

Romans 13 11-14

by David Ravenhill

This sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual maturity and readiness for the times we are living in. It highlights the need to define time specifically, seize kairos moments, and discern the signs of the times as mentioned in Matthew 24. The message urges believers to surrender secret sins, dress in the armor of God, and make no provision for the flesh, while acting out their faith in obedience to God's Word.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15, Matthew 24:42, Romans 13:12, 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 1:22, Ephesians 6:11

Topics: "Spiritual Maturity", "Discernment of the Times"

Description

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Transcript

...and so on. If you take your car in for repair, and you say to the mechanic, when will it be ready? And he says, sometime. Well, I don't know about you, but that's not good enough for me.

That may be in my lifetime, it may be in my children's lifetime, my grandchildren's lifetime, and so on. I need something more specific. And so we break that time down, don't we? We say, listen, give me a few minutes.

You know, come back in an hour, or sometime this afternoon. And it won't be ready for three days, or it's going to be next week before we know it. In other words, we've got to define time a little more specifically in order to understand it.

I'm a Greek, so I'm not an expert when it comes to Greek and Hebrew. My father used to say he knew a little Greek and a little Hebrew. The Hebrew ran a delicate test of the Greek catapulting sword.

But, you know, that's not my expertise when it comes to Greek and Hebrew, too. But I've been told this, the word that Paul uses here for the word time is the word pyros. And it means a very specific moment in time.

It has behind it the sense of seizing or grasping the moment. This specific moment in time. I don't know how many hunters are out here, anyway.

I'm going to acknowledge that you belong to the NRA, I think. But, you know, if you're a hunter, you go out there somewhere out in the woods, you climb up in your line, and you're waiting for that short feedback to appear. And there's a little opening, maybe, you know, 50 feet across, and you hear a rustle in the leaves.

You've been waiting there for early hours of the morning, and all of a sudden this beautiful deer steps in, and that is that kind of rustle moment. If I don't squeeze the trigger in the next 5 or 10 seconds, that thing is going to go. Or maybe you're a fisherman, you're out on the lake, and you're using a bobber, and that thing is sitting motionless on top of the water, and then all of a sudden it begins to move like this.

And you know any moment I need to set the hook. Any fisherman here? Oh, fishermen, you've got to be politically correct here. Vigilante.

And those are kairos moments. You know, it's the sale, it's on from 2 to 5, 40% off. All the ladies are lined up, you know, speedy.

If I don't get in at that particular moment in time, that dress that I've been looking at, or that handbag, or whatever it is at first, you know, I'm not going to make it, I'll leave. First time the auction happens. And you get distracted momentarily.

You've got your eye on some object, and all of a sudden you hear the hammer going, you know, going once, like, you know, a kairos moment. And so Paul is speaking here about knowing this specific moment in time. If you ask this, you know what time it is.

I'm not asking you to look at your Rolex or your Timex. I'm asking you if you know spiritually what time, what season you're in. Jesus reprimanded very strongly the Pharisees for not knowing the time.

He said, you guys could get a job at Weather Channel. I'm paraphrasing a little bit. He says, you know how to discern the weather.

You know, you can tell whether it's going to be a good day or a bad day, and so on and so forth. But he said, you don't have a clue as to the time in which you're living. In fact, one of the saddest verses in the Bible, I think, they miss the day of their visitation.

They miss the day of their visitation. Here were men that disciplined themselves to study the Word of God, to memorize the Word of God, and so on. And yet the living Word of God stood right in their midst, and they were absolutely blinded to it.

Amazing, because they missed the day of their visitation. The Bible has a lot to say about time. Redeeming the time.

The days are evil. In other words, redeem it. Begin to use it wisely, and so on.

So there's many, many scriptures. John talks about, this is the last hour. Can you imagine, 2,000 years ago, the apostle John was speaking about time, and he said, this is the last hour.

If that was true then, then certainly now we're down to the closing moments, if you like, of time. 1 Corinthians 7 says, time is short. And so on and on the Bible talks about the matter of time.

We will give an account, I believe, not only for every hour of work, but we'll give an account for our time. And he said, I hope not, because I've got a lot of wasted time. I'm sure you do too.

But do we really redeem the time? Do we use it for the purpose of God, and so on? Do we squander it? Most of you are aware of Matthew chapter 24, where the disciples come to Jesus, and they say, listen, you know, you've been talking about many things, but you're going to come again. What are some of the signs of your coming? What are some of the things that we can look for? Use Jonathan Cahn's expression, what are the harbingers? You know, he dug that word up somewhere out of the dictionary, and there it's begun. You know, toss aside this harbinger, I don't think people in Calcutta could care less about a tree growing in Manhattan, but the true harbingers are there in Matthew 24.

I know that we get used to looking at them, but turn with me, if you will, to Matthew 24. Let's just look at some of these things that Jesus mentioned. I want to elaborate on them a little bit, because we read these.

If you've been raised in church, like I have, and you've been saved for any length of time, you know, Matthew chapter 24, we can wrap it up. You know, wars, ruins of wars, earthquakes, pestilence, all those things. But let me break down some of these things.

Right now there's 192, last time I checked, 192 nations embroiled in some type of conflict in the world. We're talking about wars and the rumors of wars. The Bible says there in verse 7, nation will rise against nation.

The word nation there is the word ethnos. In other words, race against race. We're seeing that in America right now, aren't we? Trying to pit the black lives against the white lives.

You can see on the brown line all the division that is coming on. Again, a sign that we're living in the last days. Nation will rise against nation.

Race against race. Not just nation in the sense of America against Canada, Taiping, or Mexico, but within our own nation, the division that is being brought out. We've had 150 major wars since World War II.

Not we as Americans, but around the world. 150 major wars. If you're not living there, obviously it's not major, but that's the fact that there's been that many.

And then Jesus talked about the fact that there would be earthquakes. These are statistics that I've checked a number of times. 21 major earthquakes between the year 100 and the year 1800.

21 major earthquakes in a 1700-year period. Between 1800 and 1900, not 1700 years, but 100 years, or 18 major earthquakes. Between 1900 and 1913.

Between 1950 and 1991, 93. We have 130,000 earthquakes every year between 3 and 3.9. 13,000 between 4 and 4.9. 1300 between 5 and 5.9. 134 between 6 and 6.9. 17 between 7 and 7.9. In other words, there is an increase of earthquake activity. Jesus said these are the beginning of earthquakes.

Those of you who are models here, you know that when the contractions begin, they do not diminish as the baby approaches. Isn't that right? The contractions get closer and closer. Jesus said, listen, there's going to be an increase of activity.

We're seeing a major increase of activity now. The devastation of this cause. Many years ago, we were down in New Zealand, visiting our youngest daughter, our grandkids.

All of a sudden, she was upstairs praying, and I was downstairs waiting for a friend. Passed a friend, and all of a sudden that house began to shake. I mean, it was just absolutely violently shaking.

Part of the wall fell out, so I screamed for my wife to get out of there. The city of Christchurch was devastated. Billions of dollars worth of damage in just a matter of seconds.

Again, we're going to see an increase of that around the world. Then famine. I always talk about famine.

Nine million people die every year of famine. Six million children under the age of five will die of hunger. Eight hundred million people suffer from malnutrition, and they're predicting now the change in the weather and so on.

There's going to be an increase in famines. Obviously, keeping with the Word of God. The Word of God is tomorrow's news.

I think sometimes we look at the labels. There's always some stuffy old book that pertains to things that happened years ago. Obviously, we have the history of the children of Israel and so on, but it also speaks about tomorrow, what we can look for.

The Word of God is relevant. We need to understand that pestilence. We've had 30 previously unknown diseases since 1973.

Of course, right now we're in one. That's why we're sitting spaced out and so on and so forth. We've had Ebola.

Now the coronavirus and so on and so forth. And all our expertise and so on. Pestilence is increasing.

Persecution. They average about 163,000 people die every year because of Christ. I'm sure it's even higher than that.

There's been more people died for their faith since 1900. Since all the previous history of the world. In other words, you take all of history and from 1900 to the present, more people have died for their faith than all those previous centuries combined.

The Bible says we will be hated by all nations. I've been predicting for many, many years. I still believe I'm right.

And it won't be too long before we have an underground church in America. Not out of fear, but out of necessity. They're beginning to burn churches now.

They're burning Bibles and so on. We are hated. Psalm 2 is being fulfilled.

We kings of the earth take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed. Saying, let us tear apart their feathers. You see, the church puts feathers on the world.

A feather is something that restrains. It holds things in. I have a belt to hold things in.

But the church holds things in. We say it's wrong to do this. We say it's wrong to do that.

Homosexuality is wrong. Abortion is wrong. Pedophiles are wrong.

So on and so forth. And the world is getting to the point where they don't want to hear that anymore. Let's break off those feathers.

We want to be free to do whatever we want to do. I want to marry my cat. I can marry my cat, you know.

I want to have sex with my dog. I can have sex with my dog. Now that that's the world where you can have more than one wife.

Wasn't it Massachusetts recently now that polygamy is okay? My father used to say there is a penalty for polygamy. Two mother-in-laws have said one. But you see the way the world is going.

We are the restrained voice. We are the voice that says don't do it. It's wrong.

But now we're saying that right is wrong and wrong is right. Everything is being turned around. Persecution.

False. Christ will arise. So think about Matthew 24.

It says that there will be an increase. Be not deceived. Over and over again.

It was shattered. More than earthquakes. More than anything else.

Jesus warned us about deception. And it is spiritual deception. False tribes.

False prophets. Signs. Wonders.

Miracles. And so on. A number of years ago I was sitting just meditating on the word of God.

And I thought to myself, you know, I'm not going to be deceived. After all, I've been to Bible school, raised in a Christian home. I sought to study the word of God.

And nobody is going to come along and deceive me into believing that they are the Christ. I know better than that. And I was sort of priding myself in that sense.

And then all of a sudden I felt the Lord say what does the word Christ mean? False Christ will arise. The word Christ means anointed. False anointing will arise.

And deceive me. Then I got afraid. What if somebody comes here and holds a series of meetings.

People are getting healed. Supernatural healings. Miracles of all sorts.

You've been in church all of your life. You've never seen it. This man is, you know, doing miracles that you've only ever dreamed about or read about.

And then over a period of time he begins to introduce some sort of a false doctrine and so on. You think, well, you know, this man's got goods. False Christ will arise.

Signs, wonders, miracles, and so on. Again, they estimate that about 2,000 people in America claim to be Christ at any given time. People, you know, up in the mountains or whatever, they've got a little fan behind them.

They're hearing from God. And the people are believing that they are some sort of supernatural incarnation or whatever. And this man's got great wisdom or this woman and so on.

In England now, something like 80,000 registered witches, according to the latest statistics. And I read that again last night as I looked up some of these things. Sold an entire generation of Harry Potter books.

Introduced them into the world of the occult. 60 million plus books have been sold. They're now teaching yoga in daycare centers where children are tripping out on 90-mile trips and so on.

And it's coming to the church. It's prevalent now. So yoga is the answer for everything.

Every position, obviously, is a position of worship to a foreign god. Again, all of these things are things that the Bible talks about. Drugs, the Bible talks about in Revelation.

The whole world is going to be deceived by her sorceries. That's the word in the Greek, pharmakia, the word we get our word pharmacy from. Drug addiction, as you know, one of the major problems.

It goes on to say, as it was in the days of Noah. What happened in the days of Noah, the minds of men were absolutely perverse, perverted. We have pornography, one of the big, major problems.

Our church back home now, let's say back home down the road here, is weeping on it five or ten weeks. I think it's about a ten-week thing we're halfway through now, trying to deal with this area. It's something that most of us don't really want to admit to.

Isn't that right? In an average church, and hopefully this is not an average church in that sense, 50% or more of the men are struggling with pornography. There were women sitting there saying, you know, look men, that's the people, minds and so on. I was walking through our living room back where we used to live in Texas and Steve used to come and visit.

I turned on the television one day and just happened to be strolling through. I didn't know what was on, but it was all commentary. She was just entering into her little monologue of opening up her meeting or whatever you want to call it for the day, her show.

She began to talk about this industry. I missed the first part, but she said this industry is one of the largest industries in the world. It's bigger than General Motors, it's bigger than Ford, it's bigger than General Electric and so on and so forth.

She said, I'm talking about pornography. And then she made this statement that got my attention for sure. She said the largest consumers of pornography in America are not men, but women.

And she spun off from being a garden woman, but she was honest and she said women have a different type of pornography. They get into the soap operas and the romance novels and so on. In other words, they fantasize.

I wish this was my husband or I wish I was married to him. And they get absorbed. And she called it pornography.

It is pornography. Yes, that's right. They estimate now that nobody knows for sure between 25 and 250 million pornographic websites.

Conservatively, between 20 and 25, the high end, 250 million pornographic websites. That's how prevalent pornography is. \$57 billion a year in business.

\$3 billion alone in child pornography. \$4.5 billion a year in phone sex. 2.5 billion pornographic emails go out every single day.

27,000 people visit pornographic websites every second. 76% of ministers admit to visiting a pornographic website. One out of every five children will be abused.

Promise Keepers, it was popular years ago, did a survey. These were men being challenged to take a lead in the home to be the spiritual headline. The family and so on.

Over 50% said that they had a problem with pornography. Again, spiritual leaders, supposedly. AIDS.

Another major problem with drugs. Plagues and so on. 20 million people have died already of AIDS.

I think it's higher than that. These are a little lower now. And so on.

\$7 to \$9 billion spent every year in human trafficking. 27 million sex slaves worldwide. I watched an ABC program years ago.

A man that left New York City within five hours of leaving New York City. He landed in Haiti. He had secured for himself a young man, I think.

Actually bought the man. Confused him. Abused him.

By the way, one sex slave get rid of him at the end of his period of time. I mean, they follow this. That's what's going on in this world.

They say that the entire population of Texas crosses international borders every year. Something like 27 million people are trafficked every single year. From nation to nation and so on and so forth.

A major problem. And catastrophes that we see that are taking place. Luke talks about the complexity of the roaring of the seas.

In other words, we can't understand what's going on. The tsunamis have wiped out thousands, tens of thousands. In fact, hundreds of thousands of people.

200,000 killed in the tsunami in Southeast Asia. And so on. All of these things.

Again, those are some of the signs of what we are seeing today. I thought I would refresh your memory and I'm going to ask you again. Do you know what time it is? Again, this is a season where we need to be alert to what is going on.

So it's time to wise up. It's time to wake up and rub the sleep out of our eyes, if you like, and so on. And then it's time, again, to seriously wake up.

I mean spiritually wake up. The Bible many, many times talks about awake, now let's sleep us. The church of Sardis in the New Testament there in the book of Revelation.

God says you need to wake up. It's easy to sleep, isn't it? Thessalonians says this in 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 6. Let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. Let us not sleep as others do.

It's Paul writing here about the rank and title of Christianity where you don't sleep, you deprive yourself of sleep. No, because the Bible says God gives his beloved sleep. He's talking about the sleep of indifference, of apathy, of lethargy, of complacency.

Just hanging out there in your head, buried in the sand. Not being aware of what is going on around about you spiritually. It's so easy to lull ourselves to sleep, isn't it? We need to wake up.

The Bible loves, or the Bible I should say, the enemy loves a sleeping church. Let me say that again, the enemy loves a sleeping church. I guarantee if you have a sign made and you put it in your front yard that says this family sleeps very soundly.

You are going to open the door to every feet in the block of the community. Because they know we are not going to have any problem breaking into this house because they admit they're sound sleepers. And the enemy likewise looks to those who are sleeping.

He can move in. We've got to wake up. We've got to ask God, oh, shake me, spiritually speaking, shake me.

You know the story of Samson and Delilah? Two of the saints, again, were terrorized by this man. He was doing all sorts of signs, wonders, miracles, if you like. Because of the supernatural power of God that rested upon that mess right now.

And so they solicited the help of his girlfriend, Delilah. She was the undercover agent. She had to figure out, where does this guy get his strength from? It doesn't make sense.

Where's he got this power? There's some sort of supernatural power here. We've got to learn to tap this and turn it off if we can. And, of course, he was wise to the fact that she was after the source of his strength.

So he had a little bit of fun at her expense. He'll try this and try that and so on and so forth. Then it didn't work.

Then he would roll with laughter and so on and Delilah. And then she tried something that never fails. Tears.

Us guys, ladies, we're getting old enough. We're suckers for the tears. As soon as the tears begin, all of a sudden that toughness goes away.

I'm so sorry. And she tries tears and he tells her the truth. I'm an Aslan.

I've never had my hair cut. I've made a vow to God to live a life of purity and so on. Now she knows.

I've finally tapped into the source of this man's strength. But you know what? She's powerless to do anything about it. And so she does one thing.

She gets him to sleep. The Bible says she made him sleep on her knees. And while he was asleep, the enemy moved in.

Shaved his head, basically. He walked up to Palia. While he was sleeping.

Remember the story of the ten virgins? Oh, they were anticipating the arrival from the bridegroom. They were out there. Their lamps were burning.

But there was a delay. They all got drowsy and they began to sleep. All of a sudden there was a sound.

The cry of the bridegroom coming. And they woke up. But their lamps were out of order, at least five of them.

By the time they got back, they were shut out. Going in. Possibly one of the hardest scriptures in the Bible to explain.

They were virgins. They were anticipating the arrival of the bridegroom. And yet they never made it.

By the time they got there and got the right. Their lamps were burning brightly again. The doors were already closed.

Again, while they were sleeping. Remember the story of the disciples? They were in the garden. Jesus went a little ahead.

And said, listen, you guys watch and pray. Specifically, he said that to Peter. He comes back an hour later.

Peter is fast asleep. Could you not watch with me one hour? And he warned Peter. As a result, Peter is sleeping again.

He did not close three times. Again, while they were sleeping. Matthew chapter 13.

Talks about the man that sowed seed in his field. Then while he was sleeping, the enemy came. And he sowed tares amongst the wheat.

Again, it all takes place while we're sleeping. And I think spiritually, things are taking place right now. But we are not aware of.

Unless we are in tune with God. Unless we are seeking God. Unless we are waiting on God.

Unless we are sensitive to the voice of God. So, it's time again to wake up. The third thing, it's time to clean up.

Again, after you wake up, you clean up. Is that all right? I'm sure most of you here headed into the shower this morning. Or bathed, whatever it is.

And so on. Brush your teeth. Brush your hair, if you have any.

And you know, you've got drips. So, you began to clean up. Paul says here, laying aside the deeds of darkness.

Laying aside the deeds of darkness. In the natural, we lay aside the things that we slept in. Anybody still got their pajamas on here? I doubt it.

We lay aside the night attire, if you like. We put on clothes befitting the day. But spiritually, we're going to do the same thing.

We lay aside the deeds, the actions of darkness. Darkness is anything that is contrary to light. We are to walk in the light and see as in the light.

Men love what? Darkness, because their deeds are evil. And Paul is saying, listen, wake up, number one. And then clean up, number two.

The great message prior to the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is a message of repentance. Those of you who are familiar with Brownfield or Fenton's Total Reminder. That was Steve's burden.

Night after night after night. A message, basically, if you summarize it in one word, repentance. Getting rid of sin, turning away from sin, cleaning up the rag.

Even the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because he's coming back for a bride. A bride without spot or wrinkle.

My father used to pastor in England when I was a little boy. And just around the war years, material for wedding dresses was very rare. Things were rationed.

I still remember my mother, we had a little book like a passport. When you went, you could get only so many pounds of butter for a month and so much sugar for a month. And they would actually stamp in the book to show that you'd already had your supply of whatever it was that you were buying.

But material, because of the war and the other, material for wedding dresses was not a priority. And so what would happen, my dad said, they would take the lace curtains, the old lace curtains, and they would bleach them as white as possible and turn them into wedding dresses. And my father said, I've seen many a bride come down the aisle in a dress made out of the curtain material.

But he says, I've never seen a dirty bride yet. I've never seen a dirty bride yet. He's coming for a bride without spot or wrinkle.

And it's our job to get ready for that, to anticipate that. The Bible says in Revelation, the bride has made herself ready. She's anticipating every bride knows even down almost a second.

When's your wedding? Well, it's four days and six hours from now or whatever. Three days and two hours from now. I mean, there's an anticipation, there's a joy.

You know, they know exactly we should be the same way to them. You know what? Look for him. He will appear a second time.

Does that mean if we're not looking, he won't appear? Maybe. Are you looking for him? It's that longing, it's that desire to be with him. It's no longer seeing through a glass darkly, but seeing him face to face.

Again, it's time to clean up. Revelation chapter 16, it says in verse 5, stay awake and keep your garments white. Notice you've got both of those things.

Stay awake. In other words, don't get too weary, well-doing. Don't get complacent.

Don't allow that apathy to come into your life. But stay awake, stay alert. And then keep your garments white.

That's a responsibility to you and I have. We have to purge ourselves. Isn't that right? I know that may sound very Catholic or Roman Catholic and so on, but we have a responsibility.

Isn't that right? To keep ourselves pure, keep ourselves clean. Passover, they were redeemed by the blood of lamb, but the moment that Passover ended, another feast began, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was the responsibility of every Jew to ransack their house and find if there was any trace of lemon whatsoever.

And if there was, it was their responsibility to take it out. We are redeemed by the blood of lamb, but the moment you and I are redeemed, it's our responsibility to keep our house unleavened, to improve the leather. And it's interesting to note that if they didn't, they were cut off.

You can put that in your theology. It's the greatest answer to eternal security in the word of God. One of the great preachers of all time, Spurgeon, said the day will come and his teachings will be worth their weight in gold.

This man said there's two ways in which an Israelite could lose his life, spiritually speaking. One, if he never applied the blood to the doorposts of his house. The deaf angel would have taken him out along with the Egyptians.

And then he says this, he said after applying the blood, if he failed to remove lemon, he was also cut off. There in the typology is the greatest answer to eternal security. You and I have a responsibility by the grace of God to walk in purity.

Seven days, meaning God expects us the moment we are born again in the spirit of God to walk in absolute purity in our life. Not in our own strength, but he supplies the grace of God. Again, he's coming back to the church without stopping.

I remember one of the articles in Pensacola. Every night there was hundreds of people that would come forward. But this particular night it was an exceptionally large crowd.

We used to sit on the stage. I didn't like that, but they'd ask me to sit up there. And so they asked some of the pastors on the stage if they would come down because they needed extra counselors.

And I just randomly walked up to a man to pray with him. And he said to me, he said, you know, he said, I'm an evangelist. He said, I travel the world.

He said, I have a message of faith. And he said, as Steve was preaching tonight, he said, God spoke to me and said, brother, without faith, it's impossible to please me. But then he said immediately after he gave me that verse, the spirit of God said, but without holiness, no man will see the Lord.

And he said, I'm here because there are things in my life that I know are not pleasing to God. Oh, he had a message of faith, and that's wonderful. But without holiness, no man will see God.

And I was able to pray for him. I don't know his name or anything like that, but I'll never forget that. Oh, I travel the world with a faith message.

But tonight, the spirit of God through Steve's preaching zeroed in on the things in my life that are not pleasing to God. I want to see him. Without holiness, no man will see him.

This is the great message that is needed, I believe, in the church today. It's a message of holiness, of repentance, of getting right with God, living a life of purity, integrity, and so on. You recall the story of Jesus coming there just prior to the crucifixion with a bowl of water and beginning to wash the disciples' feet.

They were humiliated. Their master, this was the job of the lowliest of servants, to wash the feet of those who had walked into their house. And yet here is the master.

He's doing himself a vow. He's taken on the form of a servant, and he's beginning to wash the disciples' feet. He comes to Peter.

You know the story. Peter says, No way. You're not going to wash my feet.

And Jesus said, If I don't wash you, you have no problem. If I don't wash you, Peter, you have no problem. I will make the Spirit of God today.

He's coming to the church, not with a basin of water, so much as a basin of blood, and said, Unless you allow me to wash you, you and I are not having any relationship. You can have no part of me. Be holy as I am holy.

Again, we need to clean up. Number four, it's time to dress up. One thing that I discovered about America came over here when I was 15 years of age.

I became aware of the amazing amount of fashions that we have. Clothing. We have clothing for virtually everything, don't we? I mean, I'm talking about specialized clothing.

If you're cutting down a tree, then you need your red plaid shirt and your steel boots and so on. If you're playing tennis, then you get to a sweatband and white shorts and tennis shoes and so on. If you're ice skating, again, you've got a whole other outfit.

If you're into cycling, there's a whole other outfit that you can put on. If you're into football, all sorts of things. We've got zillions of different types of clothing, depending on the activity that we're involved in.

If you're a jogger, you strip down. If you're a driver, Harley Davidson, you patch up my clothes. I mean, it's endless.

Casual clothes and so on. I called Pastor Steve and I said, by the way, what's your dress schedule? Oh, your dress situation. He said, well, sometimes I'm in blue jeans and sometimes trot.

I thought, well, I'll do a sort of mediocre advert and I called the time. But, you know, if you're going to a wedding, chances are you're going to dress up. If you're going to a funeral, chances are you're going to dress up.

But when you're frolicking with the kids, chances are you're going to put on some sweats or whatever. Because we have different clothes for different sorts of activities, doesn't that make sense? And notice what Paul says here about getting dressed. He says, put on the armor.

Put on the armor. Don't put on a tuxedo. Don't put on your sweats.

Don't put on your hoodie. Put on the armor. Why do we put on an armor? Because we're in a battle.

We have an adversary. You have an adversary. He is the devil.

He goes around seeking whom he may devour. And he knows everything about your life. He knows everything about my life.

Not because he's omniscient, as I tell people, but because he's a good fisherman. Those of you who understand fishing may understand this illustration. The rest of you can nod off for a moment.

But, you know, we have different lures. And you put that lure on the end of your line. You cast it out there.

And you troll it through the water. And you maybe do that 10 or 15 times. If you don't get a bite, then you think, you know, they're not attracted to this particular lure.

And so we change it. We'll put on another color, maybe, and try it again. And the moment you get a strike, okay, they seem to like this one.

And you change that. But you figure out what appeals to the fish. And the enemy, long ago, before you even knew he was fishing, comes to your line.

And he throws in different words. Anger. Resentment.

Pride. Bitterness. Lust.

Whatever. And the moment you grab that thing, he knows what's wrong. And he will use that over and over and over and over and over again.

It becomes your besetting sin. The devil has figured it out long ago. That's why he always harasses you with the same thing.

And until you build up a resistance to that, until you understand that, you will be plagued with that till the day that you die. He is smart. And he's good at what he does.

So we put on another. There's a battle raging. We've got to learn to overcome.

Not only overcome in the sense of our own individual struggles and so on, but there is an even bigger battle going on for our nation right now. Is that right? This is possibly one of the most critical years, if not the most critical year, that America has ever faced. There are principalities and powers that are being loosed against this nation.

That spirit of lawlessness, again, heading up to the matter of lawlessness, that is about to come one of these days. We've got to be able to pull down strongholds. We're mighty, the Bible says.

Mighty. More than adequate to the pulling down of strongholds. There is a spirit that is seeking to destroy this nation.

I call it the minor leagues and the major leagues. Minor leagues, we're all involved. Our personal devils, if you like, will be after that.

But we need to make the transition from the minor to the major. There are principalities and powers that we need to recognize. And make declarations as we declared among our sons this morning.

It should be against the other. We exalt the other, and so on. I won't get into that any more than that.

But it's time to be able to dress up. How do we dress up? It says there that we have a plan of Lord Jesus Christ. Which brings me to number five, it's time to draw up.

Let us behave properly. You see, your dress affects your behavior. I used to travel a lot for time.

Two, three years of non-stop travel around this nation, some of the nations of the world, I've been to airports, and you see military people in their dress fatigues. And boy, that's just the way in which they walk when they're in uniform. They are proud of the fact that they represent the United States Navy, Army, or whatever it is, and so on and so forth.

I don't see them frolicking on the ground with a two-year-old when they're dressed in their dress fatigues. And the way in which we dress should affect our behavior. The Bible says that we not only put on the armor of the light, but we put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Imagine if we had coats here this morning and I introduced, maybe, you know, a very serious introduction about this great man of God, very solemn, you know, and I step out and I've got flaming red hair, great big red nose, I've got bow tie that's two feet wide, it's blinking. I've got an oversized suit on, one side is yellow, the other side is green. I've got trousers on that are about this wide.

Again, one side is all polka dot and so on. I come out dressed like a clown. What do you expect? Imagine if I came out like that and I said, you'd think it was part of the routine, but I'm making a joke.

Why did I dress like a clown? I should act like a clown. You expect me to start pulling my handkerchief out, yeah, and all sorts of crazy things. Why, that's the way I'm dressed.

And so you expect me to act the way I'm dressed. You know, God expects us to act the way we're dressed. We put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we make no provision for that. It's time to grow up, let us behave properly. Let us behave properly, not in carousing and drunkenness.

That's an expression, according to William Barclay, it's an expression that was used by rabble-rousers that would come through a town or a village, you know, drunk, out of control, just boisterous, regardless of the fact that people were trying to sleep and so on and so forth. Thank God that hopefully we're not involved in that, but drunk. Out of control, sexual promiscuity, that desire for a good bed, having no values outside of marriage and so on.

These are things, obviously, that have no part in Christian life. Sexuality, having no shame regarding sin. Goodness, if it was only ten years ago, maybe we'd got something like that, and that would be generous, and all of these perverts would pull off television and so on.

But now we accommodate them and look up to them as, you know, sort of the, having made it, isn't that right? The whole community have come out of the closet now, they're no longer ashamed, they're all zero-doubters and so on and so forth. Boy, I mean, it's only now, lifetime, twenty years ago, whatever they were trampled upon, now you can't say a thing against it, otherwise you're the one that's going to be locked up. Isn't that right? Anyway, shame, there's no shame, openly flaunting sin, strife, lust for power and so on.

Paul says, listen, put all those things aside, stop behaving properly. Paul says, doesn't it, to the Romans, that the gospel is lasting because of you. In other words, they've looked at your life and they've been lasting the gospel because you're not an example of what the Christian life is supposed to be like.

People are watching you. Isn't that right? The Bible says you and I are epistles. I know the Bible says we've got to add to the word of God, but in that sense, you and I are epistles, we're written and read of all men.

The only Bible some people will ever read is your life and mine. I have at the front of my Bible a poem, it's the very first poem I ever memorized. I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

I'd rather one would walk with me than merely tell the way. The eyes of their pupil are more willing than the ear. Fine counsel is confusing, but examples always clear.

The best of all preachers are men who live their creeds, for to see good put in action is what everybody needs. I soon can learn to do it, if you let me see it done. I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.

The lectures you deliver may be wise and true, but I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do. I may not understand the high advice you give, but there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live. We are epistles, written and read of all men.

People are watching us and observing us, and Paul says, listen, behave properly. Again, it's time to grow up. One of Paul's greatest words was the fact that he had a whole bunch of babies, even in the printing church, and he's pleading.

You know, if I could do my own translation of the Bible, he says, listen, I would love to take you to the alpac, but I've got to buy you a milkshake. And that's what he says in essence. You know, you can't buy Jeff's solid food.

You've got to live on milk. One of Paul's greatest burdens. Why? Because they didn't grow, they didn't mature.

I'm in trouble, he says, until Christ be formed in you. The great need of the church is that we begin to grow up. It's not enough just to accept Christ as your savior.

There's nothing more wonderful than a baby. There's nothing more tragic than that baby not maturing. The church is full of immature babies.

They don't read the Word of God, they don't pray, they don't spend time seeking God. And as a result, we've got to spoon feed them day after day after day. We've got to run into a hassle with all of our problems, and so on.

And we've got to grow up. Our time is getting away. I'll take you to the last one, number six.

It's time to lock up. Verse 14, he says, make no provision for the flesh. Make no provision.

You see, when you want to do something, you make provision. Imagine if I went to your house. I've never been to your house before, but as I drive in the driveway, I notice that there is a caravan.

Behind the caravan there's a boat. On the boat there's a bunch of jet skis, and so on. There's some sleeping bags lying around, fishing poles, and so on.

I know that you're making provision to go camping, either that or you've been camping. In other words, you've gathered together all the things that are necessary to accomplish a given task. The Bible says make no provision for the flesh.

Don't go in the places where the flesh is going to be ministered to, so to speak. Stay away from that. We have a classic illustration in Proverbs in chapter 7 of a young man, a young foolish man, who makes his way into a red light district, if you like, a prostitute area, a town.

And she comes out to greet him, and she uses spirituality. Oh, I've offered my offerings this morning. You know, I just came from church too.

Oh, by the way, the man of the house, you know, my husband's out of town. He's going to be gone on a long journey. He's not going to be back until the fourth moon.

That's the way they measure the weeks there. In other words, nobody's going to discover it. Let's have our fill of love.

Let's have some fun sexually. Nobody will find out. The man of the house isn't going to be back for weeks.

The Bible says with her flattering eyes and so on, she seduces him. And at the end of the chapter, it says, Danny, a slain, that way. He makes his way into an area where he knows there's trouble.

Listen, turn off the computer at certain hours or whatever it is. Avoid certain things. Avoid certain people.

Bad company corrupts good morals. Stay away from those things. We can do it.

Remember my good friend, Winky Frackney, some of you may know that name. You know, he said he used to have people come up to him and say, I just have a problem with cheating. I'm always cheating.

I can't stop it. Or I have a problem with stealing. Or I have a problem with this and that.

He says, well, let me ask you a question. Do you steal when your mother and father are watching? No, of course not. Do you swear when your mother and father are watching? No, of course not.

He said, then you can control it. It's just that simple. It's just that simple.

We have a will that God has given us. That will has the power to make choices. Choose you this day.

I'll serve this or I'll serve that. We are not under the dominion of sin. Sin shall not have what? Dominion over you.

Power over you. Once you are born again with the spirit of God, there is a greater power that resides in you. It gives you the power over the power of the enemy.

We can lock up. I don't have to allow that thing to come into my life. That church next to that pastor who was up in the chapel there in Washington.

I was always the last one up at the church. Typical pastors, I guess, shaking hands and this and that. So after everybody left, I would go through and make sure all the lights were off in the bathrooms and so on and so forth.

All the doors were locked. And then I'd go to the front door and make sure that door was locked. In other words, I locked that door so nobody could enter.

And spiritually, we've got to do the same thing. Do not give place to the devil. We can open the door by unforgiveness, by sin, whatever it is.

We've got to learn to lock up. And by the grace of God, by the spirit of God, we can again live a godly life. So we are to make no provision.

Let us flee from youthful lusts and so on. I'm sure you're aware of all those scriptures and so on. Let me add one final one, if you like, number seven.

I didn't read it in the beginning. It's time to act up. I know that's a negative expression, but I'm going to use it in a positive way because it means act out what you believe.

Act up. But spiritually, we need to act up. Because Paul, if we go back to the beginning, he says, do this.

Do this. Know your time. Know this.

Don't just be a hearer of the word. Be a doer of the word. Don't just sit there and say, you know, I don't like that message or I didn't like that message at this point, let's do it at that point.

Whatever. You can criticize it all you like. But listen, don't be a hearer of the word.

Be a doer. That's what God expects us to do. You can read a cookbook all day long.

It won't produce a batch of cookies at the end of the day until you do something that it says. And spiritually, you can read this book like the Pharisees and memorize it inside out and so on and so forth. But until you put it into practice and walk in obedience and say, God, by the grace of God, I'm going to follow this recipe, so to speak, then you will have some results.

Then you know what time it is. You're ready to lay aside the deeds of darkness. You're ready to put on some new clothes.

Put on the light. Get involved. Recognize the end.

You've got an adversary. And then lock up. Let's close in prayer.

Just while our heads are down this morning, if God has spoken to you, let's just take a moment. You don't necessarily have to come to this altar. God sees you.

He knows you. Maybe there's areas of your life where you say, Lord, you know everything that's going on in my life. Lord, I've strayed.

I've been doing things. I've been practicing things. Father, I need your forgiveness this morning.

Lord, I've been complacent. I've been sleeping. I've been out of touch.

I haven't been reading the Word. I haven't been studying the Word, God. Whatever it is this morning, the Spirit of God is putting its finger up.

Don't go out of this building this morning until you've settled that thing once and for all. That's going to put the fear of God in your heart. That you don't go back into that same routine that you've been involved in.

Become accountable to somebody else and say, brother, sister, whatever. Listen, I need accountability in this area of pornography, whatever other area of bondage you're in this morning. Let the Spirit of God be with you.

Let's just take a moment and I'll turn the meeting back over to Pastor Steve here. Let's do some business with God, just for a moment here before we close this out.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/wnCvnYUSQcE.mp4>
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