**Romans 13:11-14**

I. Paul calls us to recognize the time (v. 11-12)

A. “The night is almost over; the day has drawn near” (v. 12)

1. Paul is describing dawn just before the sun bursts forth on the horizon and changes the landscape. The darkness is soon coming to an end but still hanging on.

2. We are living in the dawn of our salvation: Christ has won the decisive victory against darkness, and his second coming is imminent

B. “Salvation is nearer than when first believed” (v. 11)

1. Salvation = our future salvation when Christ returns and ushers in the fullness of his kingdom

2. That day is drawing nearer and nearer all the time

C. “The hour is already here to wake from your slumber” (v. 11)

There is no time to stay asleep; now is the time to be spiritually awake

D. The “already/not yet” nature of our salvation

-We are living in the “in between times” in which we have “already” been saved (forgiveness of sins, gift of the Spirit) but have “not yet” received our full salvation (final defeat of evil and resurrection of our bodies in a new heavens and new earth)

1. Already verses: Colossians 1:15, 2 Corinthians 5:17

2. Not yet verses: Romans 8:18-27

II. Paul calls us to live according to the time (v. 12-14)

A. Stop living as though it were still night

1. Take off your sleeping clothes (v. 12)

 Take off your PJ’s and nightgowns and things appropriate for sleep

2. Stop engaging in night-time behaviors (v. 13)

a. Orgies and drunkenness = a lack of self control with alcohol

 b. Sexual immorality and debauchery = a lack of self control in the sexual arena

examples: adultery, sex before marriage, pornography, sexual fantasy, general preoccupation with sex

c. Dissension and jealousy = lack of self control in relationships

examples: having an unhealthy desire for attention, control, the need to be right, constantly seeing how we measure up to others, etc.

= conforming to the pattern of this “age”

d. These activities are examples of what it means to be spiritually asleep

1) One of Satan’s most effective strategies is not to scare us or confront us directly but rather lull us to sleep in gradual and imperceptive ways.

2) When we first became Christians we are so awake to God’s grace and spirit and movement in our lives. Over time it is easy to slowly fall back to sleep and engage in behaviors that belong to the darkness

3. “Don’t think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh” (v. 14)

a. “to think in advance”: Paul is not even talking about committing sin; he’s talking about that first initial thought that leads down a path that leads to sin

 b. Paul is saying to cut sin off at the source right at that initial thought.

c. That’s convicting to those of us who may not sin in overt and obvious ways, but rather like to “dabble” in certain sins

 4. It’s appropriate to look at our lives and ask ourselves, “where have I fallen asleep?”

B. Start living in light of the day

1. “Put on the armor of light” (v. 12)

a. Notice “armor”: to be awake is to realize that we are in a battle against the darkness

b. Notice the armor Paul mentions in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8

1) Faith: trusting in the promises of God. Trusting God to provide for our needs, including the need for forgiveness when we fail

2) Love: cherishing God above the delights of the darkness, and loving others rather than being jealous and quarrelsome

3) Hope: looking ahead to the day of Christ’s return, and reminding ourselves that what we see at this time is not all there is

2. “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 14)

 a. Jesus himself is our ultimate armor

b. As we pursue closeness to and worship of him, he is our protection against the deeds of darkness

1) analogy: the best way to protect yourself from having an affair is to pursue a healthy relationship with your spouse

 2) As we fix our eyes on Jesus, he protects us

c. Paul saw knowing Jesus as surpassingly greater than anything this world has to offer (Philippians 3:8)

C.S. Lewis: “It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”

3. It’s appropriate to look at our lives and ask ourselves, “how am I pursuing and protecting a close, passionate, joyful relationship with Jesus?”

C. The context of all this is the command to love

The purpose of waking up is so that we can love God and others more joyfully

**Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss the idea of the already/not yet reality of our salvation. Was there anything particularly new or helpful about that perspective for you?

2. How did the following statement on Sunday strike you: “One of Satan’s most effective strategies is not to scare us or confront us directly but rather to lull us to sleep in gradual and imperceptive ways.”?

3. If it would be appropriate to share, where can you relate to having fallen asleep in a particular area of your life? Where are you still wearing your night time pajamas?

4. How specifically can you clothe yourself with Jesus Christ at this time? Is there anything specific you are feeling called to do to pursue him more intentionally or more joyfully?

5. Read Colossians 3:12-14 where Paul uses the same analogy of putting off and putting on. Is there a particular trait that Paul mentions that you would like to intentionally trying to put on this week: “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

6. Discuss the C.S. Lewis comment made on Sunday: “It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”