



# HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

**Clothed in Christ**

**August 30, 2020**

**Romans 13:11-13**

**Clint Pressley**

*<sup>11</sup> Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.*

*(Pastor prays)*

We've come to a passage that changed the course of Christian history more than 1600 years ago, and I pray it will speak into your soul even today. He is known as Saint Augustine of Hippo. But before he was Saint Augustine, he was Sinner Augustine chasing success, living with a woman and climbing the cultural ladder. And yet he had a great big hole right through the middle of him. One sunny day while Augustine was walking through a friend's garden, filled with distress because—although he was successful and even had a woman he loved—his soul was filled with darkness. As he sat down on a bench in the garden, he heard a child's voice saying softly, "Tolle legge, tolle legge", Which means, "take up and read." On the bench beside him lay his friend's volume of Paul's writings. And as he read that last sentence, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires," Augustine said it was as though the light of assurance had poured into his heart and all shades of doubt were shattered, and from that day forward the sinner Augustine became the Saint Augustine as he cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

In your lifetime, have you ever felt a deeper need than there is right now to be a person of light putting on the Lord Jesus Christ and to live for the glory of God? Many years ago Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey wrote a book entitled, "How Now Shall We Live?" And above all the noise

and the clamor in our culture today, we need to answer that question with: I'm going to live my life for the sake of Christ to the glory of God through faith in Jesus on the cross. God's grace has saved me and it's His grace that will sustain me. And I pray that today through this passage, God gives you grace that motivates you to live for Christ and His Kingdom. Because that's the Kingdom that will last. That's a life worth living.

### **Life in Christ is a life Worth Living.**

In this passage Paul gives us some indication of what that looks like. How do we live in this new era?

### **We live with full awareness**

You'll see that right there in verse 11. *Besides this you know the time.* You notice the word time isn't the word *chronos* which would be the time of day on the clock on the wall. It's the word *Kairos* which means "season" or "epoch," like me saying we live in strange times. And one of the admonitions Paul makes to the church at Rome and to the church at Hickory Grove is that we have been placed at a specific point in history to live our lives for the Gospel of Jesus. We don't put our heads in the sand and ignore what's going on around us but we also don't get hopped up on the news cycle. We trust a sovereign God and we see an opportunity to answer the world's demands with the cross of Christ.

It's like Mordechai told Queen Esther that she had been put in a position, *for such a time as this.* We must be aware of anxieties, pressures, hatred, false gospels, broken solutions and empty promises and realize that we have been given a golden opportunity to point a clear path to the love of God found in Jesus Christ... and, more pointedly, the perfect life, death on the cross and resurrection of Jesus. That's the Gospel we chain ourselves to and fight off anything that threatens the free grace of God found at the cross of Jesus. We live with full awareness of the time.

### **We live with a new urgency**

Let's read a little further in verse 11. *Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep.* What a great true-to-life metaphor when so many Christians have seemingly become bored with Jesus and excited with politics. Sleep or slumber suggests a lethargic Christianity. It suggests a life so packed with other distractions and preoccupations

that there is a real forgetfulness of God. A laissez-faire Christianity, a complacency in doctrine, a forgetfulness of the Gospel and a rejection of holiness . That's middle-of-the-road Christianity and Paul rejects it out of hand. It's as if Paul is saying, look around you people. Look at how the world has seeped into the church. If you don't do something soon you're gonna lose the church to the next big cultural wave or political movement. It's why we must stay Gospel-centered so that we don't become lackeys to a tribe but disciples of Christ.

Where have you gotten lazy in your Christianity? Is it in your devotional life, worship, anger, political involvement, confession of sin, empathy? The church isn't just a dynamic force for God; it's the pillar and ground for truth about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is that our Holy God is the creator of the whole universe and everything in it. He created man in His own perfect image, but when man sinned it created a chasm between God and man and condemned man to death because the penalty for sin is death. Jesus Christ, the son of God, was born of a virgin and lived a perfect life. He willingly gave His life on the cross to cover our sins and provide redemption for man. There is a need for repentance and a turn to faith. We live with a full awareness of time. We live with a new urgency.

### **We live with complete confidence**

Let's go back and read all the way through verse 11. <sup>11</sup> *Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.* Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. What is Paul talking about right here? He's pointing to the second coming of Jesus Christ and our final glorification when He comes. Our Salvation is broader and grander than most people realize. It helps to think about salvation in past, present and future.

The past is **justification**. We find it in Ephesians 2:8: For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.

Justification is a one-time event when you understood that God is holy and punishes sin. And since you are a sinner, you are in trouble. But God is loving and sent Jesus to die on the cross to take the punishment in the place of sinners. The work is finished and that is applied to any sinner who repents and believes. It is a person who is converted, born again, came from death to life. It's dramatic and profound and has effect. Your past sins, foulness, hurt, guilt are all nailed to the cross. That is the past.

The present is **sanctification**. It is an ongoing process where we are growing stronger in Christlikeness day by day. Paul wrote it in first Corinthians 1:18: For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. You ought to be getting victory over sins, growing in grace and learning more of God's word. That is the present.

The future is **salvation** . What Paul is talking about here is the future. We would call this glorification. Salvation is nearer to us . There is a day coming when we will be done with all this struggle, and Paul is urging us to look forward to being done. Look forward to being done with pain and disease and hatred and struggle. Done with depression and anxiety and discouragement. Done with being let down by ourselves and others. It's why we live each day with all our confidence in Christ and not people or politics or systems. Let me give you something else to live with.

### **We live with strong hope**

Look with me at the first part of verse 12. *The night is far gone; the day is at hand*. Think with me about that phrase. The night and all its evil and darkness and difficulty, the night with all its pain and confusion and hurt is far gone , it's almost over. And The day with a capital T. The day in a biblical concept is at hand. The triumphant return of the reigning Lord Jesus. He'll come in glory to receive His people, to bring rejoicing to His church and judgment to His enemies.

Brothers and sisters, that is a passage of hope for the dark times we live in culturally and personally. It gives me hope that all this hatred and pain and rioting and shooting and bickering won't last. For us personally it gives us hope that cancer and heart problems and depression don't have the last word, Jesus does. And for the believer this hope reminds us on that day Jesus will heal every wound, answer every question, dry every tear and right every wrong.

But tucked in this passage of hope is a strand of warning. That day is not only hope for the Christian but it's horror for those not in Christ. For on that day , judgment follows so that every person who hasn't come to Christ will face the full holy judgment of an incensed God. So even in this verse of hope is an urgency to have that conversation about Jesus . That conversation about coming to Christ and being saved. It's why we live like we do. We live with full awareness of time. We live with a new urgency. We live with a complete confidence in Christ. We live with a strong hope.

## **We live with a clear difference**

To see this you need to read verses 12 and 13 together. Verse 12 is broad and verse 13 is specific. <sup>12</sup> *The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.* <sup>13</sup> *Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.* Look at the second part of verse 12 and see the language. Casting off and putting on. He's going to use that again in verse 14. It has a real ruthless feel, a genuine separating from this present darkness that we live in.

And then pick up these specifics in verse 13. Let us walk properly as in the daytime in the light of Christ. And then to illustrate how to live, he explains how *not* to live in verse 13. There are three pairs of sins and each pair functions almost as synonyms. Not in orgies and drunkenness which means riotous wild mobs and gang mentality. It's not Mardi Gras or spring break. It's not drinking to excess and a having a complete lack of self-control and lack of respect for others. It's not in sexual immorality and sensuality, which literally means don't be in the wrong bed. The right bed for Christians is the bed shared between a husband and wife and no other. Sensuality. William Barkley called this the ugliest word in the Greek language. It's those who have lost any and all shame. It's the LGBTQ movement, homosexuality, transgenderism, polygamy. It's the normalizing of the new sexual revolution.

Paul is saying that's darkness and the Gospel is better and saves us from that. It's not in quarreling and jealousy. It's not for those who desire power and prestige. It's not envy and begrudging someone else's success. It's the opposite of being content with where God has you to live for Christ. Then Paul gives the answer to all that sin listed in verse 13. Verse 14 says "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." It's an intentional, willful act and it's on purpose. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ means to recognize His lordship - Lord. Trust him as substitute - Jesus. Serve Him as King – Christ, Because I promise: life in Christ is a life worth living.

*(Pastor prays)*