

Several weeks ago—I suggested we could summarize Romans chapter 13—in three general parts—[1] our responsibilities to governing authorities (vv1-7), [2] our debt or responsibility to love our neighbor (vv8-10), [3] our responsibility to personal and radical holiness (vv11-14)—having considered the first two—we come this morning to begin our consideration of vv11-14—a passage I hope to consider in a total of three messages...

Verses 11-12a—these verses serve as a bridge between what preceded and what follows—they provide the motivation—for us to both love our neighbors (vv8-10), and to "cast off the works of darkness and [to] put on the armor of light" (v12)...

The remaining verses contain three pairs of negative and positive commands—v12b—"therefore let us cast off the works of darkness (negative), and let us put on the armor of light" (positive)...v13 Let us walk properly, as in the day (positive), not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy (negative)...v14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ (positive), and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (negative)..."

I. Knowing the Time: Explained

II. Knowing the Time: Applied

I. Knowing the Time: Explained

A. Time to wake-up

1. The first thing that needs explaining is the little phrase—"and do this"—that is—all that was previously mentioned...
2. In other words—we are to love each other and our neighbors—knowing the time—that Christ's coming is near...
3. Or, simply put—the fact that Christ's coming is imminent—should motivate us—to diligently obey God's law...
4. Hendriksen—"When Paul says, 'And do this,' he is referring at least to what is found in the immediately preceding verses. Therefore, he is now saying, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' but do it not only because the law demands this, but especially also because you know how very critical is the time in which we are now living..."
5. Now—key to this entire passage is this phrase—"knowing the time"—knowing that Christ's coming is near...
6. The word "knowing" is a word that entails the whole man—"knowing" in the deepest parts of our heart and soul...
7. "Knowing" it not merely intellectually, but experientially—having our hearts and minds gripped with this knowledge...
8. Now—the apostle then tells what he means by "time"—it's time to wakeup, salvation is near, night is far spent...
9. V11—"it is high time to awake out of sleep"—the hour has come to wake-up—the time for sleeping has past...
10. Now—the question here becomes—what exactly is Paul referring to—well, keep in mind he's writing to Christians...
11. He's telling the Roman Christians, and us also—that it's time to wake-up—it's time to get serious and sober...
12. Now—does this imply that Paul thought the Roman Christians were extra lazy, carnal, or spiritually sleepy...
13. Well—yes and no—no, in that there's no indication that the Roman Christians were especially lazy or carnal...

14. Yes—in that he understood all Christians—those at Rome and those in North Canton—are prone to spiritual sleepiness...
15. Thus—he exhorts them—"to awake out of sleep"—that is—out of all carnal and spiritual laziness and apathy...
16. Mk.13:32-37—"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. 34 *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 35 Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming -- in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning -- 36 lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch..."
17. Here—we find that being spiritually "awake" is fundamentally to be alert—and waiting for our Lord's return...
18. Thus—spiritual sleepiness or drowsiness—has a close relationship to our expectation of Christ's second coming...
19. 1Thess.5:5-8—"You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation..."
20. This passage is almost identical to Romans 13:11-14—because we are no longer of the night—let us not sleep...
21. [a] Sons of night and darkness—"night" because they are spiritually asleep, "darkness" because they are immoral...
22. [b] Sons of day and light—these are Christians—who have been brought out of the night and out of darkness...
23. The phrase that I'm specifically after is v6—"therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober..."
24. Because we are "sons of the day"—let us not sleep—that is—"let us watch and be sober"—watching is the opposite of sleeping...
25. Thus—while we remain *IN* the night we are no longer *OF* the night—just like we are *IN* but no longer *OF* the world...

B. Salvation is near

1. V11b—"For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed"—that is, that future aspect of our salvation...
2. Most of you know—that the Scriptures speak of salvation in a threefold way—past, present, and future salvation...
3. [a] Past salvation—that is—it's right to assert that Christians have been saved—from sins penalty and power...
4. Eph.2:8—"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God..."
5. You have been saved—past tense—Christians have been saved from the penalty, but also the power of sin...
6. That is—they have been delivered from the slavery of sin—Christians have been delivered from sin's mastery...
7. Tit.3:5—"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit..."
8. Here salvation is associated with regeneration—that is—getting a new heart—being saved from sin's power...
9. [b] Present salvation—there is a sense in which—Christians are saved—and they are presently being saved...
10. 2Cor.2:15—"For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing..."

11. Notice there are two kinds of people—there are those who are "being saved" and those who are "perishing..."
12. [c] Future salvation—this is the salvation spoken of in our text—"for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed..."
13. That is—that future aspect of our salvation—salvation from remaining sin and all its effects—is coming closer...
14. Salvation from remaining sin, the temptations of Satan, this corruptible body, and this fallen and foolish world..
15. Salvation is coming—and it's closer now—than when we first believed"—we are all a little closer to glory...
16. Now—this future salvation is one and the same with "our inheritance"—which is given to us as a promise...
17. When I first believed the gospel, back in 1994, I was saved from the penalty and power of sin—once for all...
18. Furthermore—I began the process of sanctification, or what we might describe as progressive and ongoing salvation...
19. In addition to this—I was also given the promise of future salvation—which Christ brings with Him at His return...
20. Thus—Christians have been saved, they are being saved, and they shall be saved—as they await final salvation...

C. Night is far spent

1. V12—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand"—these two phrases are two sides of the same coin—they say the same things...
2. "The night is far spent"—that is—the night is largely or mostly finished—"the day is at hand"—it's close coming...
3. Here the apostle uses a common imagery found throughout Scripture—that of night and day, or darkness and light...
4. Notice—he describes this present time as night—it is presently night-time—with the morning coming soon...
5. That is—whatever measure of light and knowledge we now know—it's but darkness in comparison to what awaits...
6. Thus by "the day" is likely meant the return or second coming of Christ—the morning of the general resurrection...
7. Thus—by "the day" is meant the same thing as "salvation"—salvation from this dark world and remaining sin...
8. Gill—"A little while, and the night of darkness, affliction, and disconsolation will be over, and the day of glory will succeed, when there will be no more night, no more darkness, no more doubts, fears, and unbelief; but one continued series of light, joy, and comfort, and an uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit..."
9. 2Pet.1:19—"And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts..."
10. The Scriptures use the imagery of the morning dawn in several ways—usually to our regeneration or conversion...
11. We are all by nature in darkness—and Christ, by His Spirit, dawns within our souls—bringing light and life...
12. But—the Scriptures also use this imagery, not of the beginning of the Christian life, but of its consummation...
13. That is—when Christ returns, He will deliver us from the darkness that remains, and this dark and dreary world...
14. Thus—by "the day" here Peter refers to the resurrection morning—or, to the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ...

15. The Scriptures refer to this as "that day" "that great day" that great and glorious day" "the day of the LORD"...
16. Thus—the Scriptures portray this "day" as both a "day of judgment" and a "day of salvation" or blessedness [2Pet.3:7,10,12]...

II. Knowing the Time: Applied

A. Saints easily become sleepy and sluggish

1. This is a sad fact, proved as easily by experience as Scripture—Christians are prone to spiritual sleepiness and drowsiness...
2. Now—the causes of this potential sleepiness are many—thus, here I want to briefly suggest three possible causes...
3. [1] Christians have to wait a long time—that is—the time that exists from our conversion to Christ's coming...
4. Christians are those who are waiting for salvation—this salvation is given to them in the form of a promise...
5. Rom.8:22-25—"For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance..."
6. [2] Christians must walk through the Enchanted Ground—that is—this enticing, tempting, and enticing world...
7. Now—some of you know that—by Enchanted Ground—I'm referring to a passage our of Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress...
8. Bunyan—"I saw then in my dream that they [Hopeful/Christian] went on till they came into a certain country where the air naturally tended to cause drowsiness in those unaccustomed to it. Hopeful's mind began to grow dull, and he became very sleepy. He then said to Christian, 'I'm getting so drowsy that I can hardly keep my eyes open. Let's lie down here and take a short nap.' 'No way!' Said Christian. 'If we sleep here, we may never wake up.' 'Why not, my brother? Sleep is sweet to one who is exhausted. We may be refreshed if we take a nap.' 'Don't you remember that one of the Shepherds warned us to beware of the Enchanted Ground? He meant that we should beware of sleeping there, So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.' 'I admit my fault,' said Hopeful. 'If I had been here alone, I would have run the risk of death by falling asleep. I see that what the wise man said is true, 'Two are better than one.' Up to this time your company has been a gift of mercy to me; you shall surely have a good reward for your effort.' 'You have blessed me too,' said Christian, 'but to keep the drowsiness of this place from overcoming us, let's keep talking about those things that edify our spirits'..."
9. Heb.10:23-25—"Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching..."
10. [3] Christians are vexed with remaining sin and unbelief—this is the greatest cause behind spiritual sleepiness...

B. Eternal realities motivate us to obedience

1. This is the great motive or incentive—to awake from our slumber or sleepiness—and be alert and sober minded...
2. The Scriptures use various motives to encourage us to obedience and holiness—but none more often than this...
3. V11—"And do this [that is—love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself], knowing the time..."

4. Now—I suggest that this knowledge—entails the conscious and experiential understanding of these three truths...
5. [1] This world is passing—that is—all the "things of this world"—are passing away—"the night is far spent..."
6. This is how Christians are to look upon this world—there is a true sense in which—it is but one passing night...
7. Now—this is obviously—one major difference between Christians and nonChristians—our views of this life...
8. Christians understand that this world is but temporal—that it will one day burn—that the night is far spent...
9. 1Jn.2:15-17—"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that *is* in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever..."
10. [2] These people are perishing—that is—while the things of this world are passing way—the people are perishing...
11. V12—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand"—and many (most) are not ready for that day, Rev.6:17—"for the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand..."
12. 2Tim.4:1-5—"I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry..."
13. [3] The Savior is returning—that is—Christ is returning, who is our redeemer, who will redeem our bodies...
14. Heb.9:27-28—"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation..."

C. Heaven involves no night but eternal day

1. There is a sense in which—this entire life is but a "night"—in comparison to what awaits us in the morning...
2. Ps.30:5—"weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" Rev.21:4—"and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away...."
3. Rev.21:23-25—"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. 24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there)..."