church in Rome?

Would I be wrong in expressing this to us as a church today?

Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit and completely accurate.

What is Paul trying to say then? He is saying we must live every day as if Jesus is coming at any moment. Nobody knows the day or the hour. Jesus could come back today.

Wake up Christian. Live as if Jesus is coming tomorrow. If you had that mentality, you would live differently.

Paul is expressing what Jesus taught His disciples.

Jesus cautioned His disciples to be ready. He told a parable of the ten virgins. You know the story. Five were wise and five were foolish. The wise virgins were ready and had enough oil in their flasks so they could keep their lamps lit. Those who were not ready had to go buy more oil from the merchants. While they were gone buying oil, the door to the wedding feast was shut. When they knocked on the door, the bridegroom didn’t open the door, because, as he said, “Truly I say to you, I do not know you.”

Jesus concludes the parable with this warning, “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

Paul is making the same point as Jesus. We need to continually live as if today is the day and this is the hour for the Lord’s return. Be on alert.

Because we know the time, we need to wake up. This is no time to be sleepy. What do sleeping people do? They do nothing except lay still. Sleeping people don’t live, they sleep. They are not on the alert.

We need to wake up from being lackadaisical about our faith. There is no room in the church for spiritual apathy. We may not be lethargic. Instead, we are to be awake, alert, and watching for the Lord’s return.

We are not a people of the night and darkness; we are not a people who are to be asleep as others are; but we are to be a people who are ready, alert, and clear-headed.

“Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” (Ephesians 5:14)

The hour is already here. Salvation is nearer than we believed.

It is time to wake up.

[alarm sound]

## IT IS TIME TO LAY ASIDE THE DEEDS OF DARKNESS (v.12-13)

**Romans 13:12-13** <sup>12</sup> The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

Day and night & light and dark were important metaphors for good and evil in the ancient world. These metaphors occurred very frequently in Roman and Greek literature and the Scripture. The metaphor of light and dark for good and evil is still used in our present day.

As Christians, we are of the light, we are children of the day.

We are not children of the night nor are we children of darkness

Because of this, we are to lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

We are called to live like it is the day, because for us, the night is gone.

Most crime and immorality takes place in the dark of night. When a crime is committed in the day, we sometimes use the expression “I can’t believe they did that in broad daylight, what is this world coming to?” Crime doesn’t always happen in broad daylight.

The deeds of darkness are grouped in pairs:

- carousing and drunkenness: (i.e., partying) are sins which show lack of self-control. The peak time for violent offences is weekend nights, usually near a nightclub. The majority of violent incidents involve drunkenness. Partying leads to all types of problems.
- sexual promiscuity and sensuality: are sins demonstrating immorality and lack of holiness, these sins lead to broken marriages, abortion, and deadly diseases.
- strife and jealousy: are sins which destroy relationships, they lead to thievery, murder, coveting, and are contrary to loving our neighbor.

Deeds of darkness are destructive and lead to destruction.

We are to lay aside the old self. This is our old manner of life. Our old self is corrupted and deceived. Scripture tells us to lay aside falsehood, he who steals must steal no longer, lay aside coarse speech letting no unwholesome word proceed from our mouth, put aside bitterness, wrath, anger, malice, and on and on.

There is absolutely no good reason for us to do these things. When we do, Scripture says we give the devil, our greatest foe, an opportunity.

We don't think enough about not giving the devil an opportunity. We spend money on guns, locks, and alarm systems so bad humans don't have an opportunity. Yet, we sometimes take no thought about giving the devil an opportunity. His goal is to steal, kill, and destroy and we are his target.

Christian, at the risk of sounding like a fundamental puritan (which I'd much rather be accused of than be accused of being soft on sinful practices), I want to caution us against being too free with our Christian liberties.

It is often the Christian liberty of a believer that gives the devil an opportunity; a foothold.

"Why does it seem my walk with the Lord doesn't progress?" Is it possible your Christian liberty of partying might have something to do with it?

"Why is it I always seem to have so much trouble in my life?" Is it possible your Christian liberty of not having a disciplined time to renew your mind and get to know the God of Scripture has something to do with it?

"Why is it my Christian witness has little effect?" Is it possible your Christian liberty of looking and acting like the world has it so you are not the salt of the earth, but you have lost your flavor?

Too often, with Christian liberty, we argue what we "can" do because of grace, some even go so far as to flaunt their Christian liberty, rather than have meaningful discussions about what we "should" do.

Here is what we should do. We should not grieve the Holy Spirit of God and lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Our Christian liberty should lead us toward holiness, not the other direction.

We are now at liberty, we are free, to be holy whereas before, we were slaves to sin.

We find a similar theme about putting off and putting on in Ephesians and Colossians.

In Colossians, Paul tells the church to lay aside the old self with its evil practices, and put on the new self who is being renewed according to the image of Christ.

**Colossians 3:11** - a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

The Scythians were notoriously barbaric and aggressive warriors. They drank the blood of their enemies and used the scalps as napkins. If you need a hit man or an army warrior, hire a Scythian because they were ruthless. Scythians were evil men with no fear of God. You would only bring the gospel to a Scythian with much fear and trembling. Some of the Scythians heard the Gospel and were saved.

Get this point: before we were saved, the punishment we were to receive from God for our life is the same punishment the Scythian was to receive for their life. The wrath of God was upon us for being evil and our evil, in God's eyes, is equal to the evil of a Scythian. We were no different than they.

Imagine Scythians, a few months or a few years after getting saved, begin practicing their old ways. What would we say? We would say, stop! You are Christians now. You are to live differently. Don't go back to your old ways. Live a new life in Christ. Be holy. Show love to one another. Live at peace. Display gentleness and kindness.

The Scythian may say, but aren't my sins forgiven? Yes, they are. Am I justified in Christ? Yes, of course you are. Being saved results in not being our old self, but walking in the newness of life.

The Scythian may not go back to being Scythian and we may not practice our old ways either. We should not live as we did before. We are new creations in Christ.

**2 Corinthians 7:1** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Cleanse ourselves. Perfecting holiness.

Put the old self aside, "put it off" like a garment. "Throw it off like a filthy disgusting shirt." And after putting it aside, kill it. Kill it dead.

Exercise your Christian liberty and privilege by perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We know the time. It is time to lay aside the deeds of darkness.

Last ...

## IT IS TIME TO PUT ON CHRIST (v.14)

**Romans 13:14** <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

The latter part of the verse tells us to make no provision for the flesh. It is made in reference to the preceding verse which tells us to put aside the deeds of darkness. The word flesh is consistently used by Paul to talk about our old man with the sinful, depraved heart.

Don't give your flesh an inch. Give it an inch and it will take a mile. Give your flesh no room to operate and inflict damage in your life. It only leads to bad news.

The best way to not give our flesh any room is put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Put off sin, put on Christ.

In looking at this point, I want to answer three questions. Why do I put on Christ? How do I put on Christ? and, what does putting on Christ look like?

### **Why do I put on Christ**

God's supreme purpose in all that He does, especially in our salvation, is the exaltation of Jesus Christ; giving Christ first place in all things; the Lordship of Jesus Christ. God is working all things with a view, with the end in mind, of "summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth."

Our putting on Christ is for the glory of Christ.

Let me paraphrase Philippians 3:20-21 which tells us precisely why we are to put on Christ.

We are citizens of heaven. As citizens of heaven, we eagerly await the coming of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. When He saves us, He will transform us mere humans into conformity with the body of His glory. He does this, makes us like Himself, in accordance to His image, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

We are being transformed today, with our completion of being glorified occurring on the Day of the Lord, for the purpose of setting all things under His feet. The elect are made glorious for the purpose of bending their knee and declaring with their tongue the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

**Romans 8:29** <sup>29</sup> those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son

God is ordering the Universe to bring every molecule into subjection of Christ the King. When this occurs in completion, the Universe will be made perfect. On that day we will be the most joyous, satisfied, complete creatures we ever could imagine.

When we put on Christ we are at the center of God's will. We are the most pleasing to God, bearing the most fruit, and walking in a manner worthy of the Lord when we are putting on Christ.

What is God's will for my life? Too often people minimize this question with talk of a job change, buying a different house, choosing a mate, or some other life question. God's will is that we be conformed to Christ.

The reason why we put on Christ is to bring Him glory and to bring us everlasting joy.

Put on Christ for your joy.

### **How do I put on Christ?**

We put on Christ by thinking and living in a Christlike manner.

We have no excuses. God has totally enabled us to be Christlike.

Our union with Christ is for the purpose of enabling us to live like Christ.

**Romans 6:4** <sup>4</sup>... we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, *so that* as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Or as Paul said to the Galatians,

**Galatians 3: 27** all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

God's Holy Spirit enables us to be Christlike. The Spirit which raised Christ from the dead, made a dead man alive, is desiring and able to make us alive so we can be like Him.

So, back to the question, "how do I put on Christ?"

If you really want to put on Christ grow in applying Romans 12:1-2

**Romans 12:1-2** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Notice what it says, that you may prove the will of God.

What is the will of God? It is that we glorify Christ by being conformed to Him. We glorify Christ by putting on Christ. How do I put on Christ? By presenting my body as a living and holy sacrifice, not be conformed to the world, but being transformed by renewing my mind.

That's how. Word saturated holy living.

### What does putting on Christ look like

Let me tell you what it does not look like. It does not look like us running around like the miracle working Son of God. Don't be fooled by the false teachers who will tell you we are to look like Jesus in doing the miracles of Jesus. We are not going to walk on water or multiply bread and fish so we can feed the town.

The Bible says Jesus did miracles, signs and wonders, for the purpose of proving His deity. We have no reason to prove to God we are deity.

Putting on Christ is to put on His character. As Paul told the Ephesians, put on the new self, which *in the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Ephesians 4:24).

Righteousness, holiness, and truth.

To be conformed to the image of Christ is to be righteous which means you do what is right. Doing right is to be committed to one another in brotherly love. Doing right, is to do no wrong to a neighbor. Doing right means giving honor to governing authorities, doing right means loving our enemies. Doing right is



to not think too highly of ourselves, but to associate with the lowly and to have the humble attitude of Christ.

Do these things sound familiar? They should. Because being Christlike is having the character of Romans 12 and 13.

We are God's adopted children. As children, Jesus said for us to be perfect as our Father is perfect. People should say about us, "the apple didn't fall too far from the tree." Offspring have traits of their parents. "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children (Ephesians 5:1)"

Putting on Jesus is not like putting on a garment. Putting on Jesus is putting on a person. When we wear Christ, people see Christ. This is the idea of the text.

Read the Gospels and grow in love with the person of Christ.

- See Him washing the feet of His disciples and become servant-minded like Christ.
- See Him setting aside His kingly privileges and become humble like Christ.
- Listen to Jesus say give to Caesar what is Caesars and honor governing authorities as Christ did.
- See Jesus obeying the commands of the Father, doing God's will no matter the cost, and love our Heavenly Father as Christ.
- Hear Jesus on the cross forgiving others, and forgive as Christ forgives.
- See Jesus lay down His life for us and decide to love radically as Christ loves.

## SUMMARY

Listen to how all this come together.

We are to present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God. This is the reasonable response for those who are saved by the gospel and have been joined to Christ.

We are not to be conformed to this world. We are to have a radical love for one another and a love for our enemies. We are to owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. We are not to be conformed to the world by doing deeds of darkness, but we are to put on the armor of light.

We are to do all this, because the time of salvation is near. The day is coming when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead. Those who are saved in the judgment are those who are predestined to be conformed to His image; those who glorify Him now. Today is the day to glorify Christ.

Be on the alert Christian, for you do not know the day nor the hour. Wake up.

**MAIN IDEA:** The time has come to put aside the deeds of darkness and put on Christ.

## QUESTIONS FOR HOME FELLOWSHIP

Questions to ensure understanding and right application of the passage:

- What is meant by now is the time to awaken?
- How is salvation nearer than when we believed? I thought we were saved?
- What is the importance of the imagery of day/night and light/darkness?
- What do the deeds of darkness have in common (besides being sinful)?
- What is Christian liberty? When does Christian liberty become a deed of darkness?
- In what ways do we make provision for the flesh?
- How do we make no provision for the flesh?
- Why do we put on the Lord Jesus Christ?
- How do we put on the Lord Jesus Christ? How does this work practically?
- How is this passage a fitting conclusion for Romans 12 and 13?