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Romans 13:11-14

Get Dressed!

INTRO: Welcome to GraceLife. We're finishing chapter 13 of Romans today and the other half of our message from last wk.

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. 12 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. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. **(vv. 11–14)**.

SLIDE: Our Outline. 3 points. Wake up. Cast off. Put on. Last week we focused on Wake Up. This week we'll focus on the last two. Cast off and Put on. Or, combining them…Get Dressed!

Pt. #1 WAKE UP: Summary…Wake up to reality. Philipps para.

Know God's time, especially the *present time*, the *kairos* **the existential moment, pregnant with meaning, rich with opportunity, and calling for decisiveness and action!**

We are living in two ages. The in-between. The already and not yet. The Bible divides history into 'this age' and 'the age to come.' When Jesus died for our sins, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, he *inaugurated* the age to come.

Now, those two ages overlap. Those kingdoms collide. We live in an already and a not yet. As I said, between D-day and V-day. We live in Two Different Time Zones: You can't take yourself out of either w/out grave error. Many have tried.

We're on the threshold of the Lord's Return. We're nearer our final salvation and glorification than when we first believed. Therefore…

Wake up! Know what time it is! You and I are on the edge of eternity. Jesus Christ and eternity will burst onto the world scene at any given moment.

So understand the times. The season. The urgency.

Know what is going on around you. What are the forces at work? ideologies, philosophies, prevailing worldviews and ideas?

What kind of lies deceptions are taking people captive? What false religions are holding people hostage?

Every aspect of this evil world system has impacted all of life.

The world of **education**
The world of **entertainment** (Leave it to Beaver in 60 s. Ward and June Cleaver slept in twin beds. In 2024, a show rated TV-14. Within 3 minutes, teenagers sexually active. That would have been Rated R when I was a kid. Now. NORMAL.
The world of **politics**
The world of **religion**

Wake up Neo. The Matrix has you.…

Question. Does the world have YOU? Are you slowly but nearly imperceptibly being squeezed into the world's mold? The world's values? The world's ideologies? Is the world telling you what matters? What makes your life count. What you should be chasing

Is the world teaching you all about identity. meaning. purpose. about sex, marriage, truth, religion. It's very subtle. Example…

The Olympics. The song, "Imagine" lyrics "No heaven above us. No hell beneath us. No religion too. Imagine all the people living for today.) The closing song "I did it my way." Really an anthem to autonomy. Pride. Hubris. Secular Humanism. Opposite of what Paul is teaching us in this passage.

Sound petty? But a barrage. Like ELF snowball fight. Relentless.

In another strikingly similar passages, Paul echoes this passage.

SLIDE: But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. **—1 Thessalonians 5:4-8**

So whether you are in Rome or Greece or Asia or America… Look around! Know the time! Walk in the light! Wake up! This is for us.

Pt. #2 CAST OFF: Verse 12. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Paul uses darkness and night as metaphors for sin. And so do the other NT writers. Jesus included. "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." John 3.

Now we come further than wake up. Paul says, "Get up! Cast off your night clothes and put on your proper clothing!"

Many of these Christians were saved from pagan, immoral, idolatrous lifestyles. They lived in Rome. So Paul warns them about relapsing. He urges them to avoid the way of thinking and way of life, and sins that characterized their previous life and relationships.

Back to the Summer Olympics in Paris this year. The opening ceremony got a lot of attention. Bad press. Criticism.

Critics claimed the ceremony itself was hyper-sexualized and blasphemous. It crossed boundaries of respect & sensitivity.

Instead of focusing on the athletic games, the athletes who would compete, the families and communities who support them, etc.

The opening ceremony depicted a drunken feast of ancient Rome. Some say it was a mockery rendition of Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Last Supper' with drag queens in the back standing in for the apostles, and even a golden calf instead of a lamb in the mix.

Probably it was both. Creative mockery and sign of our times. Maybe you saw that opening ceremony, or pictures of it and noticed some weird, blue, smurf-looking dude in the center wearing a thin diaper. What was that all about? He was Dionysus.

Dionysus was the Greek deity known chiefly as the god of wine and pleasure. The Romans called him Bacchus.

Check out what R.C. Sproul said about this verse in Romans.

Paul's reference to rioting and drunkenness pertains to the pagan religious worship of the god Bacchus, the god of the grape and the vine. Bacchus was the sponsor of the ancient Bacchanalia, an orgiastic feast involving gluttony and unbridled sexual behavior. Participants set out to get drunk to silence pangs of conscience so they could engage in unbridled sin. **—R.C. Sproul**

How differently do you think America in 2024 is with Rome in 67?

Let's compare the rest of the passage and see if we're living in some of the same cultural dangers. The works of darkness are specifically identified in a short list of vices in verse 13.

Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.

They are works of darkness because people do them in secret. Some we commit against ourselves. Some are against neighbors.

Paul mentions 3 sets of vices. The first two sets occur especially at night. 3 warnings really.

- Don't live for endless pleasure and self-indulgence
- Don't live for sexual immorality
- Don't live for conflict, drama, strive and division

Those all lead to the next. Ordered for a reason.

Orgies (carousing, wild parties. Revelries) and Drunkenness. You lose all sense of self control. Your flesh has no caution lights or brakes on it. Silenced conscience leads to sin leads to conflict.

If wild parties and drunkenness characterize the first pair, then sexual sin describes the second. Those who fall prey to drunkenness are more liable to commit sexual sin.

“Sexual immorality” is a Greek word which can simply be translated, “bed,” and the word for “sensuality” or *debauchery* is one of the ugliest words in the Greek language, for one who is not only given to immorality, but incapable of feeling shame.

Paul covers the whole range of immorality here—fornication, adultery, homosexuality, pornography.

Those who live in darkness are in bondage to sexual sins.

We live in a sex-crazed culture. Paul says to put it off.

Ashley Madison was a website that encouraged people to have an anonymous affair. The tagline was “Life is short. Have an Affair.” Eat, drink, be merry. For tomorrow we die.

That’s the world we live in. If it feels good, do it. How do you live in such a world? We need to renew our minds. The mind of Christ.

To see sexuality through the lens of Scripture. It’s not bad. It’s good. It’s beautiful. It’s wonderful. A gift. Given to those within a heterosexual, covenant relationship. One man. One woman.

Pornography = A mockery of God’s design. An assault on our bearing God’s image. It’s deadly and has sharp claws. Prison.

Ps. 16. In God’s presence is fullness of joy. Pleasures forevermore

Don’t settle for cheap distortions. Cast them off!

The last pair focuses on sins that tear apart communities, families, church. Quarreling and Jealous.

We’re more tolerant of these, but Paul puts them in the same category. Do you crave desire, control, power. Do you resent it when others are elevated and promoted and you feel overlooked.

This phrase describes someone who cannot stand being surpassed. They hold grudges against the success of others.

If Satan can’t get your heart with money or sex, he’ll get you with envy and jealousy and conflict.

Let’s not let competition and jealousy robb our satisfaction in Christ. A lot of that happens online. Social media platforms. Destruction of relationships. families. Rangling and contention. Argumentative. Heated passions and rivalries.

This is the culture in which the church in Rome existed.

Do not be conformed to this world. Don’t let yourself be squeezed into this world’s mold. This evil world system.

This reminds us of Romans 8:13. If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. This is not just self control

Paul says it is not only time to wake up, and cast off. He says it’s time to put on. I mean, you can’t dressed properly until you take off your old clothes. Maybe your dirty clothes or your PJ’s.

Same idea in Ephesians and Colossians:

SLIDE: (2X) But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.**—Ephesians 4:20–24**

Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.**—Col 3:12–14**

Pt. #3 PUT ON: This is the grand finale. This is the nuclear warhead of Paul's exhortations. Earlier, he said to put on the armor of light. Now…Put on Christ. This is not just behavior. This is not adornment. It's protection. But against what?

It's one thing to say put on holiness and righteousness. But he grabs our attention. He goes deeper. He says something striking. Something incredible. Something that is powerful.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Wear him. Identity with him.

Those instructions in Romans 13 sound strange to our ears because we put on clothes, not a person. But that's precisely the point Paul makes with the clothing metaphor. Clothing covers you. Clothing protects you. Clothing distinguishes you. Clothing equips you. What you wear *matters*.

SLIDE: In the movie, *True Grit* a man on horseback appears in a snow blizzard wearing an enormous Bearskin. The head of the bear covers his face and he actually looks like a bear riding a horse. Rooster (played by Jeff Bridges says, "It's fixing to get cold. Do you know of anywhere to take shelter?" The man replies, "I have my bearskin." He looks ridiculous, but is ready for the storm.

Now in one sense, we've already put on Christ at our justification. That speaks of our positional righteousness & sanctification.

SLIDE: Gal 3 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. But Paul tells us to continually put on Christ.

He is talking about our practical and experimental sanctification.

Live in personal fellowship with Jesus. In communion with him.

Notice that Paul uses the full titles for Christ, "the Lord Jesus Christ." I think he does this deliberately, because LORD stands for his authority to rule, his power to change When you put on Jesus Christ, you are putting on a power, a capacity to love people. To show people what God is like. To resist temptation. Embrace joy.

What does it mean to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"?

Let your friendship with Christ be as close as the shirt you wear."

Put On suggests protection rather than adornment. Put on armor. We're engaged in a battle, not dancing at a ball.

What we wear has a bearing on how we act.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: "Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ means living upon Him, partaking of Him and of His life. Feeding on Him. Relying on him, like a soldier putting on and trusting in his armor. We put Him on in this way: conscious of our weakness and of our need for strength and power. It means to hide in Him. He is covering you. You are in Him."

Put on his nearness
Put on his character
Live by his power

SLIDE: In **2 Cor 3:18**, Paul writes, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." As we (believers…Paul included himself) **behold** the glory of Christ with the eyes of our heart, we are conformed into His image.

SLIDE: Hear that? You *become* what you *behold*. Whatever captures your attention and affection has also captured your heart. You've "put it on" so to speak. You're wearing it, resembling it.

In one of the greatest paragraphs outside the Bible, John Owen summarizes that reality. He says:

SLIDE:"Let us live in the constant contemplation of the glory of Christ, and virtue will proceed from Him to repair all our decays, to renew a right spirit within us, and to cause us to abound in all duties of obedience. … It will fix the soul unto that object which is suited to give it delight, complacency, and satisfaction. … When the mind is filled with thoughts of Christ and his glory, when the soul thereon cleaves unto him with intense affections, they will cast out, or not give admittance unto, those causes of spiritual weakness and indisposition. **—John Owen**

What's he saying? He's saying when you eat a 16 oz T-bone steak cut from a free grazed, free roamed, pastor-raised cow. When you eat that, a bologna sandwich on white bread with ketchup probably won't seem very appetizing.

When sin loses its appeal to Jesus, you're waking up, friend. When we are beholding him, sin loses its appeal.

J.I. Packer in Knowing God. Chapter on Grace. To appreciate grace, you have to know two things. **Size of the debt. Magnitude of the provision**.

How much in trouble were we in? Lloyd-Jones. If someone came to your house when you weren't there and upon your return told you they got your mail, noticed a debt you owe and paid it, You'd probably say, "Well thank you very much. What was it? An overdue book fine? An unpaid postage? Or… an unpayable IRS debt…?

One you'd shake their hand. The other you'd fall down and kiss their feet, being moved to tears by their sacrifice.

In a series on 1 Corinthians 15 long ago, Martyn Lloyd-Jones said that the Gospel is good news, not good advice. It depends on a historical event like no other religion in the world does.

Good advice is something you must do. It's good. it's necessary. It's probably costly. A teacher telling you to prepare for the exam. Pay attention. Study. Read ahead. Fill out the story guide. Get a good night's sleep. Exam will be worth 80% of your final grade. That's good advice. It's all on the line. Better work hard!

Good news, on the other hand, is something that has already been done. For you. The only thing you can do is respond.

Consider a battle being fought for your city. The king has been sent out to confront a menacing invading enemy. He is victorious and sends back messengers, angelois (good newsers) to let your town know victory was accomplished on their behalf. They celebrate, like America and England did when Germany surrendered in WWII. Remember those picture of the celebration? It was a response to the good news. The war is over. Rejoice!

If the king goes out and does all he can, but the enemy is still not defeated, he does not send back good news herald's. He sends back military advisors who warn you. Get ready. Prepare. Station the archers and the calvary and canons. The enemy is coming. You must fight. It's all on the line. That's good advice.
Lloyd-Jones in that series said that every other religion besides Christianity sends military advisors. Get right with God. Live better. Try harder. It's all on the line. No grace. No good news. No assurance. Just a tremendous burden.

Lots of mistaken Christians live life in that way. It's sad. You can take two people who are living moral, ethical lives, reading their Bible. Praying. Obeying the ten commandments. But for two completely different reasons. One because they are trying to please God. The other, out of joy and gratitude. One is terrified or proud. The other is grateful and humbled. The gospel is good news, not good advice. When you put on Christ, you remember.

Paul goes further than just telling us to "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." He adds, "Make no provision for your flesh."

What does that mean? It means don't pander to your flesh. Don't feed it. Starve it. Cut off all nourishment and fuel. Lay siege to your flesh like ancient armies besieged a castle. You are at war!

Put into very simple English, Paul is saying: Do not plan for sin; give it no welcome; offer it no opportunity.

"Kick sin off your doorstep and you won't have it in the house."

Some entertainment, even music and literature, can very easily excite sinful lusts. In order to "guard our heart," we must know our weaknesses and never trust our flesh.

Do not plan to sin. Do not daydream about sin. Do not seek comfort in sin. Do not flirt with sin. Specifically, in light of this passage, do not entertain the idea that a wild night of drunkenness and partying will cure your loneliness, sadness, or boredom. **— Tony Merida**

When engaging in culture, we should ask ourselves: What kind of person will this form me into. If we don't ask the question or ever

consider it, we're presumptuous and naive. But of course if we ask it for everyone but ourselves, we're moralistic and legalistic.

Watching this series. Visiting this website. This relationship. This book. This entertainment. This hobby. This social media…

Put on Jesus. Make no provision for the flesh. Jesus is better.

A new affection. Jesus has replaced all of those fruitless joys. The gospel really is the power of God for salvation.

What Paul is emphasizing here is to deliberately recognize and live within that identity. Live in the hope and power of that identity. You are in Christ now. He is with you, in you, and upon you.

Luther put it this way: "I cannot keep sparrows from flying about my head, but I can keep them from making a nest in my hair."

At the very least, to put on Christ is to be identified with him. Shamelessly. You wear clothes you are unashamed of.

We are supposed to remember "who we are wearing," what he did for us, what he wanted for us, and what it cost him. This is much like Romans 6, in which we are told: You are dead to sin and alive to Christ. So now act dead to sin! Act alive to Christ!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace

Let's pray…