

“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ”  
(Romans 13:11-14)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Paul exhorted us to give to everyone his due:
  - a. To the government, taxes, custom: because they are His ministers.
  - b. To the government and all in authority – elders, husbands, parents – fear, honor, respect: again because all authority from God is to be honored and respected.
  - c. This is our debt, this is what we owe, 1) because God commands it, 2) because we are the beneficiaries.
  - d. This is simply an application of the fifth commandment.
2. But Paul told us of another debt: one never fully paid: love.
  - a. This is what we owe all men at all times: love your neighbor as yourself.
  - b. We owe it because God commands it.
  - c. We owe it because it fulfills all His commands towards our neighbor: not to commit adultery, or murder, steal, covet; and as we’ve seen in the evening, not to bear false witnesses against our neighbor.

B. Preview.

1. Paul says we owe this especially because of the time.
  - a. He says it is time to awaken from sleep.
  - b. Salvation draws ever nearer.
  - c. The night is almost gone, the day is at hand.
  - d. We’ll look at what these things mean.
2. But because of the day being at hand, Paul says we must pursue righteousness.
  - a. Put off the deeds of darkness, put on the armor of light.
  - b. Behave properly as in the day, not sinfully as those in the dark.
  - c. In short, we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and no longer make any room in our lives for our flesh/sin.
  - d. This morning, Paul exhorts us to press forward in sanctification.

II. Sermon.

A. First Paul tells us, it is time for us to wake up because salvation is near.

1. The sleep he refers to can only mean spiritual indifference.
  - a. When used of salvation, it can refer to regeneration: rising from the dead: “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you” (Eph. 5:14).
  - b. But in sanctification, it refers to being roused out of spiritual slumber, indifference, lethargy, sluggishness.
    - (i) Paul writes to Christians, so we take it in this sense.

- (ii) It's easy to cool off to the things of the Lord.
  - (iii) We're in a world that hates Him, contrary to Him.
  - (iv) It drags us down spiritually.
  - (v) Which is why we need the means of grace:
    - (a) Prayer, the Word, sermons, sacraments, fellowship.
    - (b) They stoke the coals in the heart.
    - (c) They supply the oil to the flame: the oil of the Spirit.
  - (vi) Paul gives us a wake up call this morning.
    - (a) We set our alarms to wake us from sleep in the mornings.
    - (b) God appoints His Word and messengers to wake us up to the importance of pressing forward.
2. Why are we to wake up? Why the call? "For now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (v. 11).
- a. Understanding this depends on understanding the other terms.
    - (i) It's not completely clear.
    - (ii) Good commentators differ.
    - (iii) There are several words having to do with time.
    - (iv) "And this do, *knowing the time*" (v. 11).
    - (v) "It is already the hour for you to awaken" (v. 11).
    - (vi) "The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand" (v. 12).
  - b. Night can mean:
    - (i) The darkness of ignorance, of OT shadows and types, or Jewish tradition.
    - (ii) The ignorance to sin we were once in, not knowing God or His Law.
    - (iii) Our own sleep/death in the darkness of sin, in the kingdom of darkness.
    - (iv) The sin of this world, the ignorance of others.
  - c. Day can mean:
    - (i) The dawning of New Covenant mercy and grace in Christ, the light of knowledge His coming brings.
    - (ii) The light He shined on us when He saved us – illumination.
    - (iii) Our deliverance from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.
    - (iv) The light of the Gospel shining in this world, ushering in a new era of righteousness and peace, either in an earthly millennium or the eternal state.
  - d. Paul urges them to wake up because of the time – something is drawing near:
    - (i) The destruction of the Temple in A. D. 70, finally putting the Old Covenant away and bringing in the New.
    - (ii) The golden age of Christ's reign on earth draws near.
    - (iii) His Second Coming and the new heavens and earth are drawing near.
    - (iv) Their personal salvation – the shortness of life, the soon arrival of Christ for them – is near.

- B. For whichever of these reasons, Paul urges them to press forward, and so must we.
1. Salvation is nearer to each of us now than it was when we first believed.
    - a. Certainly, His Second Coming is nearer.
    - b. The New Heavens and Earth are nearer.
    - c. But His coming for us is much nearer: our salvation draws nigh.
      - (i) There is a future sense of salvation.
      - (ii) We were saved from our sins.
      - (iii) We are being saved from our sins.
      - (iv) And there will be – may God be praised – a future, final and full deliverance from our sins in heaven.
  
  2. It is in light of this that Paul urges us to press forward.
    - a. He says, “Wake up.”
      - (i) Rouse yourself to the importance of eternal things.
      - (ii) Stop getting bogged down in the things of the world.
      - (iii) Lay aside everything that weighs you down – the things that aren’t sinful that entice you – and the sin that entangles you – the things that are contrary to God’s Law – and run the race set before you (Heb. 12:1).
  
    - b. He says, “Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light” (v. 12).
      - (i) Not only put off sin, but put on your defense against it.
      - (ii) Put on the armor of light:
        - (a) Gird your loins with truth: know God’s Word, in your heart as well as your head (Eph. 6:14).
        - (b) Put on the breastplate of righteousness: have your heart protected by a fervent love of God’s Law/what is good, and your soul protected by the righteousness of Christ (v. 14).
        - (c) Have your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: know the Gospel, be ready to go and share it with others (v. 15).
        - (d) Take up the shield of faith: believe the promises of God, trust Him and His strength, fear Him and His threatenings; this will give you a strong defense against the devil’s flaming missiles of doubt and temptation (v. 16).
        - (e) Put on the helmet of salvation: be sure of your own standing before God, be assured you are His child (v. 17).
        - (f) And take up the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God: be able to use it skillfully to tear down the devil’s lies and strongholds (v. 17).
        - (g) And pray at all times for yourself and your brethren: this energizes, gives power to the whole armor (v. 18).
  
      - (iii) Put on the armor of light and be ready to fight.
        - (a) We are in a battle, whether we realize it or not.
        - (b) If we don’t, we’ll be carried away a POW.

- c. Paul tells us to “behave properly as in the day” (Rom. 13:13).
  - (i) People tend to live uprightly during the day, but wickedly at night, when they can’t be recognized.
  - (ii) This is one aspect of common grace – God’s restraint on sin – what others think.
  - (iii) Paul reminds us that the sin we’ve already committed is far more than enough; as Peter also says, “For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries” (1 Pet. 4:3).
  - (iv) I don’t need to go into detail here about what Paul means: live uprightly/godly, not in drunken immorality and in fighting and envy like the rest of the world.
  - (v) We have given far more than we ever should have to the world.
  - (vi) Forsake the world and follow Christ.
  
- d. Finally, he summarizes what he is driving at: put on Christ, not the flesh.
  - (i) The things Jesus did, do.
  - (ii) The things He thought, think.
  - (iii) The things that moved His heart, let them move yours.
  - (iv) Become like Christ, live as He lived – as much as humanly possible with the Spirit’s help.
  - (v) And don’t leave any room – make no provision – take no foresight for – don’t make any plans to include – don’t leave the door open for – anything that has to do with sin. When you make your plans, don’t plan for any sin.
  - (vi) The Law of God doesn’t leave room for sin – it’s perfect.
  - (vii) Christ followed it perfectly, leaving us an example.
  - (viii) By the grace of God then, by the power of His Spirit, let’s conform to His perfect Law inwardly and outwardly.
  - (ix) Let’s put on Christ.
  - (x) The Lord is coming. Let’s be like the wise virgins and keep our lamps lit that we might be ready to receive Him when He comes for us. Amen.