

EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #48

Romans 13:11-14

Apparently the Apostle Paul was facing some form of spiritual somnambulism in the church of Rome. Some of the believers were walking through life sound asleep, spiritually speaking. These people were coming to the services, they were singing the songs, they were listening to the Scriptures being read and taught, but then they would leave as some type of spiritual zombie. Their spiritual senses had been lulled to sleep.

The Apostle Paul wanted the believers in Rome to be awake, alert and active, and the central motivating factor for this was the coming of Jesus Christ.

In this dispensation of Grace, there are two ways that a N.T. believer can potentially see Jesus Christ: 1) Through death ; 2) Through the Rapture .

THE REALITY THAT WE ARE NEARING THE COMING OF JESUS CHRIST IS A REALITY THAT SHOULD MOTIVATE US TO BE AN ACTIVE DEMONSTRATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

According to the Apostle John, this thought of seeing Jesus Christ should have a purifying . effect on God's people (I John 3:3).

IN VIEW OF CHRIST'S RETURN RESPONSE #1 – Wake up . 13:11-12a

When Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians, he told them to wake up and make the most of their time “because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16). We cannot afford to fall asleep in this world because it is an evil world and we are up against an evil enemy.

In December of 1734, Jonathan Edwards, the great revivalist, preached a sermon he called “The Preciousness of Time and the Importance of Redeeming it.” In that sermon, there were several points he made and we will give you five:

- 1) Time is very short and very precious;
- 2) We do not know how much time we have left;
- 3) We cannot regain time already gone;
- 4) We are accountable to God for what we do with our time;
- 5) We need to improve the use of our time.

(The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 2, pp. 233-236)

Apparently some of the Romans were spiritually falling asleep in the world and so Paul says, you need to recognize this and “wake up” and start using your time properly.

What is most significant is the place he puts this challenge in the book of Romans. He doesn't tell them to wake up until he has written eleven chapters of heavy theology. What we learn from this is **the basis for active righteousness stems from a proper theological and doctrinal understanding. It is sound doctrine that produces sound lives.**

Our practical life will never wake up spiritually until our doctrinal level increases. **You can be absolutely certain of this fact; your enemy is not asleep and he is wide awake to the fact that God's people are sleeping.**

IN VIEW OF CHRIST'S RETURN RESPONSE #2 – Get dressed. 13:12-13

The verses of this section are few, but they pack a wallop. In fact, these next verses that end the 13th chapter of Romans, were the very verses that Augustine read the night God saved him. He said he read these verses which said put off deeds of darkness and put on the Lord Jesus Christ and instantly God saved him (*Confessions*, pp. 127-128).

Obviously, one cannot just get up from a sleep and go outside; one must put on proper clothing. God wants His people dressed properly in light of His return. **There are two phases to being properly dressed:**

Phase #1 - Lay aside works of darkness. 13:12b

The verb “lay aside” is middle voice, meaning we are to perform the action in and of ourselves. We are actively involved in this process. It is our responsibility as a believer in Christ, to take this action and lay aside or cast off any work of darkness that is in our lives. There are six different kinds of dark works we are to lay aside specifically named in this context:

(*Kind #1*) - We must lay aside carousing. 13:13b

In the N.T., this particular word was used to refer to festive drinking parties which would go on well into the night. Did you ever stop to ask, “I wonder what God thinks about this?” How does God view the Friday night bashes? He views it as a work of darkness; make no mistake about it. This kind of activity needs to be laid aside and the middle voice verb means this is not something we pray about, this is something we do.

(*Kind #2*) - We must lay aside drunkenness. 13:13c

Now the Roman soldiers were known for their drunken carousing.

What is drunkenness? Is it a disease which needs to be treated? Notice what the Bible says - it is a sinful work of darkness! Now I think this is an extremely important text of Scripture because Paul is making the assumption that the believer has the power to get rid of the sin problem. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have the power to stop getting drunk and God expects you to stop.

This was a problem in the early church. Some people were coming even to communion services stoned-drunk (i.e. I Cor. 11:21).

(Kind #3) - We must lay aside sexual promiscuity . **13:13d**

The word indicates that God expects us to be pure, not involved in any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of marriage. Sexual promiscuity is a work of darkness. Any and all sexual activity outside of marriage is a dark sin in the sight of God.

(Kind #4) - We must lay aside sensuality . **13:13e**

The word “sensuality” is a Greek word that refers to licentiousness or excess. It was used for one who would indulge himself in anything without any restraints. This was one of the ugliest words in the Greek language and was actually used of someone who would give himself or herself over to public vice with no shame whatsoever. This kind of person was doing things in public that most would not do in private.

(Kind #5) - We must lay aside strife . **13:13f**

Paul lumps “strife” into the same context with these other gross sins. The Greek word is one which means contention. It was used of a contention between two believers which was caused by some self-centered, competitive personal ambition.

(Kind #6) - We must lay aside jealousy . **13:13g**

Jealousy is the sin of wanting something that someone else has. It could be a house, a car, money, or a job. It could be looks, a figure, a talent, or ability. Jealousy is an evil sin.

Phase #2 - Put on the armor of light . **13:12c**

The most significant passage in the N.T. on armor is Ephesians 6:10-17.

Get dressed - put off darkness and put on the armor of God.

IN VIEW OF CHRIST’S RETURN RESPONSE #3 – Behave properly . **13:13**

We have the responsibility to live our lives properly. The Greek word means we have the responsibility to live in a way that is becoming decorated. We have the responsibility to live out life as one who has been decorated by God.

IN VIEW OF CHRIST’S RETURN RESPONSE #4 – Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. **13:14a**

The issue at stake here is sanctification, not justification. We are to clothe ourselves with everything Christlike. Our thoughts, our actions, and our attitudes are to be a reflection of Him. The names that Paul uses means we are to think in terms of the fact that Jesus Christ is God (Lord). He is the only Savior (Jesus) and He is the Jewish Messiah (Christ). We are connected to God and we are to look like it.

**IN VIEW OF CHRIST'S RETURN RESPONSE #5 – Make no provision for the flesh .
13:14b**

The words that are used in this context would certainly indicate that one of the big lustful lures is sex. Obviously Paul knew sexual, lustful and immoral things can and will capture a believer. We do not want to meet Jesus Christ having been dabbling in fleshly lusts. One key to this is “make no provision for the flesh.” We need to take concrete action to make certain we are not providing lustful things to our own flesh.

Now why should we bother? Why go to the trouble to make these changes in life?
Because the coming of the Lord draws near!