

LESSON 76 - PUTTING ON CHRIST *Romans 13:12-14*

(13:12) - THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT - This refers to the time of our earthly pilgrimage. It is called “*night*” because even though we as believers have seen the light of Christ and have the light of His truth (*Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5*), this present world is enshrouded in moral and spiritual darkness and is opposed to the light of the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ. We are IN this world, but we are not OF this world. Our time in this world is nearly over. **THE DAY IS AT HAND** - The time of our entrance into glory is near. While in this dark world, we are to shine forth the light of the Gospel of Christ (*Matt. 5:16; Php. 2:12-16*). We are to **CAST OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS**, i.e. lay aside all deeds, ideas, attitudes, motives, and goals that oppose the light of the Gospel of Christ. We are to **PUT ON THE ARMOR OF LIGHT**, which is the same as the “*whole armor of God*” listed in *Ephesians 6:11-18*. Armor is made for warfare, and, as believers, we need to realize we are in a warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our victory is assured because of the grace and power of God to save us and keep us unto the end (*John 16:33; Rom. 7:24-25; Rev. 12:9-11*). None of this armor is of our own making and effectual because of our own power. It is all the power and goodness of Christ our Lord.

(13:13) - LET US WALK HONESTLY, AS IN THE DAY; NOT IN RIOTING AND DRUNKENNESS, NOT IN CHAMBERING AND WANTONNESS, NOT IN STRIFE AND ENVYING. - As we are driven by the Holy Spirit and motivated by grace, love, and gratitude to God, let us strive to conduct ourselves in ways that honor Christ and His Word. Let us walk “*honestly*” (decently or properly) in behavior of which we would not be ashamed as openly in the light of day. Let us conduct ourselves obediently, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality, not in quarrelling and jealousy. We who have been saved by God’s grace in Christ and so freely blessed in Him are to be living proofs and examples of the perfect will of God (*Rom. 12:1-2*), and trophies of His grace and power.

(13:14) - BUT PUT YE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, - The idea behind “PUTTING ON the Lord Jesus Christ” is a common metaphor in the Bible that describes the believer’s security in Christ and his/her relationship with Christ. It is not to be taken literally, as if to say Christ is only effective on the outside of our persons and not on the inside, i.e. within our hearts. The reason I mention this is because of some confused preachers who do not understand, and many who deny, the Biblical truth of IMPUTED righteousness claiming that if righteousness is only “imputed” (charged, accounted, credited) to a person, then it is no more than a “pasted on” righteousness or “righteousness on the surface, but not real and substantial, even pretend.” It is vital that, as believers who are involved in a spiritual warfare, we understand clearly what it means to “PUT ON the Lord Jesus Christ.” To do this, it is important that we see the distinction between the LEGAL realm of salvation and the SPIRITUAL realm of salvation.

(1) The LEGAL realm of our salvation is our JUSTIFICATION before God based solely upon Christ’s righteousness IMPUTED by God to us. By His grace, God charges the merit of Christ’s obedience unto death to accounts of His chosen people. This is based on the fact that God has imputed the sin-debt of His people to Christ as their Surety. As the Surety of God’s people, Christ came into the world, took into union with Himself a perfect and sinless human nature, obeyed the law unto death on the cross for us, and satisfied the justice of God for all our sins. As our Substitute, Christ redeemed us from our sins. The merit (value, quality, virtue, excellence) of His obedience unto death in our place is called “*the righteousness of God*” (*Rom. 1:16-7; 2 Corinthians 5:21*). This is the righteousness God imputes to all His people for our justification in His sight. Because of this righteousness

imputed, God cannot lay sin to our charge or condemn us for our sins (*Psalm 32:1-2; Rom. 4:6-8; 8:1,31-34; Heb. 8:12; 10:14-17*).

In the Bible, righteousness imputed is described metaphorically as putting on a coat. We see this first in *Genesis 3* when Adam fell and brought the whole human race into a state of sin and death. Both Adam and Eve “*knew that they were naked*” and covered themselves with fig-leaf aprons (*Gen. 3:7*). They “*hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God*” (*Gen. 3:8*). In the Bible nakedness symbolizes a lack of righteousness which exposes to God’s just wrath. The “*fig leaves*” sewn by Adam and Eve symbolize man’s futile attempts to cover his nakedness and shame with his own efforts. It is a symbol for man seeking to make himself righteous by his works. As this will not do, God showed them the only way for sinners to be made righteous - “*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them*” (*Gen. 3:21*). These “*coats of skins*” showed that righteousness could only be achieved through blood of sacrifice, the death of a God-appointed substitute. This was a type of Christ, the Lamb of God, by whose death righteousness is achieved. This is the righteousness with which God clothes His people, which is a metaphorical way of describing our justification before God based on Christ’s righteousness imputed to us. Throughout the Bible the same metaphor is used to describe the imputed righteousness of Christ (*ex. Job 29:14; Psalm 132:9; Isa. 11:5; 59:17; 61:10; Zech. 3:1-5; Matt. 22:1-14; Eph. 6:14; Rev. 3:4-5; 19:8*).

(2) The SPIRITUAL realm of our salvation is our SANCTIFICATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT in the new birth when He imparts spiritual life, knowledge, and grace to bring us to faith in Christ, true repentance, and perseverance unto glory. The Holy Spirit sets us apart from the world by invincible and powerfully calling us out of darkness into the marvelous light of Christ in the Gospel (*Col. 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:9*). This is the new birth (*John 1:12-13; 3:3-7; 2 Thess. 2:13-14*). The Holy Spirit empowers the Gospel unto our salvation and brings us to faith in Christ (*Rom. 1:16-17; 6:17-18; 10:13-17*). Because of Christ’s righteousness imputed to them, they must be given spiritual life and all the blessings of that life in the Lord Jesus Christ. They must be born again and brought to faith in Christ, true repentance, and perseverance unto glory. Christ’s righteousness imputed is the GROUND of their whole salvation. The work of the Holy Spirit within them is FRUIT of their whole salvation.

It is this aspect of salvation to which Paul refers when he writes “*but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.*” God has already clothed us in Christ by the imputation of His righteousness to us in our justification before Him. When we are born again, we put on the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, believing in Him as our whole salvation (*Gal. 3:26-29*). Now, having the foundation of grace and faith established in our hearts, we are to be about the business of putting Him on continuing to believe and rest in Him, looking unto Him always for our strength and assurance, and in seeking to be conformed to Him in all ways of truth and godliness. We are to seek to imitate Christ in the exercise of grace, to walk as He walked, love as He loved, forgive as He forgave, submit to the Father’s will as He submitted.

AND MAKE NOT PROVISION FOR THE FLESH, TO FULFIL THE LUSTS THEREOF. - This involves fighting the warfare of the flesh and the Spirit (*Gal. 5:16-18*). As sinful human beings we cannot control the sinful thoughts and desires of our fallen human nature, but we can and should, by the Spirit’s power, declare war against it so as not to fulfill its lusts by making provision or paving the way for it. Again, we are to keep in mind what Paul wrote in *Romans 12:1-2*. We stand safe, secure, and victorious in Christ, washed in His blood and clothed in His righteousness. We wear “*the breastplate of righteousness*” so much that no enemy can defeat or kill us spiritually and eternally. By faith, looking to and resting in Christ, we adorn ourselves in “*the whole armor of God*” (*Eph. 6:11*) and fight the battle that, in reality, like David of old against Goliath, is not ours but the Lord’s (*1 Sam. 17:47; 2 Chron. 20:15*).