

04/24/22 Message

Part of Romansthe Life of Faith - the Power of Grace

April 23, 2022

**Message: Deeds of Darkness **

Series: Romans

This is our thirteenth message in the series Romans: the Life of Faith – the Power of Grace.

As one of Paul's epistles (or letters), Romans is considered the greatest of all his letters. It's been called one of the most foundational documents of Christianity.

Introduction

Although the passage today is Romans 13, the message culminates from this:

Romans 13:12 (NLT)

The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.

(MSG)

The night is about over, dawn is about to break. Be up and awake to what God is doing! God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed.

(TLB)

The night is far gone, the day of his return will soon be here. So quit the evil deeds of darkness and put on the armor of right living, as we who live in the daylight should!

Religion vs. Government

Background: In Rome, there is a fine line between religion and government (in fact, sometimes there is no line at all). There was a

period of over 1,000 years where the Pope was sovereign over the major territories of Italy (Papal States). In Paul's day, it was all about Caesar, the word itself means a powerful ruler, emperor, dictator.

Caesar Augustus claimed that Julius Caesar was a god, and as his heir, he was part god. He was declared a god at his death. During his life, he wanted to be more than a political leader, he wanted to be considered the supreme spiritual leader of Rome. He made himself Pontifex Maximus (chief priest of Rome) in 12 AD.

Christians recognized that the political leaders were not the same as the spiritual leaders – but they were confused as to the role government should have in their lives. To that, Paul said...

Romans 13:1-7 (NLT)

1 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.

God Established

God established three institutions to work and live in harmony with one another:

- HOME (Genesis 2:18-25)

- GOVERNMENT (Genesis 9:1-17)
- CHURCH (Acts 2)

Paul said (v1):

- SUBMIT to governing authorities

God didn't say worship them, be like them, or agree with them. He said submit to them.

—Pastor Chad

The principle behind this isn't about the leaders - it's about us.

At the end of the day, you can't change anyone but you. Here is a valuable leadership principle - You can be gentle, respectful, and honorable to others, in spite of your differences; because being gentle, respectful, and honorable has nothing to do with them, but has everything to do with you!

—Pastor Chad

Paul is saying - don't lose your testimony by what you say or do. You can refused to let people influence you, and still respond Godly - so that you can influence them.

When you rebel against authority (v2):

- You rebel against God

Paul teaches us - don't tell them what you're against, tell them for you're for! Don't be seen as a troublemaker... a pot stirrer... someone who bucks the system just to be that person. Don't stand out among those you're trying to influence as divisive... stand out as someone who unites...

—Pastor Chad

- Be a GODLY example for others to follow
- Do the RIGHT thing

Be a Godly Example

Romans 13:8-14 (NLT)

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

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

9 For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

10 Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law.

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.

12 The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.

13 Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy.

14 Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

- Because of Easter, we're no longer under THE LAW
- Because of Easter, we're under GRACE

In **John 13:34** Jesus called it a new commandment.

There's no need for any other laws or commandments because this covers it all! We don't follow Jesus and try to be more like Him because of the punishment we'll have if we don't. We follow Jesus and try to be more like Him because we live under grace! Our motive for obeying God and helping others is the love of Christ in our hearts!

—Pastor Chad

Paul's Warning

Romans 13:12 (NLT)

The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.

One commentator's interpretation of this verse:

- WAKE UP (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:1-13)
- CLEAN UP (1 John 2:28-3:3)
- GROW UP (Romans 13:14)

Romans 13:13-14 (NLT)

13 Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy.

14 Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

- Live DECENT lives for all to see
- Live GRACEFUL lives for all to see (grace filled)

Lay down your deeds of darkness at the altar and be filled with His grace!

Let your testimony... your living testimony reflect Him!