

111. The Book of Romans 13:11-14

Part 1

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

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(1-15-26)

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In our study of the Book of Romans, we have come to the application portion of the book which started in Chapter 12—but this evening we're going to be at the end of chapter 13:

Romans 13:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed.

This study is going to be about a challenge suggested by the first half of Romans 13:11.

I want to begin by referring to two other passages from the Bible—

Matthew 16:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. ² He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘*It will be* fair weather, for the sky is red’; ³ and in the morning, ‘*It will be* foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times.

Jesus said,

*“When evening comes, you say, ‘*It will be* fair weather tomorrow, for the sky is red,’ and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You hypocrites! You know how to predict the weather by reading the signs in the sky—but you can’t understand the day you’re living in by reading and understanding the signs given in God’s Word (prophecy) that told you of My coming (First Coming—but the same will be true of His Second Coming).”*

The second passage is from 1 Chronicles 12, which lists the warriors who came to David when he was king at Hebron—the men of Issachar were among them who are given special mention by the Holy Spirit—*“They had understanding of the times and knew what Israel needed to do.”*

The NLT puts it this way—*“All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take.”*

So, we have one group who was *ignorant* of the signs of the times (clueless professional religionists); and then another group (laymen) who *did* understand the times and knew what needed to be done. The same is true today—some understand the day we’re living in and how the prophetic signs are all pointing to the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to bring judgment and establish His Kingdom.

But sadly, the vast majority of people haven't got a clue as to what's coming—even though the signs are everywhere! It is against this background that makes Paul's admonition in Romans 13:11 so important and relevant.

This combination of verses causes us to ask ourselves—*"Do we understand the times we're living in? If not, why not? And if we do—what are we doing about it?"*

This is all built around the two admonitions Paul gave at the beginning of verse 11 when he challenged believers to—"know (understand) the times you're living in" and "**wake up to the seriousness of the hour.**"

When Paul admonished us to "**know the time**"—he was referring to knowing Bible prophecy which tells us what to look for—the signs that point to the return of Jesus to the earth.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV)

²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

I have been witnessing a sad thing taking place in the church—the closer we get to Jesus' return the more it seems like many of His followers are no longer faithfully anticipating and watching for His return.

I see a lethargy that seems to have taken hold of many Christians (not all but many) in the way they approach their personal devotional lives—but especially in the area of their public Christian lives when it comes to Bible study, small groups, prayer meetings or other gatherings of the Body of Christ (except when it involves socializing, going on fun outings, etc.).

I think this is due to laziness, carnality, discouragement or a combination of all three—which is why it's so important for the rest of us to keep in contact with them to try and '*stir them up*' by exhorting them to stay faithful to the Lord in their walk, in their witness, and in their work for Him.

I know that the New Testament writers warned us that the closer we got to Jesus' return the more the spiritual warfare would be ramped up and the harder it would become to walk with Him.

That's why we are commanded in Hebrews 10:25—*"not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."*

"As you see the Day approaching" is a reference to the Second Coming—which is preceded by events we *can* look for.

Ultimately, I believe the *rapture* is in view, but that event is *imminent* (involving no signs to look for)—and so we have to look for the signs of Jesus' Second Coming which will tell us we are getting close to the rapture. (Use the signs of Thanksgiving which signal the nearness of the coming of Christmas).

Christians won't be able to 'see the Day approaching' if they don't know what to look for—and they won't know what to look for if they're not coming to church to hear teachings on prophecy or if their church isn't teaching Bible prophecy.

This is not a time in the history of the church to kick back and stay home from church—this is a time to give the final kick in our race for Christ that will propel us across the finish line! And if you're going to a church that doesn't teach Bible prophecy—find one that is!

Prophetically speaking, there has never been another generation in the history of the church that has seen more end-times prophecies being fulfilled than the generation we are living in—so let's get excited and go all out!

But it all starts with us staying *awake* and keeping watch!

Mark 13:32-37 (NKJV)

³² "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. ³⁴ *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. ³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning-- ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. ³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

The reason that God didn't tell us the day and hour that Jesus was coming back is because it would lead to laziness and carnality knowing that His coming was still years away—and the Lord wants us to be in a constant state of readiness always watching for His return.

Jesus said, "*An evil servant says, 'my master delays his coming'*"—because he's not watching.

The effect of living in such a way that Jesus could be coming back at any moment will be that it produces holy living—

1 John 3:3 (NKJV)

³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

You say, "*Is constantly watching for the Lord's return an important issue?*"

Anything that Jesus commands us to do is important—but if He really wanted to stress the importance of something He would often repeat Himself, "*Verily, verily (truly, truly) I say to you...*" (KJV)

But here Jesus repeats Himself *three* different times when He commanded us to watch for His return.

Mark 13:33 (NKJV)

³³ Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

Mark 13:35 (NKJV)

³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming...

Mark 13:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

He even stresses it a fourth time through illustration:

Mark 13:34 (NKJV)

³⁴ *It is* like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

He then goes on to contrast this diligent vigilance with those who don't watch but instead fall asleep on duty.

Mark 13:35-36 (NKJV)

³⁵ Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning-- ³⁶ lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

Paul the Apostle reinforced this important teaching in 1 Thessalonians 5—

1 Thessalonians 5:1-5 (NKJV)

¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. ² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. ³ For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. ⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. ⁵ You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

- Paul here is using "**night** and **darkness**" as metaphors for "*deception, evil and unbelief*."
- And he is using "**light** and **day**" as metaphors for "*truth, righteousness and salvation*."
- All *unbelievers* are of the night, while all *believers in Christ* are of the day.

Now listen to Paul's admonition here to believers:

1 Thessalonians 5:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

The implication is that just because we are believers in Jesus Christ doesn't mean that we can't fall asleep in the light. In fact, he goes on to tell us in Romans 13 that many have in fact gone to sleep in their relationship with God and are no longer being vigilant in looking for Jesus' return.

Paul tries to wake them up by saying:

Romans 13:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now *it is high time to awake out of sleep*; for now our salvation is nearer than when we *first believed*. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

How does a child of God keep from falling asleep in the light in the first place?

Let me give you three things to guard against—

1. You can only fall asleep when your eyes are closed so—Watch!**Ephesians 6:18 (NKJV)**

¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

1 Peter 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

Revelation 3:2 (NKJV)

² [the church of Sardis] Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.

Since God has commanded us to *watch* He must have told us *what to watch for*—He did and we call it prophecy.

Open your eyes and take a look around and see why we're getting close to Jesus' return—the signs are everywhere. (Matthew 16:1-3) And yet, so many Christians are oblivious to the signs of the times. Some refuse to see, so they have purposely buried their heads in the 'sand' because the thought of Jesus returning to the earth makes them very uncomfortable.

Why? Because it will destroy their plans of laying up for themselves treasures on the earth.

Others simply have not been taught Bible prophecy because many churches today consider it too controversial and they don't want to offend anyone or make people uncomfortable, so they simply ignore it—but God commands all of His children to be watching for Jesus' return!

2. You can only fall asleep when you're comfortable so—Work!

The church went to sleep when pastors and preachers started tickling ears and telling people that God exists to serve them instead of the other way around.

2 Timothy 4:2-5 (NKJV)

² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Vance Havner, the great Baptist preacher, used to say that he saw it as his job to "*Comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable.*"

Do you come to church to feel good and to be placated or to grow in your relationship with God by being challenged from the Word of God?

If you continually use your gifts in service to the Body and to the Lord you'll never get comfortable (complacent)— so work! Don't be a spectator, be a servant.

3. You can only fall asleep lying or sitting down so—Walk!**Ephesians 5:8-12, 15-16 (NKJV)**

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret... ¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Galatians 5:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Romans 13:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

When the New Testament writers talk about our '**walk**' they're talking about living in such a way as to remain close to the Lord by obeying His commands and growing in your relationship with Him.

Your **walk** begins the moment you put your faith in Jesus Christ and are born-again.

Your walk involves the sum total of your life for God—

Romans 12:1 (NKJV)

¹ I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.

Your walk with God means that you stay close to Him and active for Him.

Let me just say that when it comes to your walk with Jesus—you're either moving forward or sliding backward—but you are not holding your own. It means that you stay in fellowship with other Christians by coming to church and Bible study.

"I don't need to go to Bible study anymore—I've learned enough. I mean I'm not going to be a pastor or a professor—I can stay home on Wednesday night and kick back..."

That is a dangerous way to approach your walk with the Lord—it will set you up for a major fall.

You may disagree with that but it's true and to prove it all I need to do is draw your attention to King David (2 Samuel 11—Bathsheba).

Romans 13:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed.

Again, this study is about "*understanding the times*"—a challenge that is built around the two admonitions Paul gave at the beginning of verse 11 when he challenged believers to—"know (**understand**) the times we're living in" and "*wake up to the seriousness of the hour*."

The question is: are we ready for what's coming? How are we preparing for the inevitable?

Proverbs 22:3 (NLT)

³ A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.

In 2 Chronicles 14:6-7 we read that God gave King Asa a time of peace, but he used that time to build fortified cities and to make walls around them along with towers, gates and bars—he used the time of peace to prepare for war.

The Lord Jesus held His generation responsible for knowing and understanding Bible prophecy and He is holding our generation responsible as well.

Unfortunately, most of the Christian church is asleep in the light oblivious to the signs of the times that are all around us.

No one knows the day and the hour that Jesus is coming back for His Church, but we are commanded to know the *"times and seasons"* based on God's prophetic word.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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