

Spiritual Progression among Social Opposition # 45

Romans 13: 11-14

We have learned much in recent weeks regarding our spiritual walk with the Lord and among the world. Paul has spoken of our relationships and obligations to fellow believers, how we are to interact within society, and even our submission to authority in human government. Each of these is certainly possible, but in order to be effective we must enjoy fellowship with Christ. He alone can equip us to endure the struggles we face and accomplish the work we are called to perform. We cannot live victoriously apart from a right relationship with the Lord.

You may have noticed a great sense of urgency within the text. He reveals there is no time to waste. The Lord's return is imminent, it could happen at any moment. We must live in light of His coming contrasted with the brevity of life. We have a short time to make a difference within our world, and those around us must receive salvation while in this life. The enemy would have us believe there is plenty of time, but in reality, we have no time to spare!

Let's consider the [challenges](#) within the text as we think on: [Spiritual Progression among Social Opposition](#).

I. Paul Speaks of Waking (11) – [And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.](#) He addressed two aspects of our lives in regard to waking out of sleep. Consider:

A. Our Awareness (11a) – [And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep.](#) He fully expects that we are aware of the time in which we live. The word time refers to “*a season of time.*” Clearly he is referring to the imminent return of our Lord. We sense the great urgency in his voice; there was no time to spare. The Lord could return at any moment and we must live our lives aware of that truth.

- If Paul fully expected the Lord's return in his day, how much more should be aware of His return in our day. Global events are pointing to the soon coming of our Lord. We see the prophecies of Scripture being fulfilled before our eyes. It is time for us to wake from our slumber of complacency and become fully aware of the time. We haven't a moment to waste. There is much yet to be done and little time to accomplish that work!

B. Our Anticipation (11b) – [for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.](#) Don't let this simple, and yet profound statement confuse or intimidate you. Our salvation is actually a three-fold process. We were saved by grace through faith, our justification as we were declared righteous in Christ. We are being saved through sanctification: becoming more and more like the Lord. We will continue to be saved: our future glorification in Christ as we enter His presence for eternity.

▪ It is that future tense of salvation, our glorification, which Paul refers to here. He is saying that our Lord could return at any moment. We must wake out of sleep knowing the time we have on earth is drawing to a close. This fundamental truth will never change. We must live in anticipation of our Lord's return. We should wake each day thinking the Lord could come today! If He doesn't return today, let us anticipate His coming tomorrow. Even if He doesn't return in our life time, our salvation, our glorification with Christ, is much nearer than when we first believed in Christ for salvation. [2 Pet.3:13-15 – Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. \[14\] Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. \[15\] And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.](#)

II. Paul Speaks of Warfare (12) – [The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.](#) Here he addressed the great struggle we face in our day, the warfare we are engaged in with the flesh and the forces of evil. Consider:

A. Our Awareness (12) – [The night is far spent, the day is at hand.](#) Again we are reminded of the great urgency before us. The night has passed and the day has dawned. The day of our Lord's return is at hand. We must come to the sober realization that time is short. What we are going to accomplish for the Lord, we must do quickly. [1 Pet.4:7 – But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.](#) The adversary even knows his time is short. He is working diligently to deceive as many as he can. [Rev.12:12 – Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.](#) We must be committed to working harder than the enemy; the day is at hand!

B. Our Abandonment (12b) – [let us therefore cast off the works of darkness.](#) As we engage the enemy in this spiritual struggle, we must be willing to cast aside and abandon anything that would hinder our ability to fight a successful battle. We must strive to live in light of the righteous nature of our Lord, seeking to honor Him in all we do. We cannot live like the world, engaging in the activities and vices of the world, and expect to be effective in ministry for the Lord. [Heb.12:1 – Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.](#)

C. Our Armor (12c) – [let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.](#) After ridding ourselves of anything that would hinder our efforts, we are expected to put on the armor of light. A good soldier knows the benefit of each piece of his armor and is very familiar

with it and how to use it. We must clothe ourselves in the armor of Christ. We will never overcome the advance of the enemy if we are not well equipped and prepared for battle. We must seek to be clothed in the armor of God, described in [Ephesians 6:10-18](#). We must prepare our hearts for the struggles to come, walking in close communion with the Lord through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. A soldier who lacks preparation and proper armor will fall victim to the enemy. We don't have time to waste, so we must prepare now!

III. Paul Speaks of Walking (13-14) – In our closing verses, Paul addressed the walk of the believer among the world and in the midst of adversity. Our walk is also vitally important. Notice:

A. Our Charge (13a) – [Let us walk honestly, as in the day](#). This literally has the idea of “*proper behavior*.” We must always be aware of the life we live before others. We must be prepared to face the adversities that come our way. We must be prepared to engage the enemy in battle, while having the compassion and commitment to share the love of Christ with those who are yet outside the family of God. We must maintain a godly witness in a world that watches our every move. The walk of the believer cannot be underestimated in our society. If we are to redeem the time, making the most of every opportunity, we must walk upright before men.

B. Our Character (13b) – [not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying](#). Paul addressed the spiritual character we are to present before the world. Our lives should never be characterized by those activities and attitudes Paul admonishes against. This is not an exhaustive list, but we must refrain from these:

- **Rioting** – reveling, carousing, partying, feasting, intemperance, debauchery, unrestrained revelry and indulgence, giving license to basic urges.
- **Drunkenness** – to take intoxicating drink or drugs to affect the senses and faculties; to become intoxicated for the purpose of lust or pleasure.
- **Chambering** – sexual immorality, adultery, fornication (pre-marital sex).
- **Wantonness** – sensuality, running wild, licentiousness, debauchery; homosexuality, lasciviousness, living a wild, partying, and immoral life.
- **Strife** – contention, quarreling, arguing, striving. It is the craving deep within a person that wants recognition, honor, position, and authority.
- **Envy** – jealousy that begrudges others. It looks upon the position, recognition, and success of others with a jealous eye. It regrets the success of others. ⁱ

C. Our Confidence (14a) – *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ...* Having been instructed of how we are to walk among men, laying aside the sins that beset us, Paul admonishes us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Simply we are to strive to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ, walking in a way that honors Him and affords His presence and power in our lives.

- I can think of no greater confidence while walking this road of life than being clothed in the righteousness of our Savior. As we walk with Him, being conformed to His image, He provides all we need to live successfully in the midst of a fallen world. *Ephes.4:13 – Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

D. Our Conformity (14b) – *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* As we strive to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we must also make a conscious effort to crucify the flesh, being daily conformed to His glorious image. There is no room in our lives to make any provision for the flesh. We must die to ourselves daily. If we make any provision for the flesh, it will always lead to indulgence and sin. We cannot give in to the temptations we face. If we are to overcome, we must seek that way of escape and flee the lusts of the flesh. We will live in defeat otherwise. *James 1:14-15 – But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.* ^[15] *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* *Gal.5:16 – This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

Conclusion: I hope we too have sensed the great urgency with which Paul spoke. It is time for us to wake out of sleep and prepare for the work we are called to engage in. This will require commitment, faith, and perseverance as we face opposition. We must also walk in a way that pleases the Lord, denying the flesh, and honoring Him. Our world needs the church to be active among them, sharing the good news of the Gospel. They don't like to admit it, but Jesus is their only hope. There is no time to waste; we must be busy for the Lord.

Christian, are there areas in your life that need to be addressed? If so, bring them to Jesus. If you are here and have never received Christ in salvation, now is the time to come! It is time for you to wake out of sleep and obey the Lord by coming to Him for salvation!

ⁱ Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Romans.