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Romans 13:11-14

Wake Up!

INTRO: 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.

Paul wants to get our attention here so he piles up some powerful visual metaphors so we can track with him:

- Waking up from a deep sleep and getting out of bed.
- Stepping out of darkness and night into the morning light.
- Changing clothes. Put off the old. Put on the new.
- And finally, walking properly in the daytime and light.

SLIDE: That's the Outline. 3 points. Wake up. Cast off. Put on. Today we'll just cover Pt #1 because we need to focus on this!

Pt. #1 WAKE UP: know the time. the hour has come. wake from sleep. salvation is near. the night is far gone. the day is at hand.

Hear that language of urgency? WAKE UP! Pay attention!

In light of all the unfolding world events we see taking place… Any thinking Christian has to ask himself the question:

Could we be living in the final generation of the last days? Is is densational to even raise the question? Perhaps. Nobody can say we *are*. But nobody can say we are *not*. It would be completely naive to see what's happening in our culture while not giving thought to "could we be the last final generation" Jesus taught this.

You see a pattern emerge when you study all the teachings of Jesus, especially his teaching in Matthew 24. Let's take a look.

SLIDE: **5 signs of the times from Jesus:**

Global Upheaval and Unrest: Wars, rumors of wars, conflicts, international controversy. That's been going on since the dawn of time, but increasing with birth pains, Intensity. Frequency.)

Catastrophic disasters: Plagues, disease, pestilences, famines as a result. Large scale earthquakes followed by terror and fear. Strange weather patterns. Tsunamis. Wild Fires. Heavenly signs.

Persecution of Christians. Martyrdom. Mockery. Falling away of false believers. Intense time that would purge and purify the church. Those who are mere marginally connected the church abandon their post. Betrayal. And of course joined to this…

False teaching. But the gospel being preaching to all nations.

Breakdown of law and order. Lawlessness abounds. People's love growing cold toward one another. There's hatred

Economic Instability. Then efforts to control and unite world economies under one exclusive system. Then global collapse.

Jesus said the time of his return will be like it was in the days of Noah…What was it like in those days? Genesis 6 tell us…

Population explosion. Man begin to multiply on the earth.
Genetic engineering was being tampered with (race of giants).
The wickedness of man was great. "Every intent of the thought of his heart was only evil continually."
The earth was corrupt before God.
The earth was filled with violence.

Sound like anything we observe today? Paul wrote to Timothy about the last days and said: Understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power **—2 Tim. 3:1–5**.

Now…Jesus may not return for another 4000 years. Or he may come back before I finish this sermon. Live in light of that reality…

Wake up to reality. Philipps paraphrase.

Knowing the time = This is a call to possess and practice discernment. Understanding. Don't be naive. Don't be ignorant.

What is the world scene around you telling you? You need to know and understand the TIME. This is serious. 2 greek terms for time.

Chronos = Chronology. Sunday at 10am. Specific point of time on a calendar. That's not the word Paul used here.

Kairos = A very pregnant moment. A strategic moment of decision. An opportune moment. Reality. This is the Greek word Paul used.

You can be awake physically but not awake to the things that matter. Be wide awake! We know what he means…

Look no further than a good dystopian movie or novel.

Wake up Neo. The Matrix has you.

The world lies under the influence of an evil power, led by a sinister ruler, maybe with headquarters in a capitol city. Everyone enslaved by this evil force is largely unaware of their plight, due either to fear, blindness, ignorance, or apathy. But then someone is awakened, a "chosen one." This hero sees the truth, identifies the villain, and forms a rebellion, resistance, or fellowship of some kind. Sleeping people wake up, ignorant people wise up, drunk people sober up, weak people power up. Two sides clearly form and epic battles.

The Matrix best epitomizes that plot line. Everyone in the false, computer-generated Matrix is enslaved to an evil system that is **devouring them while keeping them distracted with material pleasures**. As long as victims are "plugged into" the Matrix, they sleep their entire life while providing energy for the machines that dominate and control the world.

The only way to wake up, unplug, see the lies, and hear the truth, is to take the red pill, which represents freedom and knowledge. The blue pill represents slavery and ignorance.

Not only do we see this in our own cultural art. We see it in the terms and ideas in the Bible. Take Babylon for example. We find it both in the beginning and end of the Bible. Babylon is the place where God's people live in exile, face persecution for their faith and suffer temptation to compromise.

It represents the spirit of self-indulgence and self-assertion. It's the culture that unites under the declaration "Let us make a name for ourselves." It's unity, religion, ambition, and identity—without God. That's Babylon. And it's also Rome. Babylon is actually the NT code word for Rome the apostle use. God calls his people to "Come out of her, lest you take part in her sins, and share in her plagues." This is serious business.

Babylon and Rome represent a culture at odds with God.

Why dangerous? Attractive. Pervasive. Seductive. Deceptive.

Worldliness is what any culture does to make sin appear normal and righteousness seem strange. We often grow indifferent…

Like the proverbial frog in the kettle. Too comfortable to "jump out," too indifferent to care. Barely feeling a thing. Enticed. Seduced. Deceived. Then…you're cooked.

Babylon and Rome are complete lies. Traps. After our souls.

The trap is sprung. Satan's baited hook worked. The barb is deep inside and you're being reeled in.

After Paul says, "Wake up!" He follows it with, "Salvation is near!"

SLIDE: Our salvation is nearer now. Past. Present. Future.

Why wake up and be alert? Because salvation is nearer to us.

Salvation = deliverance from destruction. To be rescued from ruin.

Salvation is used in 3-fold way in Bible. Past, present, future. That can be distinguished by justification. sanctification. glorification.

Justification = deliverance from the penalty of sin (positionally)
Sanctification = deliverance from the power of sin (practically)
Glorification = deliverance from the presence of sin (future hope)

Comprehensive Rescue. We're finally delivered and free. Past. Present. Future. Justification. Sanctification. Glorification.

He's talking about a future salvation. To be saved out of this world into the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're close!

His return is nearer now. Our death is nearer now.
We've never been this close to being in the presence of God.
We're all nearer than when we first believed.

The clock is ticking…

Farmer who went to sleep listening to the clock ticking. It Chimed 11 12 13 14….

He popped up and his wife said, "What time is it?" He replied, "I don't know but it's later than it's ever been before."

Right before us is the end of the age. That's the perspective.

How near is it? James tells us…

You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. **9** Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. **—James 5:8–9**.

What a time to be alive, friends. It's darkest before dawn!

This is the culture in which the church in Rome existed. What a temptation. Coming out of that system. Being jolted awake by the gospel. But still living under the fog of that seductive atmosphere.

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

"Do this, knowing the time"

Do is not in the original. Some translations provide it. The ESV just says. "Besides this"

The real question: "What does he mean by ***THIS***"

It points all the way back to the beginning of Paul's list of exhortations and commands, that entire practical section.
Put into practice all the exhortations I've just given you.

You need to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice.
You need to resist being conformed to this world's system
You need to be transformed by the renewing of your mind
you need to prove God's will and be living in it.
You need to exercise your spiritual gift to build up the church
You need to demonstrate love both to believers and unbelievers
You need to be submissive to the gov't authorities over you

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

All the worldviews and sexual perversions that secular historians and authorities believe caused Rome to collapse from within are alive and well in the West. In America.

It's already the hour for you to awaken.

Paul wants us to be aroused from our spiritual stupor and moral careless. Awaken out of spiritual drowsiness. Spiritually dull of hearing. Don't be lulled to sleep hypnotically by the temporal. We need to see the eternal.

Live with a sense of urgency. What urgency? Go to our bunker? Retreat. Escape. NO! Time to shine my friends. This world needs Jesus more than it ever has. And we have him! Paul wants us to live on mission but we can't do that if we return to the darkness. We walk in the light. We put on Christ. The armor of light.

In Revelation, Jesus said "Behold! I am coming quickly!"

Now…once you wake up, you do something! You don't just go back to bed. Not "just a few more minutes, Lord." There's no snooze button here. Get up! Get dressed! Get going!

Martin Luther said 2 days on my calendar. *THIS* day and *THAT* day. THAT day informs this day.

Undoubtedly, Paul is talking to people just freshly converted out of wildly pagan, hedonistic, pagan cultures. Drunkenness and sexual immorality was a way of life. Moral sewer. Cesspool of iniquity. As believers, we live in two different time zones.

The already not yet. Tension. Living between D-day and V-day. Battles to be fought but the war is already won.

SLIDE: **(3x)** We're between D-day and V-day. June 6, 1944. May 8, 1945. Do you remember when the allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy in France and pushed back the Germans?

Historians and veterans tell us that was the decisive factor in Germany's defeat. Every soldier had a fresh perspective after that time. They knew victory was theirs but battles still were fought.

Out of 9, there is not a New Testament writer who does not speak about what it means to live between Christ's first and final comings. Between D-day and V-day. The already/not yet.

Have you been lulled to sleep? Do you need to wake up?

Sleep is a metaphor for indifference as a believer. Careless Christian. The lethargic Christian life. It's possible to fall into this.

They're not hostile. They're just indifferent. They don't care. They pursue everything except that which matters, things like…

Scriptures. Church. Gospel. Holiness. the Cross. Mission. Jesus.

Nobody can say. "Who is Paul talking to here?" No. This envelope has our name on it. Nobody can say, "I wish _____ was here!"

Conclusion: Do you remember when we started studying Romans, I shared with you some stories of people throughout

church history who were dramatically impacted, supernaturally impacted by this letter?

One of those figures in church history was a man who came to be called St. Augustine, who lived in the 4th and 5th Century.
He was enslaved to sexual sin. Enslaved to craving the praise of people. He said when going away to college, "I went to Carthage, where I found myself in the midst of a hissing cauldron of lust."

"My real need was for you, My God. Who are the food of the soul. I was not aware of this hunger. I was willing to steal and steal I did, although I was not compelled by any lack. I was at the top of the school of rhetoric (public speaking). I was pleased by my superior status and I was swollen with conceit. It was my ambition to be a good speaker, for the unhallowed and inane purpose of gratifying human vanity."

That was his pre-conversion life. Enslaved to lust. Enslaved to vanity and the praise of people. He was deep in bondage. You might say he was asleep. But God was waking him up…

He was sitting under the powerful and electric preaching of a man named Ambrose. His devoted Christian mother was fervently praying for him. His friend was calling him to repent.

Augustine was in God's crosshairs.…

He was in Italy. Tormented but being awakened by God…
He was conflicted—*knowing* that God was calling him to turn his back on a life of reckless sexual immorality, pride and vanity, but *fearful* of the loss.

His story honestly reads like an addict suffering from withdrawals. "Twisting and turning in his chains," he was terrorized of what God might do to him, but in bondage to what sin had already done.

He felt miserable an alone. Then he hears some kids playing outside. He goes outside and finds a Bible and says he was gong to read the first thing he found (I don't recommend).

And the Bible fell open to this passage. vv 13-14. Put off sin and put on Jesus Christ! That was all he needed to read.

Augustine wrote, "I neither wished nor needed to read further. At once, with the last words of the sentence, it was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my heart. All the shadows of doubt were dispelled." God rescued St. Augustine.

He wrote of his new life later in *Confessions*.

"How sweet all at once it was for me ***to be rid of those fruitless joys which I once feared to lose***. You drove them from me. You who are the true sovereign joy. You drove them from me and took their place. You who are sweeter than all pleasure."

That's a great description of conversion. A new affection. Jesus has replaced all of those fruitless joys. The gospel really is the power of God for salvation.

He is changing *me*. He can change you *too*. There is more mercy in God than there is sin in us.

We can say with Augustine, that Jesus is better than sin.

We say goodbye to these fruitless joys. Jesus is so much better.

Let's live in light of that day.

the morning is almost here.

We won't regret on that day being faithful in this short life. So let's live accordingly.

Let's pray…