

Knowing the Time

by David Ravenhill

David Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the urgency of spiritual awakening and the need for Christians to recognize the times and act accordingly.

Duration: 54:08

Scripture: Romans 13:11

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Maturity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and maturity, urging listeners to lay aside sinful deeds, make no provision for the flesh, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It highlights the need to be awake, clean up spiritually, dress in the armor of light, grow in Christ-likeness, make no provision for sin, and take action in obedience to God's Word.

Transcript

The Bible says the Word of God is like a mirror. The mirror itself reveals, but it does not cleanse. Be nice if the mirror reached out and, you know, sort of took care of things for you.

No, you've got to do that. We've got to lay aside. We look into the Word of God.

It reflects our true condition when we are convicted by the Spirit of God that something is wrong. We need to get rid of that thing. We lay aside the deeds of darkness.

I know that the message of repentance is not a popular message anymore. It needs to be. Let's pray again, shall we? Father, once again we open your Word.

Father, this Word that has everything that pertains to life and godliness. This Word, Lord, that is a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path. Lord, we ask that you would speak to us.

Father, bring to life this Word that was God breathed so many years ago. Let it be God breathed again this morning. Lord, let it be quickened.

Let it not be the letter that kills, but the Spirit that gives life. Father, take the wax out of our ears. Take the scales off our eyes this morning.

Lord, open our minds to understand the Scriptures we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen. Turn with me, if you will, this morning to the book of Romans.

Romans chapter 13, and the last four verses reading from verse 11. Let me read this portion to you, and then I will give you an outline, and then I will work through the outline with you. I believe this is a very relevant, very pertinent word for our particular generation.

Obviously, all the Word of God is relevant, but this has a special relevancy, I believe, for this particular hour in which we live. Verse 11, and this do, or one translation says, do this, knowing the time. I could say it this way, knowing the time, do this.

It is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep. For now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, the day is at hand.

Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly, not in the day, sorry, as in the day, sorry, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. Number one, it's time to wise up.

Number two, it's time to wake up. Number three, it's time to clean up. Number four, it's time to dress up.

Number five, it's time to grow up. Number six, it's time to lock up. And I'm going to add a seventh, it's time to act up.

We'll go through those again in case you want those points. If you were paying attention when I read this portion of Scripture, you'll notice that Paul is taking a page out of our everyday routine. Everybody here over the age of five or six wakes up in the morning.

You, first of all, become aware of the time. Once you become aware of the time, you sort of rub your eyes and try and wake up a little more and realize it's time to get going. First thing you do, you head into the bathroom, you wash up.

Next thing you do, you clothe yourself and so on and so forth. So Paul now is applying this spiritually. This everyday routine is something not only we do in the natural, we should do in the spiritual.

And he begins, it's time to wise up, knowing the time. I don't know, I'm 67 years of age, so I'm a little out of touch with the latest expressions, but a number of years ago, you know, they say, wise up, get with it. I'm sure there's some other phrase that they use now, but it meant, you know, you're ignorant of what's going on, you've got your head buried in the sand, so, you know, come on, wise up.

And so Paul is saying, wise up, know what time it is. Now the problem with time is that it's so vast. If I take my car in for repairs and I say to the service manager, when can I pick it up? And he says, sometime.

Well, he's accurate, but I don't like that. Sometime may be in my lifetime or my grandchildren's lifetime or my great-grandchildren, which I don't have yet, but, you know, I mean, sometime is vast, isn't it? And so we define time in increments. I'll be with you in a second, just a minute.

You know, come back in 10 minutes. Well, it'll be at least an hour from now. Come back this afternoon, or it'll be two days from now.

It'll be a week. In England, where I was born, we have a two-week period called a fortnight. It'll be a fortnight from now, or a month, or a year, or a decade, you know, or a century, millennium.

In other words, time is so vast that we've got to define it a little more accurately. The Greeks had different words for time. The one that Paul uses here is the word *kairos*, knowing the time.

It is a *kairos* moment. It means seizing, if you like, the moment. It means this specific period of time.

It's not vague. It's not, you know, a big period of time. It's this specific moment in time.

That's what Paul says, knowing the time. We're not talking about 20 years from now. We're talking about this immediate season in which you and I live.

Again, that concept of sort of grasping the moment. I like to think of it as the deer hunter. Any hunters here? Okay, a few of you.

You know, you get up there, you're up and you're blind, and early hours of the morning there's a little bit of a clearing in the woods or whatever, and you're patiently waiting. After a while, you hear maybe a little bit of a rustle, and there a few seconds later appears this magnificent buck, and you have got just a moment to pull that trigger. If not, if that deer keeps going the way it's been going, it's going to disappear into the thicket and you've lost your trophy.

That is a *kairos* moment. It's the fisherman that's out on the lake, and he's sitting there with a bobber on the surface, and that bobber is sitting there motionless, and then all of a sudden it begins to move a little bit, and then suddenly it goes below the surface. You need to set the hook, otherwise you're going to lose that fish.

It's the person at the auction house. Again, it's got their eye on an item, and the bidding begins, you get distracted, and then you hear the auctioneer saying, going once, and you need to indicate. That's a *kairos* moment.

I need to seize this moment. If not, it's gone forever. This is the concept, if you like, that Paul is using here.

Seizing the moment, knowing the time. The Bible talks a lot about time. Jesus reprimanded the scribes and the Pharisees for not knowing the time.

He says you guys could predict the weather. Today he would say you guys could get a job at the weather channel, no problem. You know how to diagnose the conditions.

You can look at the sky and determine whether it's going to snow, or whether it's going to rain, or whether it's going to be a good day, and so on and so forth. But he says you're clueless when it comes to spiritual discernment. After all, the very one that they were waiting for, seemingly, the very Messiah, the one that was prophesied over and over and over again through the scriptures, was standing in front of them, and they did not know the season of their visitation, the Bible says.

And so they were clueless. Again, they did not know the time. The Bible, again, speaks a lot about time.

Paul says here that we are to redeem the time. The days are evil. Writing to Timothy, he says, In the last days, there will be men that will be lovers of money, lovers of pleasure, lovers of self, more than lovers of God.

In other words, the Bible talks a lot about knowing the time, the time in which we're in. Boy, does that ever describe the season in which we live. Men are lovers of money, lovers of pleasure, lovers of self.

And then God takes a distant third or fourth, if He's even considered at all. The Bible says that the time is short. John wrote the time is short.

It is the last hour. That was 2,000 years ago. That should wake us up.

If 2,000 years ago it was the last hour, then certainly we're down to the closing seconds of time. Something is about to happen. We need to be aware of it, and I think we are in these last days.

I think there is an escalation going on now that certainly is unprecedented in my lifetime. I used to think people would preach and say, Jesus is coming soon, and so on and so forth. But boy, it's never been like it is today.

We're seeing our nation unravel at a rate that is frightening in the natural. I've got to believe that ultimately God is in control. But at the same time, we need to redeem the time.

The days are evil. The disciples came to Jesus on one occasion, and they wanted to know the time of His coming. Listen, give us some indication of what to look for prior to your coming again.

We know that in Matthew 24 and other chapters, Jesus laid down some of the signs to look out for. Wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, pestilence, all of those things. And we get so used to hearing them that sometimes it doesn't register just exactly how significant those words were.

I have here a list that I've compiled from various magazines, the Internet, television, and so on and so forth. Let me just give you an indication of the time in which we're living. Jesus spoke about wars.

There are 192 nations right now embroiled in some sort of conflict. We've had 150 major wars since World War II. When I say we, I'm talking about the world.

Earthquakes, there were 21 major earthquakes between the year 100 and the year 1800. Between the year 1800 and 1900, 100-year period, there were 18. Between 1900 and 1950, there were 13.

Between 1950 and 1991, there were 93. We have an average of 130,000 earthquakes every single year now between 3 and 3.9. 130,000. We have 13,000 between 4 and 4.9 on the Richter scale.

We have 1,319 between 5 and 5.9. 134 between 6 and 6.9. 17 between 7 and 7.9. And one of magnitude 8 or higher. Jesus said, when you see these things begin to take place, it is just the beginning of birth pangs. Every woman here, every mother here knows that when the birth pangs begin, they do not diminish as the baby approaches.

Word to God, they did, I imagine. But instead, you know, the distance between the contractions gets closer and closer. And Jesus is saying, this is the beginning of birth pangs.

In other words, as I read that, you will see an escalation, 21 major earthquakes in a 1700-year period of time. Now, we are seeing literally thousands every single year. God knew what he was talking about.

Famine, there's about 9 or 10 million people that die every year of famine. We have 6 million children under the age of 5 that will die of hunger this year alone. 800 million suffer from some form of malnutrition.

Pestilence, we've had 30 brand new diseases in the last 30 years that were hitherto unknown. AIDS, of course, is right on that 30-year mark or maybe a little over now. But these are things that, you know, with all of our technology and medical resources and so on, we are seeing new diseases crop up that we are not able to cope with.

Persecution, Jesus said we will be hated by all nations. And I have to remind my fellow Americans that there is no exception clause for the United States. We will be hated by all nations.

My father used to say, and I used to laugh at least under my breath when he said it, I don't anymore, he said if America doesn't concentrate in prayer, it will pray in concentration camps. We are heading in that direction. We are seeing now things turn.

It is no longer popular to be a Christian. Everything is against us. We are going to see a major uprising, I believe, against the church.

I believe we will end up eventually back in home groups and so on in an underground church in this nation. The Constitution will not protect us because there is a spirit, an anti-Christ spirit, that no Constitution is able to war against, no Bill of Rights or anything else. We will have persecution in this nation.

I talked to Brother Andrew, some of you have read God's Smuggler, many, many years ago. He says, I've quit coming to America. I wanted to prepare them for persecution.

I'm just sort of paraphrasing what he said, but he said they don't believe it will happen. And he said, so I'm going to concentrate on other nations. The Bible says you will be hated by all nations.

Psalms 2 is the most repeated psalm in the Bible. It says the kings of the earth will take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us tear apart their fetters. A fetter is something that restrains.

When I was a kid, I was raised on a farm in Ireland. We used to cut down the wheat and then we would bind the sheaves together with a little, you know, take out a few strands of wheat, wrap them around and have these things standing all over the field, and then we would eventually compile them all into one. But you put a fetter around in order to hold it in, in order to restrain it.

And we are the last restraining voice. The church is the ones that cry out against pedophilia, against homosexuality, against abortion, and so on. But the world is going to say, listen, we don't want that restraint anymore.

We want to be able to do what other nations are doing, lowering the age of consent now so that we can have sex with children and so on and so forth, as they do in many countries. And we will see again that we are the obstacle that will try and hinder that and they don't want us, and then the kings of the earth will take counsel against the Lord and against his anointing. We are heading for persecution, I believe that.

Not only persecution, I believe revolution in our own country. False Christ. Jesus said there will be false messiahs.

He warns us repeatedly against the false Christ signs, wonders, and miracles that are going to take place. I believe in miracles, but I also believe there is a counterfeit going on. We have 2,000 supposedly men in America claiming to be some form of a messiah.

In other words, sort of David Koresh's and so on, these men that have got their little compounds all over the nation, and so on with a group of followers that are convinced that their leader is some deity of some sort and so on. We have 80,000 practicing witches in England. We've sold over 60 million Harry Potter books and introduced an entire generation to witchcraft and all sorts of unclean things.

We have daycare centers now that are using yoga to control our children, making them go on trips, having them lie down, imagine that they're going on some sort of fantasy trip, opening themselves to evil spirits and so on. We have Oprah Winfrey with her new religion and so on. Islam now is the fastest growing religion in America since 9-11.

Behind that is the Mormon Church, and then a distant third is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Drugs. 16 million Americans involved in some sort of drug abuse.

41% say they've had some sort of illicit drug use in their lifetime. Revelation 18, verse 23 says all nations, every nation is going to be deceived by her sorceries. Talking about the world system, Babylon.

The word that is used there, sorceries, or the Greek word pharmakia, the word we get our word pharmacy from, drugs. And so drugs now is a major problem, as you know, all over the world. It has enslaved generations of young people and so on, and yet it's all predicted there in the word of God.

Pornography. Jesus says, as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be at the coming of the Son of Man. In the days of Noah, the thought of men's hearts were only evil continually.

All he could think of was perverted thinking. We now have between 25 million and 250 million pornographic websites. Nobody knows for sure how many because they're coming online at such a rapid rate.

We spend 57 billion dollars a year on pornography. 3 billion, oh sorry, yeah, 3 billion in child pornography alone. 4.5 billion in phone sex.

2.5 billion pornographic emails go out every single day. 27,000 people visit pornographic websites every single second. 76% of ministers admitted to visiting a pornographic website.

What a terrible, terrible statistic that is. 53% of promise keepers said that they had visited a pornographic website as recently as one week ago. 47% of Christians say that pornography is a major problem in their life.

If this is an average church, and I hope it isn't, 47% of the people here have got a problem with pornography. And I know you ladies are thinking those men, all they think of, you know, is sex and so on. According to Oprah Winfrey, she says the largest consumers of pornography in America are not men but women.

And she is honest enough to admit that men have a different type of pornography, but women get involved in all the soap operas and the romance novels. That is also pornography. Well, you are fantasizing as you read this book, you know, what it'd be like to have this man as your husband, and so on.

I've never read one, so I can't go into detail, but you can imagine. That also is pornography. In other words, it's some form of escape, some form of titillation, that you get by reading those just as a man gets looking at some naked body.

And Jesus warned us that these things are going to happen. It's all clearly there. I say again, do you know what time it is? Knowing the time.

We need a wake-up call. And so the first thing, again, knowing the time, it's time to wise up. The second thing, it's time to wake up.

You see, the time determines whether you respond or not. I woke up several times last night. Not because the bed was uncomfortable and so on, but that's just the way it is, you know.

I wake up. I look at the digital clock. It was 2 o'clock in the morning.

It was not time to get up. And so once we do know the time, it is time then to do something about it. It's time to wake up.

You know, you got to rub your eyes and try and, you know, do something, stretch a little, get out of bed, you know, splash some cold water on your face, whatever it takes. But it's time to wake up. And Paul says, it is the hour for you to awaken out of sleep.

The hour. Not the day. Not the week.

Not the month. Not the year. In other words, he is calling for immediate action.

It is the hour right now for you to awaken out of sleep. Now, what is he talking about here? Is God opposed to us getting our, you know, 7 or 8 hours sleep? No. The Bible says that he gives his beloved sleep.

It is a gift of God. It is part of the replenishing of our bodies. If we don't do it, obviously, you know, we're going to come apart at the seams.

We need to sleep. But what he is talking about here is a different type of sleep. It is spiritual sleep.

It is that lethargy that we can so easily allow to come in. It's that apathy, that complacency, that indifference, that lukewarmness, where we just begin to sort of coast along spiritually, where we no longer have a passion for God. We settle down in our Christian walk and so on.

Let me give you a reference. 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 6. Paul says, let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. In other words, it's having this sobriety.

It's being alert. It's being conscious of what is going on. It's not having your head buried in the sand.

It's not sort of que sera, sera. You know, whatever will be, will be. You know, mañana, you know, sometime.

No, it's that sort of... It's the amount of Spanish I know. But it's, you know, it's doing something. It's waking up.

It's saying, God, wake me up. I'm not aware of what is happening. I've been, you know, my senses have been dulled.

I want to be spiritually perceptive to the day and the hour in which we live. You know, the enemy loves a sleeping church. Throughout the scriptures, we see the enemy working while men are sleeping.

You recall the story of Samson. Samson, this man, anointed of the Spirit of God, doing all sorts of exploits. The Philistines are terrified of this man.

Finally, they solicit the help of Bathsheba. Not Bathsheba, Delilah. Delilah acts as an undercover agent.

And it is her job to ferret out and to find out what's going on in the life of this man. How come this guy is doing the things that he does? Where is the secret to his strength? We've got to find out the secret to this man's strength. Now, he was a mystery man.

You know, we have pictures in our minds of Samson being, you know, six foot eight, 375 pounds of pure muscle, arms the size of tree trunks and so on. That is not the Samson that the Bible describes. In fact, my father used to say when I grew up, you know, when we get to heaven, we'll be looking for autographs.

Years and years ago, people used to have these little autograph books and, you know, famous people would just sign my signature and so on, maybe hoping one day it would be worth a million dollars, I don't know. But, you know, so my dad had this picture of when we get to heaven, you'll see these lines. People lining up, who's this line for? Oh, it's Elijah.

Oh, I've always wanted Elijah's autograph. Who's this for? Moses. Oh, I want to get Moses' autograph.

Who's this for? You know, John the Baptist, you know, I've got to get John's. Who's this for? Samson. And you look down the line, here's this little runt of a guy sitting at the table, you know, signing.

You think, no, no, that's got to be, somebody switch the signs, that's Zacchaeus, you know. But guess what? I think when we get to heaven, we're going to see this little, you know, pint-sized peanut of a guy. Because it had nothing to do with his physical strength.

You know, if his arms were the size of tree trunks, it would have been a crazy question to ask, how come you're so strong, honey? Bathsheba. I mean, Delilah, I don't know why I've got Bathsheba on my mind. But eventually, you know, he toys with her a little bit.

He has a little bit of fun at her expense, and then she turns on the tears. Let's face it, guys, when the tears roll, it's hard to say no. And he opens up, and he says, I'm a Nazirite.

My long hair is a sign of my dedication to God. Even before I was born, I was set apart by my parents as a Nazirite. And my hair is a vow of my Nazirite convictions.

And if you were to cut my hair, I would become, he says, weak, like other men. Now she's got the answer. Now she's discovered the key.

But she is powerless to do anything. Even though she's got the answer, she can't do anything until she gets him to sleep. The Bible says she made him sleep on her lap, or on her knees.

And once he's asleep, the enemy moves in and shaves his head, basically. And he wakes up, and the Bible says he's strengthened. And I believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is like that.

Long ago, the enemy lulled us to sleep. And he's cut off our convictions. You know, now we've got to be, you know, do the popular thing, and so on and so forth.

And we're powerless. We have the ten virgins, again, waiting for the bridegroom. He delays.

They get sleepy. They fall asleep. And then the sound of the bridegroom.

Trumpet blasts. The bridegroom's coming. They wake up, but they don't have enough oil, five of them, in their lamps.

And they have to disappear. By the time they get back, Jesus said, I never knew you. Even though they were virgins.

Pretty tough one, that one. Oh, I could understand if they'd be messing around. I could understand if they, you know, were steeped in sin.

But the virgins, they were waiting. There was a certain anticipation. But they were also sleeping.

And when they did wake up, they were not ready. I'll let Pastor explain that to you. We have the man in Matthew 13 who sowed good seed in his field.

And then it says, And while men were sleeping, the enemy came and sowed tares amongst the weak. We have Jesus warning his disciples. He says, He went into the garden to pray.

Watch and pray. And then, specifically, he says to Peter, Watch and pray. Peter falls asleep.

And it's just a matter of time. Maybe within half an hour, an hour at the most. Maybe two hours at the most, anyway.

He's come back two or three times. And yet, Peter is the one that denies the Lord. And Jesus had told him, Listen, watch.

Be alert. Don't fall asleep. Don't be complacent.

Don't be apathetic right now. Be conscious of what is going on around about you. Peter, the enemy has targeted you.

Watch. Be alert. Peter thinks he can handle things and goes to sleep.

You see, the enemy loves a sleeping church. It's time, again, to wake up. Knowing the time, let's wake up.

Number three, it's time to clean up. First thing you do in the morning when you wake up, I trust, is go into the bathroom. You know, brush your hair and your teeth, if you've got any.

And get ready. You know, we clean up, don't we? We take a shower. You know, we get ready for the day.

There is a clean-up process that we go through every single day, hopefully. If there is an aroma around you, feel free to move. But, you know, we clean up.

It's making sure you're awake. And Paul says, We lay aside the deeds of darkness. Lay aside the deeds of darkness.

Men love darkness rather than light. The daytime is a time of light. Lay aside the deeds of darkness.

We wake up and we lay aside whatever it is that is dishonorable to God. Whatever it is that is contrary to the word of God. In other words, we clean up.

We look in a mirror in the morning. That mirror reveals if we've got marks or whatever. Our hair is a mess or whatever it is.

And we use that mirror to bring ourselves back into a presentable condition. Spiritually, we need to do the same thing. The Bible says the word of God is like a mirror.

The mirror itself reveals, but it does not cleanse. It would be nice if the mirror reached out and, you know, sort of took care of things for you. No, you've got to do that.

We've got to lay aside. We look into the word of God. It reflects our true condition when we are convicted by the spirit of God that something is wrong.

We need to get rid of that thing. We lay aside the deeds of darkness. I know that the message of repentance is not a popular message anymore.

It needs to be. I just read a book. It is one of the best-selling books now, seemingly, in the Christian world.

It's called A Merited Favor. In which he states there is no longer any need of repentance. Your sins, past, present, and future are all forgiven.

Therefore, how can you repent over something that's already forgiven? Greasy grace, grace taken to an extreme. And he says nowhere in the Bible does it say that Christians have to repent once they're saved. He's obviously not read the book of Revelation where the five out of the seven churches repent, repent, repent, repent, repent.

But such is the way that we're going now. No longer do we need to clean up, so to speak. We're already eternally clean in that sense.

I don't think so. Oh, but Jesus looks at us through rose-colored glasses. He does? Well, he certainly didn't look at the church in Laodicea through rose-colored glasses.

He didn't look at the church of Ephesus through rose-colored glasses. Otherwise, there would be no need for those seven letters that have all been absolutely perfect. No, Jesus is a realist.

He draws attention to our sin. He wants us again to, you know, cooperate with the Spirit of God. When he has come, he will convict of sin.

And we need to, again, lay aside the deeds of darkness. We need to ask the Spirit of God to reveal things in our life that are not right and get rid of those things. The Bible talks all the way through the Bible about the New Testament putting off and putting on.

I dare say there's not a single person here with your pajamas on or your nightie on underneath your clothes. Why does night attire and does day attire, if I can put it that way? Spiritually, the same thing is true. We lay aside the deeds of darkness.

We no longer wear those things. Those are things in the past or should be in the past. And the message of repentance, I believe, needs to be resurrected.

One of my great complaints these days with the prophetic movement is that they are not calling the nation to repentance. The true message of the prophet essentially is one of repentance. Instead, it's all personal

prophecy.

I'm not opposed to that in any way. But there's got to be, you know, the calling back, the John the Baptist, the Elijahs, and so on and so forth. In Hebrews chapter 12, it says, No man will see the Lord.

No man. Without holiness. I remember being in Pensacola one night.

There was an especially large altar call, as there was most nights. But this was a great, huge altar call. And they asked for pastors that were sitting on the platform.

And I happened to be on the platform that night. They said, you know, we need some extra assistance. I went down amongst the crowd and just picked out a man randomly.

I said, can I pray for you? Is there any specific way in which I can pray? He said, well, I'm a preacher myself. He said, I travel around the world preaching the faith message. But he said, tonight God spoke to me very clearly.

And he said, without faith, it's impossible to please God. And then he added this, and without holiness, no man will see me. And he said, I realize there's areas of my life I need to clean up.

Nothing wrong with faith. But without holiness, no man will see God. When Jesus began to wash his disciples' feet, you recall, he girded himself with a towel and came to each of his disciples.

When he got to Peter, Peter objected. He said, Lord, not me. You know, you'll never wash my feet.

And Jesus made the statement, Peter, if I do not wash you, you have no part of me. I believe that the Son of God today is coming, if you like. And he's approaching each and every one of us.

And he's saying, listen, if I do not wash you, you have no part of me. If you will not allow me to take that sin out of your life, if you will not get that thing out of your life, allow my blood to cleanse you, allow that washing of regeneration, you will have no part of me. In fact, the last verse of the Bible, well, not quite, but almost, in Revelation, let me read it to you.

Revelation 22. Verse 11. Let those that do wrong still do wrong.

Let the one that is filthy still be filthy. Let the one that is righteous still practice righteousness. Let the one that is holy keep himself holy.

There is a final appeal, if you like, in the Word of God. If you're going to be filthy, go ahead and be filthy. But if you're going to be holy, keep yourself holy.

Again, that's the way the Bible closes. Revelation 16. It says, if I can find the verse I'm looking for.

Anyway, we have to keep our garments so white. Here we are, verse 15. Behold, I am coming like a thief, blessed is the one who stays awake.

Notice. Alert. Blessed is the one that stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame.

See, the Bible is consistent. We've got to be awake. Awaked out of sleepers.

Rise from the dead and Christ will give thee light. But we've also got to keep ourselves clean by the grace of God. And so, Paul is here giving us a word, again, a word of exhortation.

It's time to clean up. If I do not wash it, you have no part of it. Number four, it's time to dress up.

It's time to dress up. Now, one of the things that we are known for in America, possibly more than any other nation, although our Western influence has spread, but we are known for a vast variety of clothes. Isn't that right? You know, we have clothes for every occasion.

We have invented or concocted or designed, whatever the word is, you know, all sorts of clothes. We have leisure clothes. We have clothes for sports.

Watch the Olympics, you know, a few months ago there, the Winter Olympics. And, you know, they dress a certain way after skiing. They dress another way after, you know, doing the long, whatever they, what's the long jump, skiing.

You know, speed skaters have another sort of clothes. And, I mean, they've got clothes for every single style of sport. We have, again, formal clothes.

We've got casual clothes. I mean, it depends what you're doing. Isn't that right? My immediate neighbor, although I've never officially met him, but I've met his wife and my wife has met her and we've talked together.

But he is a dentist. And if I were to see him come out of his house with steel-toed boots on, heavy jeans, a red wool sweater, a hard hat, and a chainsaw, I know that he's not going to be doing root canals. Certainly not on me.

You know, he is dressed to cut down some trees. If I see him on another occasion with a white sweatband, a white T-shirt, you know, white shorts on, tennis shoes, white socks, and a tennis racket in his hand, again, I know he's not going to be doing some fillings today. He is going to play tennis.

Why? I can tell by the way he's dressed. In other words, our dress sort of betrays us, doesn't it? I flew down here and there were three or four men either going to Iraq or Afghanistan, but anyway, they were dressed in their army clothes. They were somewhat relaxed.

I've seen other men where they're dressed in their, what's the best clothes called? Dress fatigues or whatever, you know, with all their scrambled eggs on them and so on, you know. But all the awards that they've achieved and so on, boy, the way they walk, you know, in that uniform. They represent who? The United States, Army, Navy, Air Force, whatever it is.

They are proud of that uniform. We have to put on a dress. Notice what Paul says, put on the armor of light.

Put on armor. What does that tell you? It tells me that there is a battle going on. It tells me that we're in the middle of a warfare.

Paul does not say put on some shorts and some sweatpants and, you know, be a couch potato, spiritually speaking. Oh, relax, you don't have to worry about a thing. You know, Jesus paid it all.

All you've got to do is just hang around and wait for the rapture. Put on the armor. There is a battle.

I do not understand eschatology. I don't have it all figured out, but I know this, the enemy does. The Bible says he has come down knowing his time is short.

In other words, he is doing everything he can because he knows he has a limited amount of time to reap havoc in the kingdom of God. Word to God, we have that same consciousness. God, we've got only so much time.

Time is short. It's of the essence now that we do something. We get involved.

And yet most of us, again, are sort of sitting around in our spiritual lazy boys, not doing very much. Paul says dress up, but put on armor. Fight the good fight of faith.

Understand there is an adversary out there seeking to sabotage your life, and we've got to resist him. Now notice, you put the armor on over a clean body. You clean yourself first, and then you put on the armor because the armor is light, as opposed to what we have laid aside, which is darkness.

This is not a covering for sin. I always get a little perturbed when we sing songs about the fact that the blood of Jesus covers us. Now it cleanses us.

Covering is an Old Testament concept. It was covered because there was no way of really dealing with sin until the cross. It was all looking forward to, but now we are cleansed.

It's no longer covered. If I cover something, you can't see it, but the moment I take it away, it's there. But if I cleanse it, that thing is gone.

And our blood is being cleansed. But we have to wash first, and then we put on the armor of light, the very opposite of what we've been doing. We're no longer involved in darkness.

We're involved in the things of light. Again, it is a choice we put on. It's something that we have to do.

We cooperate with the Spirit of God. We have the grace of God available to us, but we have to do, again, what God tells us to do. We've got to walk in obedience.

We've got to apply the scriptures. If this was a bottle of medicine, it had the ability to cure me. Let's say I've got cancer, and this is a guaranteed cure for cancer.

I can look at it all day until the day I die, unless I put it on, so to speak, unless I swallow it. Read the instructions and apply it. We have the instructions here, but we've got to apply them.

A lot of Christians know a lot, but they don't do what they know. You know, I know that this will heal me, but knowing that it will heal me will not heal me until I apply and do what it says to do with it. Number five, it's time to grow up.

Paul says, let us behave properly. Now, the type of clothes we put on affect our behavior, right? You know, if you've got sweats on and a t-shirt or whatever, you can just lounge around. I mean, that's what they're designed for, just to feel comfortable.

They're like pajamas, and they're respectable during the daytime, but we can still lounge around. Yeah. If we put on, you know, other clothes, work clothes, then you expect somebody to be working.

And so, clothes affect our behavior. What we put on, it says, is put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That should change us. If this was a fancy dress party right now, and I had a clown outfit on, you would expect me to clown around. It would be fitting, wouldn't it, to act out what I have on, you know? If I'm some sort of snob, you know, I'm dressed up to the hilt, you know, I'd put my, you know, my walking stick and, you know.

I mean, the way you dress should affect your behavior. We put on the Lord Jesus Christ. What does that tell you? We ought to be Christ-like.

Now, your clothes are with you all day. So, there's no variation. You know, you're not just Christ-like because it's church time now, and we're supposed to be Christ-like for the next little while, and then we'll be dismissed, and we can revert back to our carnal nature.

No. We put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we make no provision for the flesh. Paul says we are not to be involved in carousing and drunkenness.

William Barclay describes this, and I guess it doesn't apply to any of us, but it is the scene of men walking through a town or a village at nighttime, the loud, the obnoxious, the boisterous, the talking, and just, you know, making a commotion, not even aware of people, the fact that people are trying to sleep, and so on. You know, just drunk, out of control, shouting, you know, just being plain obnoxious, carousing, drunkenness. The next thing, sexual promiscuity.

He says it means the desire for the forbidden bed. Having no value sexually. Sleeping around, no conviction about it, and so on.

Unfortunately, that's in the church today as well. Paul says those things are not to be a part of the Christian life. Sexuality, having no shame in association with sin or sex.

In other words, openly flaunting your sin. The Rosie O'Donnells, again, the Elton Johns, the Ellen Degeneres, and so on and so forth, that make no apologies anymore. Even 20 years ago, she was kicked off television, Ellen Degeneres, because, you know, people couldn't stomach the fact that she was a known lesbian, but now, you know, she's the talk of the town.

We see, again, a progression. You know, sin now has been modified. It's no longer, you know, people having bastards or illegitimate children.

They're now love child. You know, we're constantly changing sin to make it, you know, not so bad. It used to be that they were bastards or homosexuals, perverts or homosexuals, and so on.

Now it's the gay life style. Now it's just an alternative, you know, choice. Kids are taught it in school.

We're always trying to modify things so it doesn't look bad. Listen, we've got to name it the way the Bible says. It is sin that needs to be repented of.

It needs to be laid aside. We should have some shame in association with sin. And then he says, not being involved in strife.

Again, the lust for power, jealousy, that spirit that is never content with what it has. Always lusting for something else. Paul says it's time to put all those things aside, and we put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Time to grow up. And the last thing, or almost, it's time to lock up. He says, and make, verse 14, make no provision for the flesh.

Now when you make provision for something, you gather together what is necessary. You know, if you're going to have a little bit of a sing song, and you're going to get your guitar and your amplifier and your drums and so on, you gather all those things together. Let's say I invite you over to my house and we're going to have a time of singing and just a time of celebrating.

People are going to gather together what is necessary in order to accomplish that given task. Let's say I go to Rob's place and I arrive and he's loading up the camper with some sleeping bags. I notice a canoe there.

I notice some fishing rods. I notice a primer stove or some sort, you know, a little portable stove and, you know, some jet skis and maybe a boat and a, you know, motor and so on. And I know without asking, he is making provision to go camping.

In other words, he's getting together the necessary, the things that are necessary. The Bible says make no provision for the flesh. Don't go there.

Don't get those things in order. Don't go to the Internet after everybody else has gone to bed hoping that, you know, you can see something that nobody else will see and so on. Don't read the books you've been reading.

Turn off the television, whatever it is. Make no provision. It's important, isn't it? You know, in Psalm, sorry, in Proverbs chapter 7, we've got the young man.

Obviously, the young man has got a problem to begin with. But he gets in the vicinity of where the prostitute lives. It says he takes the way to her house.

And then the next thing, he is on the path to her house. And she comes out, greets him with flattering lips. She is seductive.

She's dressed seductively. But she's also a little spiritual. Oh, you know, she said, I've just returned from offering him my sacrifice and paying my vows.

Amazing how the enemy will, you know, well, you know, we both love Jesus, don't we? You know, we're both committed, you know. So, you know, a little hanky-panky here doesn't really matter, does it? And then she says, oh, by the way, you don't have to worry about getting caught. The man of the house has gone on a journey.

He will not be back until the full moon. He's taken a big bag of money with him. In other words, he's gone for at least a week or two.

My Bible says, be sure your sin will find you out. Don't listen to the enemy. Be sure your sin will find you out.

But he swallows it. Nobody's going to find out. This is before the day of security cameras and DNA testing and so on and so forth.

And so he goes. He takes his fill of love. But the Bible says it costs him his life.

And then it says that many, many are those that have been slain the same way. He made provision. He did everything contrary to what the Word of God says.

Flee from youthful lusts and so on. And he takes the path. And many of us have taken the path.

And we've got to say, listen, it's time, again, to lay those things aside. To wash ourselves. To put on the armor of God.

To begin to grow up and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. And then to lock up. Make no provision.

When I pastored, it was my job. I guess it's a lot of every pastor, seemingly. After everybody leaves, you go around, turn off all the lights, go into Sunday school rooms, you know, the restrooms and so on.

Finally, go to the front door and lock it up. Why? You don't want to make provision for somebody coming in while you're gone. Spiritually, we've got to do the same thing.

Lock up. The last thing, act up. Very quickly, he says, do this.

Do this. Don't just be a hearer of the Word. Hearing will not do a single thing.

In fact, hearing without doing is going to cost you greatly. It would be far better if you were not here this morning than to be here and not do something about this message. Because to whom much is given, much is required.

In other words, God will hold you responsible for the level of knowledge that you have. And not to do anything about it. Paul begins by saying, do this.

But you can't do it until you know the time. And so time is the important thing. Are you conscious of what time it is? If you are, do something about it.

If there's sin in your life, get rid of it now. It is the hour. Again, don't say, well, sometime I'll, you know, I'll deal with it next week when I've got a little... No.

Now is the time. Today is the day of salvation. Today, if you hear His voice.

Pardon not your heart. I don't know you. I know that many of you, most of you, I'm sure, are born again of the Spirit of God.

Maybe you're here. Somebody invited you to come this morning. And you don't know Jesus Christ as your Savior.

I sat in church for 18 years and never accepted Christ as my Savior. The church cannot change you. Any more than going to a garage will turn you into a Ford if you go every Sunday for an hour.

You need Jesus Christ as your Savior. And that's where it begins. Let's stand to our feet as we close.

These altars are open if you want prayer, or if you need to deal with some area of your life, if you've been complacent in some area, if you've been lethargic spiritually, just sort of dozing spiritually, you know, coasting along. There's no sense of urgency, no sense of passion for God. You've just been, again, allowing that lukewarmness to take over.

And you need to say, Lord, I need forgiveness. I need cleansing this morning. Father, we thank you again for your Word.

Thank you, Lord, for this precious congregation. And I pray, Lord, that it would be a congregation unlike any other. Lord, it would not have the statistics that many congregations have of pornography and all sorts of uncleanness.

But, Lord, this congregation would be known for its passion for God, for its purity. Father, weed out any sin. Lord, deal with any sin this morning.

Have your way, we pray. We thank you, Lord, that the blood of Jesus Christ still cleanses from all sin. Not from most sin, but from all sin.

That, Lord, we can walk out of this building this morning knowing that, Lord, we are free by the grace of God, by the blood of the Lamb. So touch lives, we pray, Lord. Open the eyes of our understanding again to the season in which we live.

Have your way, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen. If you need to pray, just come.

I'm going to close the meeting and hand it over to somebody. But if you need to talk, just quietly, as long as people are at the altar. Let's respect this time as God deals with individuals.

But come, don't put it off. I'm not a beggar when it comes to altar calls. I've got to beg you to come.

Somebody else can beg you to stay. Just do what God tells you to do.

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