

The Proper Approach to Life

(Romans 13:11-14)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Our text this morning is Romans 13:11-14.
2. I want to talk about these verses because it puts in concise and easily understood language the approach both you and I must take to live in acceptable fashion before God!
3. In doing so Paul uses some metaphors designed to stick in the minds of his readers.
 - A. He uses that of night and day, darkness and light, to contrast sin and righteousness.
 - B. He also uses that of dressing oneself, or how one puts on or takes off clothes, as representative of how one lives their life—whether one lives in sin or in Christ.
4. Hopefully, our examining of these verses will help us keep in mind the approach to life the Lord expects so that we might live with hope and assurance of eternal life to come.

BODY:

- **I. Know the time** (13:11 – “Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.”).
 - A. Though generally lost in translation, “Do this” or “Besides this,” is emphatic language, indicating how important it is to do, or add to one’s life, what follows.
 1. That is significant because Paul had previously instructed us how to...
 - a. Behave properly toward governing authorities by **submitting** and *why* (13:1-7).
 - b. Behave toward one another in **love** and **why** (13:8-10).
 2. So, “do this” or “besides this” indicates that it is imperative that we know there is more that God **requires**—more that we must do, or add, to our lives!
 - B. What follows is the command to *know the time* and *awake from sleep*.
 - 1. A successful life depends on knowing when it is the proper time to be awake and why.
 - a. Sadly, many never figure this out and suffer in life for it, losing their jobs, etc., because they want sleep when they should be awake and awake when they should be sleeping!
 - b. This confusion is not to characterize the life of a Christian, whether physically or spiritually!
 - 2. We must live with **consciousness of the time**.
 - a. This is referring to knowing the time of day, month, or year (though that helps).
 - b. This is referring to having a greater understanding of the time of our life—that we live in the time between the ascension of the Lord and His return for salvation and judgment!
 - c. Therefore, this is the time to be awake, sober, aware of our spiritual role and duties.
 - C. Why, because our **salvation** is nearer than when we first believed.
 1. **Salvation** refers to the time of entering our eternal home with God.
 - a. This refers to the day of redemption, deliverance from sin, suffering, heartache, and death, which is why we wait eagerly for it (Rom. 8:23 – “And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves **groan** within ourselves, **waiting eagerly** for our **adoption** as sons, the **redemption** of our body.”).
 - b. God does not want us to forget that with the passing of each day and its struggles we move closer to our salvation than we were when we first believed!
 2. I hope and pray that you have not forgotten this or drifted away from this hope/expectation (Heb. 9:27-28 – “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,²⁸ so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will **appear** a second time **for salvation** without reference to sin, **to those who eagerly await Him.**”)!
 - a. That last part is significant. Do we eagerly await Him coming?
 - b. If I have not reminded you (and myself) of this expectation as I should, I am sorry!

3. To **approach life properly** we must know the time of our existence and be focused on the expectation of Christ's return.
- **II. Put away darkness for light** (13:12 – “The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”).
 - A. The contrast between darkness and light is a common theme of God's word.
 1. It contrasts sin and righteousness, truth and error, ignorance and enlightenment (Eph. 5:7-9 – “Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸ for you were formerly **darkness**, but now you are **Light** in the Lord; walk as children of **Light** ⁹ (for the fruit of the **Light** consists in all **goodness and righteousness and truth**)”).
 2. Thus, for the Christian it is a matter of eternal life or death.
 - B. We must know that the **night**, the time of *darkness*, of sin and shame, is **almost gone**.
 1. How could Paul say this, considering 2000 years have passed since this was uttered?
 - a. Answer: Just as salvation is closer than when we first believed, the end of darkness for the Christian is much closer and ending soon as well.
 - b. No matter how long we live on this earth, our time here is *short*.
 - c. So, the earth's *nighttime*, the time of sin and shamefulness, will end shortly for all.
 2. How foolish it would be to *live* in darkness or allow our lives to *slip back into the darkness*, seeing it will soon **end** and give way to the day of *light*—the day of *salvation*!
 - C. **The day** quickly approaches.
 - 1. This day is the day of our **salvation**, the day this temporal world with its sin, heartache, and death give way to eternal life with God in heaven! What a wonderful day that will be.
 - 2. The coming of that day requires that we deliberately **lay aside** the works of darkness.
 - a. Like taking off and discarding dirty and worn-out clothing, God's people are to take off and discard the deeds of darkness and sin—deeds done in violation of God's will.
 - b. This is **the only way of life** for those who belong to God (1 John 1:5-6 – “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”).
 - 3. It requires that we purposely, deliberately, **put on**, clothe ourselves, in the **armor of light**!
 - a. A Christian is not indifferent to sin, treating it as one might a casual friend.
 - b. Christians are to take up God's **armor of light**, meaning God's *arms*, God's *weapons of light*, to *fight* against the darkness of sin and evil.
 - c. For, we are followers of Jesus and that is exactly what Jesus did (1 Jn. 3:5, 8 – “You know that He appeared in order to **take away sins**; and in Him there is no sin...⁸ the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this **purpose, to destroy the works of the devil**.”).
 - 4. To **approach life properly** means to be a soldier of light, putting on God's light and living one's life to put away sin, to destroy it from our life and others through Christ!
 - **III. Behave properly as in the day** (13:13 – “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.”).
 - A. Christ demands that we behave, or live, properly, or decently, honestly, as though living constantly in the daylight.
 1. The reason people do evil at night is that the darkness helps cover their deeds!
 2. We are to live as people who have nothing to hide (Jn. 3:19-21 – “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”).
 - B. This requires **rejecting** the deeds of the night like...

- 1. Like carousing and drunkenness—sins relating to a lack of self-control and sobriety.
 - a. Carousing – parties with drinking, usually characterized by loud music and lack of restraint in what is said and done.
 - b. Drunkenness – intoxication resulting from drinking alcohol, which lowers one’s guard and produces a lack of restraint.
- 2. Sexual promiscuity and sensuality—sins related to gratifying fleshly desires.
 - a. Sexual promiscuity – bed-hopping, [lack of sexual restraint], which according to 1 Cor. 6:15-20 violates the purpose of the body and one’s relationship to the Lord.
 - b. Sensuality – debauchery, sexual excesses (*BDAG*, 114), unbridled lust, shamelessness, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females (*Thayer*, 79-80).
 - c. Not surprising is that these sins so often follow carousing and drunkenness!
- 3. Strife and jealousy—sins relating to attitudes of the mind and heart, which are indicative of a selfish and strong-willed individual.
 - a. Strife – discord, contention, quarreling, [prone to r.p.] debate
 - b. Jealousy – a spirit which leads to strife and quarreling; envious and continuous rivalry
- 4. Certainly, none of these are becoming or fitting of one claiming to live in God’s light! So, to **live properly** requires that we live in the light of the gospel, shunning the darkness of sin.
- **IV. “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”** (13:14).
 - A. **Clothing ourselves with Christ**, His ways of **goodness, truth, and righteousness**, must follow.
 - 1. *Thayer* says this means “to become so possessed of the mind of Christ as in thought, feeling, and action to resemble him and, as it were, reproduce the life that he lived.” (p. 214) (Gal. 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is **no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I **live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”).
 - 2. Clothing ourselves with Christ begins with water baptism (Gal. 3:27 – “For all of you who were **baptized into Christ** have **clothed yourselves with Christ**.”).
 - 3. This clothing must continue by conscious effort after baptism:
 - a. Eph. 4:24 – “and **put on** the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth”
 - b. Col. 3:12 – “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on** a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”
 - B. Finally, wearing Christ requires that **we make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts**.
 - 1. Again, remember that Christ came to take away our sin, to destroy it and its condemnation.
 - 2. So, God’s people must not make it possible, or easier, for lusts to be illicitly satisfied.
 - a. This means we do not put ourselves in temptation’s path.
 - b. This means we are not working things so that we might give in to so or so that giving in to sin will be hidden from others!
 - c. To make provisions for lusts is to disobey God— to consciously work against God’s wishes for your life to be holy and full of light!
 - 3. To **live properly**, we must put on Christ and provide no means of sinning against Christ!

CONCLUSION:

1. So, how a Christian is to properly approach life is clear.
 - A. Know the time in which you live and be alert to life’s challenges and our spiritual duties.
 - B. Put off sin’s darkness and take up God’s armor of light to fight against sin.
 - C. Live continually in the daylight, as though all can see our deeds.
 - D. Put on Jesus and refuse to make any provisions to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.
2. Truly God asks so little for what wonders his way provides. Will you come to Jesus today?