

Sermons through

# Romans

## Walk In The Day

*Romans 13:11-14*

*Part Two*

*Put on the Lord Jesus Christ*

*With Study Questions*

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1/29/2017

# Walk In The Day

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*Part Two*

*Put on the Lord Jesus Christ*

**And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. <sup>14</sup> But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts (Romans 13:11-14).**

## Review

We spoke last time of how the Scriptures indicate that there are certain times in history that tend to be more extreme in moral/spiritual darkness. The Apostle Paul moves into this section wanting his readers to be aware of their environment as they seek to obey the call to holiness. We also discussed the various interpretations of what day/era Paul had in mind in terms of this darkness.

But his main point was that extra caution is necessary in darker times because the corruption surrounding us will affect us. Paul is writing to Christians with the awareness and anticipation of difficult times-and so there is some application to almost any generation. And what are we called to do?

We are called to **“awake out of sleep”**. The sleep of which Paul writes is a spiritual drowsiness among Christians which is an epidemic in the west. The enemy doesn't need to kill the Christians in the west in order to kill the faith. Killing Christians has never been an effective strategy. As Tertullian noted in the second century, **“The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church.”**

No, it appears the enemy would prefer to keep churches full, safe and sleepy. Sleepy enough that no one notices that they are no longer churches at all. There are no sacraments, there is no discipline and if the Scriptures

are opened at all, it is merely to support a point that has already been made via some alternate source. The enemy bids us to get on the bus and enjoy the smooth ride. It is a bus on which we can nap and never be tempted to notice that the bus has little to do with Christ-or at least the Christ of the Scriptures. As Ross Douthat profoundly observes regarding the predominant views of Christ in the west:

**If you believe what's on television, in the paper and on the front table at Barnes and Noble, a historical Jesus has to mean a revisionist Jesus--and a heretical Jesus, ultimately, rather than the orthodox Christ.<sup>1</sup>**

You see the orthodox Christ is both upsetting and demanding. John wrote that Jesus is the light, **"and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil" (John 3:19)**. So, there is something upsetting about Jesus to the natural man. And there is a temptation to those in the ministry to, as it were, de-fang Christ; to make Him less offensive to the sinner. But it is like trying to make a doctor less offensive to a sick child by taking away the doctor's medicine.

It is tricky business. For the Scriptures do present Christ as **"holy"** and **"harmless"** (Hebrews 7:26) and a **"friend of...sinners"** (Matthew 11:19). How often do we take refuge in the words:

**A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench (Matthew 12:20).**

At the same time there is no one who makes the kinds of demands which proceed from the lips of Jesus. Consider His call to discipleship recorded in Luke 14:

**Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower,**

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<sup>1</sup> Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion*, p 162.

does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it – 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:25-33).

I daresay if Jesus did not make me and own me, the call to “**forsake all**” to follow Him would appear madness. And our natural resistance to seek to obey this call may be the height of human folly, especially in light of the alternate path, the path where we follow the thief who comes “**to steal, and to kill, and to destroy**” (John 10:10). The path to which Christ calls us is that of life and light.

Are we saved by grace through faith *alone*? Most certainly. If we took every good and right thing we ever did and placed it on the scales of God’s justice, we would be shocked to see the scales moving in the wrong direction. At best, we are unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10).

But we should not draw the conclusion that because we cannot merit salvation, that Christ makes no demands of those who would seek to follow Him. Paul will beckon us to “**put on the Lord Jesus Christ.**” There are two senses in which we are called to put on Christ. In the current passage, we put on Christ by engaging in certain ethical/spiritual quests.

**Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.** <sup>13</sup> **Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy** <sup>14</sup> **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its lusts* (Romans 13:12b-14).**

## Cast Off

Under my house, collecting dust, is the dresser I used as a child.

Maybe it's worth something, maybe not. To be honest, I don't keep it because of resale value. I just can't seem to get rid of it. The human psyche is interesting. We can be nostalgic and sentimental to the point of becoming hoarders. For various reasons we find it difficult to give, sell or throw things away.

Often this behavior can be morally indifferent. There is nothing good or evil about keeping a dresser. Yet it is easy to carve out grooves in our lives which give place, or make "**provision**", for sinful behavior. We cater to, and entertain that which is sinful. Those grooves can become deep and appear impossible to climb out of.

The Apostle Paul gives more exhaustive lists of these things in other places (Rom. 1:29-31; 1 Cor. 5:10-11; 6:9-10; 2 Cor. 12:20; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:31; 5:3-5; Col. 3:5, 8; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 6:4-5; 2 Tim. 3:2-4; Titus 3:3). In our current passage he dials into revelry, drunkenness, lewdness, lust, strife and envy.

"**Revelry**" carries the idea of being unrestrained in conduct. It is when the party has gotten out of hand and you do things you wouldn't normally do. This may be the result of the subsequent "drunkenness" of which he also writes, or simply falling prey to a mob mentality.

"**Drunkenness**" is recorded in Scripture as a source of numerous issues and difficulties. Wine can be either a blessing and a curse (Deuteronomy 7:13; Psalm 104:15; Isaiah 65:8; Proverbs 20:1). Wine can make glad the heart of man (Psalm 104:15) or it can become a mocker which leads astray those who are not wise (Proverbs 20:1). It is in this area that many churches have chosen to disallow any consumption, which is an understandable action, given the destruction. Yet we should resist making unlawful that which God has deemed lawful. Wine should be approached similarly to the Lord's Table. It can be a source of great blessing or great curse when it takes over one's personality--something not always seen by the affected person.

"**Lewdness**" and "**lust**" are connected. Lewdness being the engagement in sexual immorality and lust denotes an unrestrained attitude in sexual behaviors. There is little doubt that the sexual revolution of the sixties is high on the list of that which is destructive to the culture, to the church and the godly influence the church is to have on its surrounding world. God has called us to devote our passions to one other person, and in doing so, becoming one with that person (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5).

This critical understanding of human sexuality is all but lost in the west.

It is not difficult to see how the former sins lead to “**strife**” and “**envy**”. Strife being the inevitable discord and contention which results when drunkenness and sexual immorality become common. It struck me watching a television show one time where these types of sins were taking place, how by the next week the inescapable strife simply disappeared. It dawned on me that this popular show is teaching our culture that we can sin with impunity. It’s not the real world. This type of environment fosters an envy or resentment toward those who have what our flesh wants. It’s moral anarchy and everyone loses. In light of this, Paul puts forth the very aggressive notion of casting “**off the works of darkness.**”

The Proverbs give ample wisdom and instruction on this issue:

**For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, 4 but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; 6 she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it. 7 And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. 8 Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house (Proverbs 5:3-8).**

We are cautioned in this verse to “**not go near the door of her house**”, which I take to mean to stay as far away from a temptation as possible. In the next chapter of Proverbs we see another illustration for those who find themselves already caught up in that which is injurious to their spiritual welfare.

**...save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler (Proverbs 6:5).**

This brings to mind the wildlife films where the deer is being pursued by the lion. As soon as that deer senses danger it engages all of its engines to survive. As John Owen’s said:

**Be killing sin or it will be killing you.**

We are to aggressively throw those things away which harm our souls--things Paul calls "**works of darkness**". It's been said that true Christian integrity is the behavior that is done when no one can see but God.

### **Put On**

But the counsel given by Paul is not entirely defensive. That is, along with the call to "**cast off**" comes the call to "**put on**" (seen in verses 12 and 14). Putting on "**the armor of light**" seems to be a parallel to putting on "**the Lord Jesus Christ**."

Paul gives counsel on this in greater detail in Ephesians 6:11-18. It is there that we learn that our true adversary is a scheming devil. And our battle is not against mere flesh and blood, but against "**principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, against spirituals hosts of wickedness**."

These are things that your friends will mock you for believing. Perhaps you recall in my recent debate that my opponent didn't believe in a thing called evil. He did, however, believe in actions that are evil. But if you don't believe in a thing called evil, how does one determine which actions are evil?

There is a thing called evil and it has a source. And the means by which we do battle with evil is by putting on the "**armor of light**", by (which appears to be a parallelism) putting on "**the Lord Jesus Christ**". The prescription Paul gives for this (which we haven't time right now to fully unpack) is "**righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, the Spirit/word of God, prayer, watchfulness and perseverance**."

There is a means by which this battle is to take place. There is a fight to be fought. There are battles. And each of us must be ready to wage war, armed with love, wisdom, faith and prayer. I determined that we would set aside another sermon to engage fully in how the Apostle counsels us to stay strong in the Lord and don the full armor.

What I would like to finish with this morning is the other sense in which we are to "**put on Christ**." There is a sense in which we put on Christ to do battle on behalf of God, against the flesh, and in the advancement of His kingdom. But there is another sense in which we put on Christ to protect us *from* God and His righteous judgment. It is this type of putting on Christ that Paul writes of in Galatians 3:27.

**For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Galatians 3:27).**

This is not the imperative but the indicative. That is to say, in this passage Paul is not telling Christians to do something, he is informing them of something already done. And I might add that to seek to put on Christ in the sense of seeking to walk obediently without having put on Christ by faith may be the darkest side of any religious pursuit and destined for failure.

Consider Shadrach, Meshach and AbedNego and their being cast into the **“burning fiery furnace” (Daniel 3:23)**. When the king looked he saw there was a fourth with them as they seemed to casually walk in the midst of furnace raised to seven times its usual heat--so hot it killed the guards escorting them to it.

Would you walk into such a furnace without wearing a heat proximity suit? Of course even the best heat protection suit would only be good to a few hundred degrees. What has God provided to protect us from Him whose eyes are **“like a flame of fire” (Revelation 1:14)?**

We are called to, by faith, **“put on Christ”** as if a garment, the *toga virilis*. It is a trusting in Christ that is to be, not apart from, but entirely distinct from our acts of service and obedience. For peace with God we do not look to our sacrifices, our obedience, our wisdom and goodness. But we look away from ourselves, we look to Christ-**“to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2)**. As Calvin taught:

**He therefore explains, in a few words, what is implied in our being united, or rather, made one with the Son of God; so as to remove all doubt, that what belongs to him is communicated to us. He employs the metaphor of a garment, when he says that the Galatians have put on Christ; but he means that they are so closely united to him, that, in the presence of God, they bear the name and character of Christ, and are viewed in him rather than in themselves.<sup>2</sup>**

May we move there in the meditations of our hearts as we prepare

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<sup>2</sup> Calvin, J. (1998). Galatians (electronic ed., Ga 3:27). Albany, OR: Ages Software.



for the Lord's Supper.

## Questions for Study

1. How can the spiritual/moral darkness of certain eras affect us? Give examples of this in today's church (page 2)?
2. What does Paul mean when he calls us to "awake out of sleep"? What are some ways the church has become sleepy (pages 2, 3)?
3. In what ways is Jesus upsetting and demanding (pages 3, 4)?
4. In what ways is it easy to make provision for the flesh (pages 4, 5)?
5. Define and discuss "revelry, drunkenness, lewdness, lust, strife, envy" (pages 4, 5)?
6. How should we engage works of darkness (pages 4-6)?
7. What are the two ways we can "put on Christ"? Have you done this (pages 7, 8)?