

Subject: God's Wake-Up Call

Scripture: Romans 13:11-14

When I was in Marine boot camp we had a very early start to our day and the drill instructors had some unusual ways of waking us up. One morning the D.I. threw a metal trash can down the aisle between our beds. A wake-up call like that gets the job done.

Some of us need a strong wake-up call. The great revivals were called "awakenings" for a reason. A Sunday School teacher told her class about Adam and Eve. She said that God did a little surgery on Adam and took out his rib. She asked the class, "How do you think He put Adam to sleep?" One student said, "By preaching a long sermon." A sermon shouldn't put you to sleep, but it should wake you up.

1. IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP

"Knowing the time" means be aware of the time. This is no time to sleep, but it's time to be spiritually awake and alert. "High time" means it is a critical time or crunch time. It's not the word for the passing of time, but the word for a special time or opportunity. Time is limited. The opportunity is now. It's no time for apathy or indifference.

Someone said, "The great task of the church is not only to get sinners into heaven, but also to get saints out of bed." It is a terrible feeling when you wake up and realize you have overslept. Maybe the alarm didn't go off or you didn't hear it. We need to know what time it is so we can wake up. Sleep has been defined as "a state of inactivity with a loss of consciousness and a decrease in responsiveness to events taking place." With that definition in mind we can say that sleep can be a good thing or a bad thing.

Sleep is a good thing. It is a blessing from the Lord.

Psalms 127:2 *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

But there are times when sleep is not good. It's not good to sleep when you should be awake and alert. There are times when sleep is shameful and even criminal. A pilot needs to sleep, but not when he's flying the plane. A truck driver needs to sleep, but not when he's behind the wheel. A security guard needs to sleep, but not when he's at his post. We find some examples of people sleeping in the Bible when they should have been awake, and how they speak to us today. The Bible warns us about sleeping when we should be awake.

- A. **The sleep of a lazy son – Proverbs 10:5** *He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*
- B. **The sleep of a disobedient prophet – Jonah 1:6** *So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.*
- C. **The sleep of careless disciples – Matthew 26:40** *And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*

Too many Christians have hit the snooze button. Why do believers need to be awake? Verse 11 gives the answer: now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. This refers to the

final chapter of our salvation. We have been justified (saved from the penalty of sin). We are being sanctified (saved from the power of sin). We will be glorified (saved from the presence and possibility of sin).

1 Thessalonians 5:8-9⁸ *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*⁹ *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,*

The night is far spent. This is the night of sin, unbelief, and rebellion. It is the night of man's depravity and Satan's dominion.

The day is at hand. This is the day of Christ's return and reign. It is the day of His glory and righteousness. The night is far spent (almost gone) and the day is at hand (almost here). A new day is about to dawn. Christ's return is our great motivation to watch and wait and live for Him.

Titus 2:11-13¹¹ *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,*¹² *Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*¹³ *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.*

Hebrews 10:24-25²⁴ *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:*²⁵ *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

James 5:7-8⁷ *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.*⁸ *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

This is no time to take a spiritual nap. The Lord has warned us to look up and be ready. He's coming back sooner than you think. The words on the side mirror say, "Objects in mirror are closer than they appear." Events in the Bible are closer than they appear.

Hebrews 10:37 *For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

From the looks of things many professing Christians are half asleep, acting as if eternity doesn't matter and Christ isn't coming back. We don't know how much sand is in the hourglass, but there's not as much as when Paul first wrote this. It's time to wake up.

2. IT'S TIME TO CLEAN UP

Let us cast off (lay aside, forsake) the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Armor is worn by soldiers ready for battle. Light represents holiness and purity. This is a call to repent and fight the good fight of faith.

1 John 1:6-7⁶ *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*⁷ *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

“Let us walk honestly” means to behave properly or decently. We are not to practice rioting (carousing) and drunkenness. They go hand-in-hand. We are not to practice sexual immorality and sensuality. We are not to practice strife and jealousy. These are the same sins mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21, where they are called “the works of the flesh.” It’s time to clean up.

3. IT’S TIME TO DRESS UP

Verse 14 tells us how to dress. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put on His character, His attitude, His lifestyle. It’s time to dress up and live like Christ. This is the process of sanctification, being clothed with Christ.

The ancient Jewish rabbis spoke of true worshipers putting on the cloak of Shekinah glory, which meant they were to reflect God and become like the God they worshiped.

Salvation was described as a change of clothes by the prophet Isaiah.

***Isaiah 61:10** I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

Sometimes Paul used the image of clothing to refer to the time of conversion, as something that has already happened.

***Colossians 3:9-10**⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰ And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*

At other times Paul referred to this image as something that needed to happen over and over.

***Ephesians 4:22-24**²² That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; ²⁴ And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

There is something that is already true about our spiritual life and something that should be true. In Christ there is an imputed positional righteousness that we already have, and there is a practical righteousness that we strive for. That is what Paul is talking about here.

Think of it like this. An athlete can wear the uniform, but it is how he performs on the field that shows his character. A judge can put on his black robe, but it is his commitment to uphold the law that shows his integrity. A person can call himself a Christian, but it is his faithfulness to Christ that shows his true colors.

We are to make no provision (involves planning and forethought) for the flesh to fulfill its desires. Make no plans to satisfy your sinful desires. Don’t buy things associated with temptation. Don’t go to places associated with temptation. Don’t make it easy to sin. Don’t flirt with sin. One translation says, “Give no chance to the flesh to have its fling.” Sin first begins in the mind before it is done. As long as we are in this body we will have the presence of sin, but we don’t have to give in to the power of sin. It’s time to WAKE UP, time to CLEAN UP, and time to DRESS UP.