

## KNOWING THE TIME

**TEXT: ROM. 13:11-14**

### **Introduction:**

1. In I Chronicles 12:32, the LORD commends the children of Issachar because they were “men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.”
2. As Christians we must have that same understanding. We must know what to do. To know what to do, we must know our Bibles and we must “know the time” (Romans 13:11).
3. Unfortunately, many Christians do not know the times. Many lack spiritual discernment.
4. That is because they do not know the Bible very well. They do not study the Bible, and what is worse is that many do not obey the Bible.
5. Churches today are filled with Biblical-illiterates.
6. The Bible teaches the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the Christian, everything must be done in the light of the second coming of Christ.
7. D.L. Moody said, “I never preach a sermon without thinking that possibly the Lord may come before I preach another.”
8. On Sunday evening, Pastor Totica preached a good message from I Thessalonians 5, “The Believers Conduct in the Light of the Imminent Coming of Christ.”
9. That is what we see here in our text tonight.

### **I. IT IS TIME TO WAKE OUT OF SLEEP (ROM. 13:11).**

1. This parallels I Thessalonians 5:6, which says, “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”

2. Too many Christians are sleeping when they should be working.
3. And so the apostle Paul says that “now it is high time to awake out of sleep” (Rom. 13:11).
4. “Sleep” suggests laziness, forgetfulness, and carelessness.
5. John Greenleaf Whittier said, “Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: It might have been.”
6. Being awake suggests spiritual readiness and service.
7. In His Olivet Discourse, our Lord said, “While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept” (Matt. 25:5).
8. Today it appears that the bridegroom is tarrying, and that is why so many Christians are slumbering and sleeping.
9. When our Lord, and Peter and James and John came to Gethsemane, He said to them, “Tarry ye here, and watch” (Mark 14:34), but after He prayed for a while He found all three of them sleeping, and He said “Coudest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak” (Mark 14:37, 38).
10. “And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again” (Mark 14:39, 40).
11. This incident is recorded in Scripture as a warning (cf. Romans 14:11).
12. The prospect of the Lord’s return should be a great incentive to alertness and holy living.
13. What causes Christians to fall asleep when they should be awake? I believe it is because too many Christians have indulged in the stupefying things of this world.
14. They are intoxicated by worldly pleasures; intoxicated by materialism; intoxicated by money, etc. They are like drunkards that have passed out! And so they are:

- Sleeping instead of attending church (unfortunately, some sleep when they come to church).
- Sleeping instead of winning souls.
- Sleeping instead of reading the Bible. Too many Christians are Biblically-illiterate.
- Sleeping instead of praying. Jesus said in Luke 18:1, “Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

15. “For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed”(13:11b).  
Salvation has three tenses: past, present, and future.

- Past – we were saved from the penalty of sin (hell).
- Present – we are presently saved from the power of sin.
- Future – we will be saved from the presence of sin (in heaven). That is what Paul is referring to here in Romans 13:11.

16. We are nearer to this than when we first got saved. The *Scotfield Study Bible* says in the margin that “nearer” here means, “nearer in the sense of the full result of salvation in glory” (cf. I John 3:2).

17. This is what I Peter 1:5 means. We “are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

18. Spurgeon applied this Scripture to the unsaved in his audience. He said, “Oh, ye unconverted men, must I read the text as it would have to run if it were written to you? It is high time that you should awake out of sleep, for now is your damnation nearer than when you first heard the gospel and rejected it. God grant you grace to take heed and to believe in Christ.”

## II. IT IS TIME TO CAST OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS (13:12).

1. The Bible often contrasts night and day to illustrate the vast difference between those who are in Christ and those who are blinded by Satan. Here are just a few examples:

- “For ye were sometimes (once) darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light... And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Ephesians 5:8, 11-14).
- “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”(John 3:19).
- “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).
- “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (John 12:46).
- “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins...” (Acts 26:18).
- “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (II Cor. 6:14).
- “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (I Thess. 5:4, 5).
- “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (I Peter 2:9).
- “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (I John 1:5).
- “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” (I John 1:7).

2. Here in Romans 13:12, we see an important Bible principle: we not only need to “cast off,” we also need to “put on.”

3. For example, we must “cast off” all wicked and worldly music, whether it is called rock, rap, or hip-hop, or whatever. If it is sensual and carnal it must be “cast off.” (If you want to get certain people very upset, start criticizing rock music!)
4. But casting off rock music is not enough; we must also “put on” the right kind of music. The Bible says, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19).
5. The Bible says, “putting on the breastplate of faith and love...” (I Thess. 5:8). You will find this principle all throughout the Bible.
6. “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:13-17).
7. Paul says in Romans 13:12, “Let us put on the armour of light.” The Bible clearly teaches that this world is in darkness, and as Christians we are not to walk in darkness. We need the armour of light.
8. The apostle Paul goes on to say, “Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness...” (Rom. 13: 13). I preached this text one night many years ago, and a lady who was visiting spoke to me after the meeting. She said that she enjoyed having a few drinks and therefore she did not want to get saved. She said she was content in her liberal church because they did not teach that one needed to be born again.
9. We need to remember that hell is full of worldly, booze drinking, cigarette smoking, unsaved church members.
10. “Let us walk honestly, as in the day...” (13:13). Next door there used to be a nightclub. Ever wonder why they call these wicked places “nightclubs”?

11. I was driving in my car yesterday listening to the radio, and the man on the radio was talking about the nightclub massacre in Orlando, and he said that nightclubs are all very dark because of the sinful activities going on. "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).
12. In the Bible the nighttime is associated with sin and darkness, and drinking and fornication. Paul says in I Thessalonians 5 that we are "the children of the day."
13. Have you ever noticed that in the Bible "rioting and drunkenness" (13:13) always go together? Many of the people Paul was writing to were saved out of this sinful background. Paul was reminding them they needed to stay completely away from it now that they were saved.
14. Immorality and drunkenness always go together. These are sins of intemperance and impurity. This is what Paul means by "chambering and wantonness" (Rom. 13:13). He is speaking of debauchery, which is often associated with drinking.
15. "Chambering" (13:13) refers to adultery and other immoral behavior, "Let us walk properly...not in lewdness and lust" (NKJV).
16. *Thayer's Bible Lexicon* says "wantonness" (13:13) means, "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, outrageousness, shamelessness."
17. Proverbs 23:33 warns the wine-drinker, "Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things."
18. Habakkuk 2:15 says, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!"
19. After referring to these wicked sins of the flesh, Paul adds, "strife and envying" (Rom. 13:13b). According to the Bible, these sins are just as wicked as drunkenness and wantonness.

### III.IT IS TIME TO PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (13:14)

1. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, “The true secret of Christian living is stated, first positively and then negatively. Positively, the Christian is to put on Christ as a garment. He is the soul’s true clothing. Negatively, no forethought is to be taken for the sinful nature. No preoccupation of mind with anything except with Christ. This is the Christian’s twofold method of victory. He is not to fight in his own strength, but commit himself to Him Who has won the victory...We are to say ‘No’ to the flesh on every occasion and occupy ourselves solely with the Lord Jesus Christ in the personal appropriation of faith” (*St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*).
2. “The old man” which we must “put off” is clearly our former manner of life. If you have not put it off entirely, let me encourage you to do so now by a decisive and immediate act of faith.
3. Ephesians 4:22-24 says, “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”
4. F.B. Meyer said, “It does not take long for a beggar to put off his rags and take instead a new suit of clothes, and it need not take a moment longer to put away habits and thoughts, ways of speech and life which are unworthy of the children of God. Do it now, and look up to the Holy Spirit to keep renewing you in the spirit of your mind.”
5. To put on the Lord Jesus Christ means to walk in the Spirit and to live daily in obedience to the revealed will of God. His will is revealed to us in the Bible.
6. The flesh craves attention, comfort, luxury, wicked desires, carnal lusts, worldly pleasures, materialism, and a million other selfish gratifications that would keep us from staying close to the Lord.
7. The Bible says to make no provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14).

8. When we put on the Lord Jesus Christ we will not indulge “in strife and envying” (13:13b). It has been my observation that few Christians will indulge in rioting and drinking, but there are many who are envious and contentious (13:13b).
9. Beloved, whenever you think of the word “envy” remember the Scripture that says, “For he (Pilate) knew that the chief priests had delivered Him for envy” (Matt. 27:18).
10. According to Galatians 5:21, envy is a sin of the flesh. And so the Scripture says, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14).

## **CONCLUSION:**

Outline from W.H. Griffith Thomas:

- I. The Solemn Appeal – “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep” (13:11a).
- II. The Clear Explanation – “For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (13:11b).
- III. The Glorious Expectation – “The night is far spent, the day is at hand” (13:12a).
- IV. The Practical Exhortation – “Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying” (13:12b, 13).
- V. The Complete Provision – “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (13:14).