

Salt Church

Romans 13:8-14

“Time is Short”

May 3, 2026

The Greatest Book Ever Written

David and Cindy (June 6-14)

Recap

Romans 13:1-7

13 Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. 2 So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. 3 For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. 4 The authorities are God’s servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God’s servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. 5 So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience. 6 Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. 7 Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your

taxes and government fees to those who collect them and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.

- We learned last week that God establishes all authority, even the bad ones.
- We learned that our responsibility, our worship of the Father compels us to submit to those authorities.
- We also learned that the only time we have permission from the Father to rebel against that authority is when the government commands us to sin.
- We learned that God has created this thing called government to maintain order and justice.
- We closed out last week with the reminder to pay these three things:
 - Pay your taxes
 - Pay your debts
 - Pay honor to those in positions of authority

This week we pick up where we left off:

Romans 13:8-14

⁸Owe nothing to anyone—

- This is one of those verses that could be taken out of context and used to say something that God does not mean.
 - We could say “***Owe nothing to anyone***” means that debt is a sin.
 - But verse 7 says “***Give to everyone what you owe them:***”
 - If debt was a sin, verse seven would have said you should not owe anyone anything but it, doesn't it says, “***pay what you owe.***”

- Therefore, we can conclude that debt is not a sin unless you take out a loan that you cannot or will not pay back.

Do you remember the parable of the talents (money)?

- **3 servants**
- **3 bags of silver**
- **3 different way of handling money**

Jesus said these words:

Matthew 25:24-27

²⁴ “Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, ‘Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn’t plant and gathering crops you didn’t cultivate.²⁵ I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.’

²⁶ “But the master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn’t plant and gathered crops I didn’t cultivate, ²⁷why didn’t you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.’

How do banks make interest on money?

- They loan it to people
- If this was a sin, would Jesus have used it in this way?

The point Paul is making is simple, keep your word and pay your debts.

⁸ Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another.

- Paul reminds us that the debt of love can never be paid off.
- The command on our life is to continue paying the debt of love to each other forever.

If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law.

- **That is an amazing thing to say,**
 - How does loving my neighbor fulfill the requirements of the Law?
 - Paul explains:

⁹ For the commandments say, “You must not commit adultery.

- ***So, loving my neighbor will keep me from committing adultery?***
 - **Yes**
 - **But Pastor I'm not married!**
 - You do not have to be married to commit adultery.
 - All you need to do is have an inappropriate relationship with a neighbor who is married.
 - So, if you truly love your neighbor, you will want what's best for them and adultery and divorce are not what's best for them.

You must not murder.

- If you love your neighbor, you won't murder them.
 - (side note) ***it is interesting to me how these to commands seem to find themselves paired together often.***
 - If you have ever watched Dateline, it seems that this is what every show is about.

You must not steal.

- You can't steal from yourself, so it stands to reason that if you love your neighbor, you will not steal from them.

You must not covet.”

- Covetousness is where the desire to steal, murder, and commit adultery come from.
- This is not looking at someone's car or spouse and saying, “it must be nice.”
 - ***This is fixating on what someone else has, desiring it to the point of obsession.***
 - So much so, that it becomes the focus of your life.
 - At this point it takes over and you become willing to do anything to have what does not belong to you.

Now if it feels like we are getting a lesson from the 10 Commandments we are.

- The 10 Commandments are built upon love.
- The 1st command is to have no other god before God the Father.

- In other words, “love Him more than anything or anyone else”

Paul continues:

These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

- Now this is not one of the 10 Commandments, but Jesus did say this when He was asked which is the most important command:

Matthew 22:38-40

36 “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?”

37 Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

The whole Bible can be summed up in those two commands. (Amazing)

10 Love does no wrong to others,

- **Can’t you feel the weight of that statement**
- **Can’t you see that this is what is wrong with the world?**
 - **What is wrong with the church?**
 - **That statement alone should kill any conflict within the church.**

Okay Pastor, I hear you, but didn’t Jesus say some pretty harsh things to people?

- **Didn't He call the priest "Sons of Satan?"**
- **Didn't He chase people out of the church with a whip?**
- **Didn't He flip tables over within the church walls?**
 - **Yes, He did!**
 - **So, where is the love in that Pastor?**
 - **The love is found in the truth!**

Those men were deceived and thought they were sons of God, but they were not.

- They needed their cancer diagnosis so that they could run to the doctor and have the cancer removed.
 - The problem was that the greatest physician ever known was the one making the diagnosis and they ignored Him.

The people that Jesus chased out of the temple were greedy and lusted for money and power.

- The temple of God can have nothing to do with those things
- Jesus said that "My Father's house (The Temple) shall be a house of prayer.
 - **Did you know Christian that your body is a temple?**
 - Did you know that this temple, (called your body) is to be a house of prayer also?

Sometimes Jesus must "flip the tables over" in our lives to reorient our prayer life.

- When He does this, **He is not motivated by anything other than love.**

Back to Romans

so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.

- Amen!
 - Agape love (Godly love)
 - **What kind of love is that, Pastor?**

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice **but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.** ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

- **That is Agape love.**

Back to Romans 13

¹¹ This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out.

There is a shift here:

- Paul shifts from our primary motivation (love) to a very important secondary motivation (time).
- ***“You know how late it is and time is running out!”***
 - It is my guess that many if not most of our younger people do not feel the weight of these words.
 - With only a few years completed on this earth, you don't see the urgency nor feel the speed in which time moves.
 - You sleep well

- Recover well and heal well
- **You play the law of averages**
 - In your 20's you actually believe that there at least 50 to 60 more years of life given to you.
 - Maybe so, but let me give you some names:
 - Brian McCaffrey
 - Chris Sexton
 - James Barrentine
 - Kavi Vance
 - All of them were high school friends
 - All of them died before age 27

If you are older there is a good chance you understand what Paul is talking about.

- Years seem to fly by as loved one move from this life to the next.
 - So, the urgency of the moment is felt as Paul as well as the rest of the disciples, lived with a sense of urgency for **they all believed that Jesus would return soon.**
 - They also lived with the knowledge that **their faith was a threat to the religious and governmental establishment.**
 - Meaning they understood that their faith could cost them their lives.
 - When you live with that understanding priorities change and therefore your life changes.

- You see this most clearly in those who have fought or are fighting a battle with a life taking disease.

Back to Romans

11 This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out.

Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

- There are four commands given to us by the Holy Spirit in these next verses.

- ***The 1st is to wake up!***

- In the Greek it says to “awaken from your sleep”
 - ***What is sleep?***
 - It is an unconscious state in which the body is at rest unaware of what is going on around you.
- Who is this letter written?
 - Christians!
 - So, the command to “awaken o sleeper is to the Christian.”

Okay Pastor, “wake up” I get it but what is this part about our salvation being nearer?

- I thought that the day I put my faith, hope, and trust in Jesus was the day of my salvation.

- **That’s a good question.**

- Our salvation has three **“time components”** to it.
 - There is the past in which all of our past sins have been forgiven.

- There is our present in which not only are our presents sins forgiven but there is the “**working out of our salvation**” occurring.
 - **This does not insinuate that we work for our salvation but rather we become more aware of Christ work in us as we mature in Jesus.**
 - We are given the power to overcome sin despite our past.
 - This means that there is power given to us in the present to achieve victory over sin. (**we did not have this power prior to Christ**)
 - When we exercise this power (**resist sin**) that is the **working out of our salvation.**
 - When we choose to grow in Christ through prayer, study, discipleship, and obedience **that is also the working out of our salvation.**
 - If you string together enough of those kinds of days the **third component happens without effort.**
- **The future of our salvation experience which is maturity in Christ.**
 - This portion of life is the most satisfying part of life because no matter what comes our way

we understand that everyday we draw closer to the completion of our salvation which is a complete and absolute separation from sin through the death of these bodies and the new life in Heaven.

- This “complete salvation” is what Paul is referring.
 - **We must wake up** to the fact that we are not promised tomorrow therefore we must live for Christ today.

Back to Romans

12 The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here.

- **“The night is almost gone” is another time stamp.**
 - We would say “time is short” live and love while you can.
 - Paul would agree but he would also add “the day of salvation will soon be here.”
 - **Meaning in your “living and loving” make sure that your motivation is for the glory of God the Father.**
 - Why?
 - Because soon you will stand before your King and He will judge your works and your motivations.
 - There will be both reward and loss as none of them have gone unnoticed.

With this in mind Paul continues:

So, remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.

The 1st thing we are called to do is “wake up”

The 2nd thing is “remove your dark deeds”

- We must listen to what the Holy Spirit saying here:
 - **The command on our life is to change to become more like Jesus.**
 - Removing the dirty clothes is to admit that Jesus is correct, and we are wrong.
 - **To turn away from sin**
 - **To be obedient in all things**
 - Not out of begrudging submission but out of love.

The 3rd command given is “put on the shining armor of right living.”

- Do you feel the shift?
 - We have been called to battle.
 - The war rages all around us but for far too long we have been asleep!
 - We have been unconscious to what is going on around us.
 - The command is to ***“put on your shining armor of righteousness”***
 - In the Greek it is ***“put on the armor of light.”***
 - What does that look like?

Ephesians 6:10-18

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, 14 stand firm, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Some of us may not like the idea of being called to battle.

- There is conflict in battle
- Often there is conflict in humans
 - It is not uncommon for there to be conflict among Christians
 - Running from the conflict is not the solution
 - Put on your armor
 - Trust your King
 - Do the work that is required

- You are in a war whether you choose to believe it or not.

Back to Romans 13

13 Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see.

- **Do you hear what the Holy Spirit is saying?**
 - We don't live in the past
 - We don't become so consumed with the future that we are no good in the present.
 - Meaning some people are paralyzed in the present because they worry about the future.

Jesus said it this way:

Matthew 6:34

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

The verse before that Jesus says

Matthew 6:33

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Let's focus on today,

- **If we string together enough righteous days, we will have a righteous month**

- **If we string together several righteous months, we will have a righteous year**
- **If we string together several righteous years, we will have a righteous decade**
- **If we string together several righteous decades, then we will have a righteous life**

Back to Romans 13

Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy.

- I trust none of that comes as a shock to anyone.

¹⁴ Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The fourth command is “put on Jesus”

- What a strange sentence.
- In the Greek it is “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ”
- How do you “put on the Lord Jesus Christ?”
 - The answer is found in the next sentence

And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

- ***In the Greek “Do not make provision for desires”***
 - So, we conclude that the command is to flee from those things that make provision for evil desires is part of “putting on Christ Jesus.”

I want to close today with another verse that helps us understand how to “put on Jesus”

Hebrews 12

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

- Let's throw off those things that draw us to sin.
- Let's throw off the sin in our lives.

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

- Running with perseverance the race marked out for us means we were born in this place and time according to God's perfect plan.
- The command to persevere tells us that God has promised us that **it will not be easy.**
 - We must remember this world is overrun with sin and sinners.
 - To walk in the light of Jesus Christ is to walk against the crowd.
 - But Jesus has gone before us, and He is perfecting us through trials and tribulation.
 - **And let's not forget that we are not alone for the Holy Spirit is our comforter and refuge in this difficult world.**

For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

- We are not greater than our master
- He suffered because of His righteousness
 - And we will suffer when we follow Him in righteousness.

Time is short

- *Let's live*
 - *Love*
 - *And serve while there is still time.*