

Romans 13

by David Ravenhill

This sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual awakening and growth in the Christian walk, urging believers to wise up, wake up, clean up, dress up, and lock up against temptation. The message highlights the need to put on the armor of light, behave properly, and make no provision for the flesh, ultimately calling for action and repentance in response to God's conviction.

Scripture: Romans 13:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, Proverbs 5:3, Revelation 22:11, Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Spiritual Awakening", "Armor of Light"

Description

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Transcript

And as I was in the plane, I realized something that I had forgotten to pack any ties. I normally go through a little routine of sort of pointing to my shoes. Yeah, I've got my shoes, I've got my socks, and work my way up.

The last thing is my tie. So I have a tie transplant this morning, thanks to Brother Dana. I don't have a heart transplant yet, but this is one of his.

Hopefully it's got the anointing on it. But it's a joy to be with you, and always a joy to be with the people of God. Whether you like it or not, I'm your brother.

Whether you like it or not, you are brothers and sisters of mine. We may have different mothers, but we all have the same Father. Isn't that right? Amen.

If you have your Bible this morning, turn with me to the book of Romans. Romans chapter 13, and I want to look at the last four verses of this chapter. I believe this is a very relevant portion of Scripture.

Not that the rest of the word of God isn't relevant, but I believe this has a special meaning for us. At this particular time, I will read it through, then I will give you a brief outline, and then I will work through that outline with you. Romans chapter 13, reading from verse 11.

And this do, or some translations say do this, knowing the time, that 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 as in the day, 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. Let me break that down in this outline.

It is time to wise up, number one. It is time to wake up, number two. It is time to clean up, number three.

It's time to dress up, number four. Number five, it's time to grow up. Number six, it's time to close up or lock up.

I could add one more, it's time to act up because it begins do this. Let's begin, it's time to wise up. That was a common expression a number of years ago.

You don't hear it quite as much anymore, but basically we would say to people, wise up, get your head out of the sand. You don't know what's going on. You're sort of ignorant of what's going on around about you, so sort of wise up, get with it, so to speak.

And I believe the Apostle Paul is using that same sort of word, if you like, in this portion of scripture, wise up. It's time to wise up. It's time to realize what is going on around about us.

The problem with time is it is so vast. You have to break time down in order to really comprehend it and really understand it. If you take your car in for repairs or maybe your snowmobile up in this part of the woods here and you say, when will it be ready? And the mechanic says, well, sometime.

Well, that's true, but that's not good enough for me. That could be sometime next year, it could be five years from now, and so on. That's the problem with time.

We talk about 1,000 years or millennium. We talk about 100 years or 10 years and so on. We break time down into days and weeks and hours and seconds and so on.

And the Greeks had a word for time, and this particular word is the word kairos, and it means this particular moment in time. In other words, not time generally, but this very moment in time. It has behind it the idea of grasping the moment or seizing the moment.

It's like a fisherman that's out there on the lake and you have a whole new realm of fishing up here that I'm not used to, but back in the day when I would fish, we'd use a bobber and that bobber would just sort of sit motionless on the surface of the water, and then all of a sudden it would begin to bob a little bit and you realize, you know, any moment now I'm gonna have to set that hook and bring in that muskie or whatever it is. You have salmon up here, a little better species, but nevertheless. But it's that particular kairos moment or it's the auctioneer that, you know, you've gone to bid on something, you've got your heart set on something, you've got a certain amount of money reserved for that particular thing, and the bidding begins, you get distracted momentarily, and then you hear the auctioneer saying, going once, going twice, and you think, if I don't put up my hand in the next moment, I'm gonna miss that thing completely.

That is a kairos moment. Or it's a deer hunter, he's up in the blind and into the clearing comes a beautiful buck and he knows if I don't squeeze the trigger in the next, you know, few seconds or so, that trophy is gonna get by and I will have nothing to show for it. Again, a kairos moment.

We have kairos moments in our lives, don't we? When maybe we lose a job or somebody in the family has died or we've had another catastrophe that's taken place, we have kairos moments in our nation's history. In fact, my first trip to Alaska was on 9-11. My wife had driven me to the Dallas airport in Texas and I was on my way to do a camp in Malaysia, flying on Korean Airlines, going to Seoul, Korea, then changing planes and flying down to KL.

And we were somewhere out, I guess, over the Aleutian Islands somewhere when the pilot said there's been some sort of a crisis in America. Everybody, of course, on board was sleeping. We'd left Dallas about two o'clock in the morning.

The lights were all dimmed and I don't remember exactly what he said. I wasn't expecting to, you know, be awakened to some bad news, but he said in 45 minutes we will be touching down in Anchorage. All planes have been grounded within the continental United States and so on.

That was a kairos moment in our nation. Everybody here over the age of, what, 20 or 23 or four now will remember precisely what they were doing at that particular moment in time. And so Paul is saying, listen, we need to be aware of the day in which we are living.

In fact, the hour in which we are living. The book of John says that it is the last hour. That was written 2,000 years ago.

If that was true, and obviously the word of God is true, then we are in the closing moments of time, if you like. And Paul is saying here, do you know what time it is? Wise up, get with it. The Bible has a lot to say about time.

We are to redeem the time, because the days are evil. Jesus rebuked the scribes and the Pharisees, the religious people of the day, because they didn't have a clue as to what was going on. One of the saddest statements, I think, in the Bible.

They missed the day of their visitation. The very one that they were anticipating, looking for. Of course, they thought he would come in a totally different manner than he came, but they missed the day of their visitation.

I trust we don't miss the day of our visitation. But he said, you guys could get a job at the Weather Channel, my sort of paraphrase there. You know how to discern the weather.

You know how to look at the sky and make certain predictions and so on, but you don't have a clue when it comes to the spiritual realm. And sadly, I think there's many in the church that fit into that same category. We don't know what's going on spiritually around about us.

And so we need to be aware. Paul, writing to Timothy, said, in the last days, perilous times will come. Men will be lovers of money, lovers of pleasure, lovers of self, more than lovers of God.

In other words, all of those things will eclipse our love for God. One of the great tragedies there in the letters to the seven churches was the very first church that I call the purpose-driven church of the New

Testament, a church that was squeaky clean evangelically. They didn't allow every or anybody just to come into the pulpit and speak.

They went through some sort of a routine of trying those that claimed to be apostles and were not. It's a church that God said, you know, that they were working to the point of muscle ache is sort of the Greek rendering, I understand. I know your zeal, I know your toil.

In other words, every pastor would love to pastor a church like that, where every single individual was involved to the point where they were almost exhausted with giving themselves to the work of the ministry. And yet, God said to them, or Jesus said to them, but I have this one thing against you. You've left your first love.

Not lost it, but left it. When you lose something, that's an accident. When you leave something, again, that is volitional.

It's something you've chosen to do. If you go to the mall at Christmas time, I assume you've got a mall around here somewhere, and maybe you're out shopping. You've got your little three-year-old in tow, and you get distracted momentarily, and then you look around, and your three-year-old has wandered off.

You cannot be arrested for doing that. That's accidental. Obviously, you're gonna put out a bulletin of some sort announcing that there's a little boy missing, a little girl missing, whatever the case may be.

On the other hand, if you go to the mall at Christmas time with your three-year-old to purposely leave your three-year-old, then you can be arrested. Isn't that right? I know some of you would like to do that possibly, but it's accidental. You didn't intend to leave him.

You lost him. You didn't leave him. And there's a difference between leaving our first love and the fact that we've lost our first love.

This is leaving. And so the Bible says, again, in the last days, men will be lovers of all the other things rather than lovers of God. In other words, we will leave God behind for the love of money, the love of pleasure, and the love of other things.

Matthew 24, the disciples came to Jesus. They asked Him the question, of course, concerning the last days. And the pastor, I guess, is doing a series on that, so I won't get involved in it.

That's not my thing. Don't ask me to speak on marriage or eschatology. I haven't figured either one out yet.

But when it comes to this particular portion of Scripture, you remember that the disciples said, well, listen, give us a sign, some sort of indication as when you are going to return. And Jesus gave them all the signs that we are so familiar with. If you've been raised in church like I was, it's wars, rumors of wars, and so on.

But if you break that down, and a number of years ago, and I've left my sheet at home, unfortunately, I just have a few facts here. But in the 1800-year period, there were 18 major earthquakes recorded. In a 40-year period, there were 93 major earthquakes, and then all the other stats I don't have with me on earthquakes.

But every single year, we see an increase of earthquake activity. And of course, Jesus said, when all these things begin to take place, they are the beginning of birth pangs. Every mother here knows that

when those contractions begin, they do not diminish as the baby is going to arrive.

The contractions get closer and closer. And Jesus said the contractions of the earth, if you like, the whole earth is gonna be in groaning and travail. Those contractions will get faster and faster, and we're seeing that certainly in the area of earthquakes and other things.

He goes on, of course, in that portion of Scripture to talk about famine. There's something like nine to 10 million people die every year of famine. He also mentioned pestilences.

We have something like 30 brand new diseases in the last 40 or 50 years that we never knew about prior to that. We now have, of course, this thing with the Zika virus and so on, but even AIDS was just about 40 or 50 years ago, first came on the scene. All of these things with all of our medical breakthroughs and so on and so forth, we still do not have an answer for many of these plagues that Jesus said that would come.

Drugs, the Bible says that in the book of Revelation, the whole world will be deceived by her sorceries. And if that is not a true prophetic statement, that word sorcery that is used there is the Greek word pharmakia, which is the word, of course, we get the word pharmacy from, which obviously deals with drugs, but the whole world will have a problem with drugs. Isn't that amazing? 2,000 years ago that the Bible knew exactly the day and the hour in which you and I are living.

Every town, village of any size whatsoever now has a drug problem in America, Canada, and all over the world for that matter. Talk about the fact that we will be hated by all nations. And we have now, of course, a worldwide hatred and a growing hatred even in this nation for Christianity.

I would not be surprised in my lifetime, I'm 73 years of age, but I say within my lifetime we would not see an underground church in America because of the increase government against us and governmental policies and so on and so forth. We are living in a day when the Bible says that we will be hated by all nations. And I have to remind ourselves that that includes the United States.

The Constitution will not protect us, the Bill of Rights will not protect us and so on. We will be hated, that's a pretty strong word, but we're seeing that hatred now as it begins to rise in our own nation and so on. The Bible talks about the fact that there will be martyrs.

I think there's something like 170,000 people that lose their life for the cause of Christ every single year. And those are all statistics now, of course, with ISIS and so on, we're seeing a rise now, entire cities and destroyed Christian cities that have some sort of a witness and claim to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, again, being annihilated on a weekly basis. We see the beheadings and so on and so forth.

Jesus also said in that portion of Scripture that as it was in the days of Noah, so would it be at the coming of the Son of Man were every man's thoughts were only evil continually. One of the big problems we face now is pornography, a major problem that has made its way into the church, and it is something that is growing at a rate. I tried to check this out again recently, but there's somewhere between a conservative, very, very conservative estimate of something like 20 to 30 million up to as high as 300 million pornographic websites in America, at least around the world that we can tap into if you want to, which obviously we should not be doing as Christians.

We spend \$4.5 billion a year on phone sex in America. 68 million people visit pornographic websites every single day in America. Here, 53% of promise keepers, and you remember the promise keeping group that

they've sort of died down a little bit now, but in their prime they did a survey.

53% of promise keepers said that they had visited a pornographic website as recently as one week ago when that survey was done. Again, these are supposedly the leaders in the church, men that have taken their place to be the spiritual head of their home, to bring prayer into their family and so on and so forth, bring their children to Sunday school and so on. 53% of them say they're struggling with some form of pornography.

If this is an average congregation, I trust it isn't, but then 53% of the men here have a problem with pornography and to give the ladies equal time, about 10 years ago now, we were living in Texas at the time, I turned on the television one afternoon, happened to be home, and didn't know what channel was on, but Oprah Winfrey was just beginning her sort of monologue and she was mentioning that this is the largest industry, or one of the largest industry in the world, and she said, I'm not talking about General Motors or GE and so on, but she was talking about pornography, and I stood and listened to her for a moment as she began to talk about it, and then she made this statement, the largest consumers of pornography in America are not men, but women, and she had my attention. You know, it's always the men that sort of get the blame, but being a woman that knew what she was talking about, she said this, she said, women get into a different type of pornography than men, they get into the soap operas and the romance novels, and I thought, here is a godless woman, but at least she's honest enough to say, listen, women get hooked on this type of pornography, it is a form of pornography whether you like it or not, but it is a major problem, as it was in the days of Noah, where the thoughts of men's hearts are only evil continually, and so we need to be aware. Let me ask you this question, do you know what time it is? Do you know what time it is, spiritually speaking? I'm not asking you to look at your Rolex or your Timex or whatever, but do you know what is going on? The Bible also talks about there will be major catastrophes around the world.

Luke talks about people will be perplexed at the roaring of the seas, the roaring of the seas, in other words, tsunamis that we have not really had too much to do with years and years ago, but now we've seen an increase of that, the one in Southeast Asia, of course, it wiped out something like 200,000 people, Katrina and so on, we are gonna see an increase of those things according to the word of God. So once again, it's time to wise up. The second thing is it's time to wake up.

Normally, there is a routine that we all go through and if you've been listening to this outline, Paul is taking a page out of our everyday routine because the first thing we do, the alarm clock goes off and we become conscious of what time it is, isn't that right? We try and rub the sleep out of our eyes and we try and wake up and then after we wake up, then we clean up and after we clean up, we dress up and so Paul is taking this everyday routine that we all go through, but he's applying it spiritually and we need to wake up. He's not talking here about waking up in the natural, the Bible says God gives his beloved sleep and we need that sleep and I needed it last night after traveling about six hours and realizing there's a three hour time difference and so on, but we need to wake up. He's talking about waking up from apathy, indifference, just again, having your head buried in the sand, not knowing what is going on around about you, that sort of lethargy that we can all slip into, that sort of lackadaisical attitude of sort of case or whatever will be will be and so on.

We need to wake up. One Thessalonian says this, chapter five and verse six, let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. Let us not sleep as others do.

Now he's not, again, talking about natural sleep, he's just talking about the sleep of complacency, the sleep of indifference. You know, the world doesn't really have a clue as to what is going on, isn't that right? They really don't. You know, to them, it's global warming and this and that and the other thing, they have absolutely no idea of the end time events and the fact that Jesus Christ is coming back and as it says in Daniel, in the days of those kings, he's gonna set up a kingdom and that kingdom will destroy every other kingdom, Isis and all the others eventually will be destroyed and so on, but the world has absolutely no clue about that.

Why, because it's sleeping. But we should not be amongst them. If there's one thing that the enemy likes, it is a sleeping church, is that right? In the Old Testament, there was a man that we are all familiar with, his name was Samson, he was terrorizing the Philistines, he was a pain in the neck for the Philistines, they didn't know how to subdue this man nor did they know where he got his power from and so they solicited the help of Delilah, Delilah became sort of the undercover agent and it was her job to try and figure out, hey, where does this guy get his strength from? And of course, Samson had a little bit of fun at her expense and said, try this and try that and you know, nothing worked and then finally, she tried tears.

Let's face it, men, when the tears begin, we just sort of dissolve, isn't that right? You know, it's hard for a guy to, you know, be tough when his wife or his girlfriend or whatever is crying in front of him, his heart seems to melt and poor old Samson felt sorry for Delilah and spilled the beans. He says, listen, I'm a Nazirite. I was born a Nazirite, in that sense, my mother had a visitation from an angel saying that I was to be a Nazirite, I've kept that vow from childhood, my hair has never been cut and so on and so forth but if you were to cut my vow, in other words, if you were to break that vow that I've made to God, I would lose my strength.

And now she has the answer, now she's discovered the secret. She can tell he's telling the truth and yet, now that she's got the answer, she is powerless to do anything about it until she gets him to sleep and the Bible says she made him sleep on her knees and while he was sleeping, the enemy moved in and I believe the church, likewise, is doing the same thing, trying to get the church to sleep, trying to get us to not be aware of spiritual things, not be conscious of the day and the hour in which we're living but just sort of business as usual and so on and the enemy loves a sleeping church. We have many cases of that, of course, we've got the story of Peter who was sleeping when Jesus said, could you not watch with me one hour and he warned Peter specifically.

He said, Peter, watch and pray. Why did he say that? Because, of course, he'd already had a visitation from Satan, I believe, when Satan came and he demanded permission to sift Peter like wheat and here was maybe that opportunity and Jesus trying to warn Peter, listen, the next little while now is critical that you stay awake, Peter and of course, Peter fell asleep and a few minutes later, a few hours later for sure, he is denying the Lord over and over again and we can do the same thing. We have the story of the man in Matthew chapter 13.

He went out and he sowed in the field good seed and then it says, but while he was sleeping, the enemy came along and sowed in that same field tears. In other words, while he was sleeping, we have the story of the 10 virgins. They were sleeping when they should have been awake.

Five of them, of course, never made it. One of the hardest portions of Scripture to really interpret. They were virgins and yet they had to go back and get oil and by the time they got back, the door was already closed but again, they missed, if you like, the day of their visitation because they were sleeping and we

need to wake up.

We need to stir ourselves. We need to get back into the word of God, back into the house of God, back into a place of prayer and so on and so forth. Otherwise, we are going to be like these ones that I just mentioned to you.

The third thing is it's time to clean up. Again, this is a routine, isn't it? When you get up in the morning, you again try and get the sleep out of your eyes and then you head into the bathroom and brush your teeth and your hair if you have any and teeth if you have any for that matter but anyway, we get ready. We take a shower, we clean up.

What do we do? We lay aside the deeds of darkness. Now obviously, not in the natural but we do lay aside the clothes that we've been sleeping in, our pajamas, our nighties or whatever it is. We lay those things aside.

Paul is using that same analogy. This is a new day. We lay aside the night attire.

Now obviously, he's speaking about the spiritual dimension here because men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Those things have to be put off. I'm convinced that before the coming of the Lord, we are going to see a new emphasis on repentance.

Repentance in the house of God. Repentance is almost a dirty word these days. We've got this greasy grace sort of philosophy that you don't have to repent anymore.

Once you're born again of the Spirit of God, there's no need to ever repent again and so on. Possibly one of the greatest diabolical doctrines the devil ever came up with that we can sort of lull our way through and not have to worry about a thing and so on. But prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, there was a strong message of repentance.

Jesus came preaching repentance. The early church preached repentance. And I believe we're gonna see again a message of repentance.

What is it? It's a message of cleaning up. There is nothing greater than feeling clean. Isn't that true in the natural as well as the spiritual? If you're outside, you've been changing the oil in your car or doing something and you come in and you're just filthy, you've got that sort of filthy feeling, there's nothing better than going in and just taking those clothes off and getting in that shower and you come out feeling invigorated just being clean.

I tell you, there's no greater joy and no greater thrill than being clean spiritually. Where the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin and we know that we can look God in the eye, so to speak, and there's no condemnation, there's no sense of conviction. We know that we're in the right relationship with God.

As the old hymn says, nothing between my soul and the Savior. And that's a great place to be, but we need to be people that are clean. God is coming back for a church, what? Without spot or wrinkle.

How he's gonna achieve that fully, I don't know as I look at the condition of the church as I traveled pretty extensively, but I believe that, that he will come back for a church without spot or without wrinkle or any such thing. My father used to say that he's, during the war years, Second World War, my father had a

church and he said back in England where I was born, the war years, of course, there were a lot of things that were not available and one of the things that was hard to come by were wedding dresses and certainly the various material to make wedding dresses. And so my dad said that what they would do, they would take the sheer curtains, the old sort of embroidered sheer curtains and they would bleach them and they would make them into wedding dresses.

And my father said, he said, I have never yet seen a dirty bride. I've never yet seen a dirty bride. Even though they were impoverished in many ways, on the day of their wedding, they were sparkling clean and even though it was maybe a material that was hanging in the window at one stage, nevertheless, they'd washed it and they wanted to present to themselves, again, a chaste virgin, as the Bible says.

And the same thing is true spiritually. We need to be clean. That message of repentance has to come back.

In fact, the closing appeal of the word of God there in the book of Revelation, it says this in Revelation 22, and verse 11, let the one that does 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. That is the way the Bible closes. If you're gonna be filthy, go for it.

If you're gonna be holy, go for it. In other words, you have a decision to make. How am I gonna live my life by the grace of God? I can live in victory over sin.

Thank God we have a grace that gives us the power to live in victory over sin. Sin shall not have dominion. In other words, the grace of God is more powerful than the dominion of sin.

And we need to avail ourselves of that. Again, it's time to clean up. You remember when Jesus began to wash his disciples' feet and he came to Peter and Peter says, no way, you're not gonna wash my feet.

This is embarrassing. You know, you're the master. I should be serving you.

Instead of you serving me, you've got it all mixed up, so to speak. And Jesus said, no. He said, I'm setting an example because he that would be the greatest among you, let him become servant of all and so on.

And finally convinced Peter that he needed to wash his feet. And he said this, if I don't wash you, Peter, you will have no part of me. If I don't wash you, Peter, you will have no part of me.

I believe the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to the church in this day and hour in which we live. And he's saying this, unless you allow me to wash you, you will have no part of me. That is how serious it is.

I've been involved with the men in the prophetic movement for many, many years. And while I appreciate all the prophetic words and so on and so forth, there is a great lack when it comes to calling out sin in the church today. You know, the prophet of the Old Testament, that was his message was to denounce sin, bring the people back on track and so on and so forth.

And we need a good dose, again, of repentance and a good dose of teaching on getting right. We need to clean up. It's time to get rid of all the things that you're involved in, if it's pornography or whatever it is, you know, it's time to avail yourselves of the blood of the Lamb and know what it is to be clean in the sight of the Lord.

Number four, it's time to dress up. Now, when it comes to dress, I would say that America's invented or designed more types of clothing than maybe any other nation in the world. Isn't that right? And I'm convinced that if I were to come to your home, living in Alaska, that when I open your closet, you have got clothes there that right now you don't need to wear because it is summertime, at least they tell me it is.

We're basking in 100 degrees down there in Arkansas. But you know, in a few more weeks or a few more months, you will be bringing out those parkas and you know, all those things and so on. In other words, we have designed clothes to fit certain times and seasons of the year, certain things that we do.

Isn't that right? We just downsized a year ago, but the house that we sold, our immediate neighbor right across the street, we were sort of out on the edge of town, was a dentist. And every morning I would see him come out and jump into his car and drive off. But if I were to see him come out with a plaid, heavy wool plaid jacket on of some sort, steel-toed boots and heavy jeans, a hard hat and a chainsaw, then I know he's not gonna be doing root canals, at least not on me.

He is not dressed to do root canals. He's dressed for a whole different occupation. He's gonna be trimming trees and so on and so forth.

If I see him come out with a sweatband on and a white T-shirt and white shorts and tennis shoes and white socks and a tennis racket, then I know that he's gonna be playing tennis. I can tell by the way he's dressed. Isn't that right? And we have dresses for all sorts of different things.

We have casual clothes and formal clothes and so on. And again, America doesn't have any sort of national dress, apart from blue jeans, I guess. But you go to India, you see all the ladies in their beautiful saris and so on, different countries with their national dress.

But we've got so many different types of clothing, depending what you're doing. If you're rummaging with the kids on the floor, you're not gonna be dressed in your Sunday best. You're not gonna put on a tuxedo and so on, say, okay, let's just have a good time for a while, nor are you going to dive into your swimming pool if you have one with a tuxedo on.

No, you've got a particular type of clothing. The Olympics just opened there a couple of days ago down there in Brazil, and all of those different sports, they've all got different style clothing, depending what it is. If you're into cycling, it's that type of clothing.

If you're into fencing, it's another kind. And the same thing is true with us. And so Paul says here, it's time to put on some clothes.

It's time to dress up. But notice what he says about the clothes that we're supposed to put on, not exactly clothes, but he says put on the armor of light. Put on the armor.

Obviously, when you put on an armor, you're not gonna be playing tennis. When you put on an armor, you're not gonna be going out hiking in the hills here, or going fishing and so on. You have one thing in mind, you have an adversary that you want to overcome.

And we need to recognize spiritually after we wake up, there is an adversary, your adversary, my adversary, the devil, that goes around constantly seeking whom he may devour. And the only way we can withstand that, again, is to put on the armor of light. Put on that breastplate of righteousness and so on, that we can ward off all the fiery darts of the enemy.

But so many people don't recognize that we have an adversary. And certainly, they're not involved in any sort of spiritual warfare. And I know there's two realms of spiritual warfare.

There's the minor leagues and the major leagues. I'm talking about the minor leagues here where we have our skirmishes with the enemy and so on. The major leagues get us into principalities and powers and so on.

But we need to know what it is to put on that armor and to fight, as Paul said to Timothy, fight the good fight of faith. There is a battle that is raging now in the church. All sorts of false doctrines.

The enemy is coming like a flood with all sorts of different things. And we've gotta be men and women of discernment. We've gotta be men and women of the word of God.

We've gotta examine things in the light of the word of God and so on and so forth. Otherwise, again, we're going to succumb to all of these devices. And so we need to put on the armor.

It's a choice. We have, of course, all the way through the New Testament, the putting offs and the putting on. We have to put off one thing.

Notice, we put off the deeds of darkness. And then we put on the armor of light. The armor of light does not cover the deeds of darkness.

In other words, we don't put on the armor over dirty clothing, so to speak, spiritually. We've gotta repent of that. We've gotta veil ourselves of the blood.

And then, thank God, we can put on the armor. The next thing it says, it's time to grow up. It says, let us behave properly.

In other words, what we put on should affect our behavior. If, let's say, I was introduced this morning, and we have some curtains here, and Pastor Milt said, you know, we're so glad to have Brother Ravenhill with us this morning, and so on. We want to give him a great welcome, and the curtains open, and I step out, and I've got flaming orange hair that sticks out about this far, a great big red nose, multicolored blazer, shoes about this big with big red toes, baggy pants, one side is yellow, the other side is purple, you know, big bow tie that's flashing.

You know, you expect me, then, to do something crazy, right? I'm dressed like a clown, I should act like a clown. You know, I should start pulling my handkerchief out of the pocket, and you know, it keeps going, and going, and going, and all those crazy things that clowns do. Why, because I'm dressed like a clown.

And the way you dress affects your behavior, isn't that right? Again, you know, if you see people dressed in their military gear, their dress clothes, you know, they walk a certain way, they keep very erect, and so on, they're proud of the uniform that they're wearing, and so on. On the other hand, if they're coming back from, you know, the war zone, I see them sometimes lying on the floor in the airports with their, you know, whatever you call it, non-dress clothes. What do you call those? There's a name for it, I can't think of it right now.

But anyway, you know, in other words, they've got their hands behind their back, they're sleeping on their knapsacks, and so on. They're not dressed in their best. But, and so, they're acting the way they would if they were at home, and so on.

We do the same thing, you know, we put on our old clothes, if you like, to just become couch potatoes, and so on. But when we go somewhere, we dress up. Notice what Paul is saying here.

He says, we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, we are to walk worthy of the calling to which we're called.

The Bible says our behavior should be the behavior of a Christian. Paul says the gospel is blaspheme because of you. In other words, you call yourself a Christian, but you don't act like a Christian.

People would never know you're a Christian by your behavior, the things you say, the things you do, your actions, and so on. They betray you, but that should not be the case. We put on the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore we should act like the Lord Jesus Christ, talk like the Lord Jesus Christ, so to speak, have the same attitude, and so on and so forth.

So how do we do that? Paul says we give up all the carousing and drunkenness. I trust that's not your problem anyway. But according to William Barclay, he says, this is a word that is used to describe men coming through town in the middle of the night, they're boisterous, they're out of control, they're drunk, they're oblivious to the needs of other people that are trying to sleep, and so on.

They're just downright obnoxious. I trust that doesn't apply to anybody here. The next one is sexual promiscuity.

He says that's the desire for the forbidden bed, having no values when it comes to sex. In other words, there's nothing wrong with sleeping with my boyfriend or my girlfriend, and so on and so forth, having a mistress on the side, whatever it be, none of those things should pertain to the Christian life. You can't call yourself a Christian and live with those sort of attitudes.

Sensuality, having no shame regarding sin. It's only, what, just a matter of 10, 15 years ago that we had the gay community come out of the closet now and no longer have any sort of shame about it, they're now boasting about it, and so on and so forth. But the Bible says here that that's what is termed, again, the sensuality, no shame regarding sex.

I don't care. Again, none of those things are befitting for the Christian. We need to lay all of those things aside.

We need to grow up and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to begin to act and be a true witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, we are epistles, the Bible says, written and read of all men.

I wonder what they read. What sort of an epistle are you? That's the only canon of Scripture, if you like, that is in addition to the word of God, are those sort of epistles. You're an epistle.

You may not have known that, but you are. And you've been written and read, and maybe there are people that will never read this word of God, but they will read your life. And if your life is a true witness of the Lord Jesus Christ, then the Bible says men will see your good works, and as a result, they will be converted because of the epistle that they read.

And we've gotta allow people to see that in our own lives. All right, the last thing, really, it's time to lock up, Paul says, and make no provision for the flesh. Now, when you make provision for something, you gather everything that is necessary in order to accomplish a particular goal.

Isn't that right? If you're going camping, or if I were to come to your house, and there outside, I see your pickup truck, and behind the pickup truck, there's a caravan of some sort, and on top of the caravan, there's a canoe, or maybe behind that, there's a boat or something, and I see some fishing rods and some camping gear and a primer stove and all of those things, I know that you're going, or you've just come back from camping. Why, you've made provision, you've got all the necessary things in order to accomplish a particular goal. Paul says, make no provision for the flesh.

In other words, don't go to those areas that you know are gonna be a source of temptation. Proverbs warns us about the young man that took the path into, if you like, the red light district of the time there, and he meets up with a prostitute. She comes out, and the Bible says she begins to flatter him.

She throws in a little bit of religion and said, listen, I've just been to church myself. I've just paid my vows, she said. In other words, the enemy's a master, isn't he, at just trying to seduce us in some way.

And she said, listen, the man of the house has gone on a long journey. He's got a big bag of money with him. He's not gonna come back until the full moon is the way she describes it.

In other words, it's gonna be weeks before my husband gets back. He's got plenty of money. He's not gonna turn up suddenly.

We can have a good night tonight. We can have our fill of love, and the Bible says he does not know that it will cost him his life. And many, not a few, many of those have been enslaved thereby.

And many times, again, that mistress is the world, and the world is out there to seduce us. The world is out there to say, try this and try that. You don't have to worry about it.

You won't get caught. You know, the man of the house is on a long journey type thing, and so on, and we allow ourselves to be seduced in that particular way. The Bible says we're to flee all those things, flee youthful lusts, you know, whatever it is that you are making provision to do that is contrary to the ways of God, you've gotta get rid of that thing.

Turn that television off, get rid of those books, get rid of those magazines, whatever it is, you know, don't make provision for the flesh. Last church I'd passed, it was up in the Seattle area, up in the Northwest, and one of my jobs, I was always the last one to leave the church, so it was to lock up, and the reason I locked up is, of course, not to make provision for people to come in, and we do that, all of you, I'm sure, as you left your apartment this morning, your house, you locked the door because you don't want somebody to be able to gain access while you're away. When you get home, you'll make provision.

You'll open the, take the key out and go in. The same thing spiritually. We need to lock up on certain things.

We need to get rid of certain things from our life and make no provision for those things to have their way in our life, and then the last thing, very quickly, it's time to act up because Paul says, do this. In other words, don't be just a hearer of the Word. We become great at doing that.

I can testify to that. You know, you sit in church, and well, it's another Sunday, that was a great message, poor message, or whatever it is, and so on. It goes in one ear many times and out the other ear, and so on.

Paul says, listen, don't be a hearer of the Word of God. Do something about it. Take the necessary actions.

I don't know you this morning, but I'm assuming in a group of this size, there are people that are battling certain sins, people that have already been seduced into those particular things, and so on, and I can't think of a better day than to say, listen, today is gonna be the end. Today, I'm gonna take a bath, if you like, in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, so to speak. I'm gonna come out of that thing absolutely clean, having no condemnation, and so on.

That's why he came. He didn't come for the Pharisees and the people that thought they were good enough. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

He said, it's the sick that need a physician, and if you're sick this morning, thank God that there is a great physician that is here to shed his blood, as we sang this morning, to redeem you for himself, and you can go out of this building knowing that you are right with God. You can go out of this building, again, redeemed by the blood of the Lord, and all it takes is honesty, and we've all been there. We've all faced these different Goliaths, if you like, in our life, but you're not the only one, but if you're here this morning, and even as I'm speaking, there's something going on in your life, you're aware, you're conscious that the Holy Spirit is putting his finger on that particular thing, then whatever you do, come to this altar this morning and say, God, that's me.

I need forgiveness. I need to walk out of this place knowing that I'm absolutely, totally free and ready, should you return today, and the Lord may not return for another 50 or 100 years, but it could be your time today. It could be your day to meet your maker, and you need to be ready.

Let's just stand to our feet, and as we close, Father, I thank you this morning, that Lord, you're still the same, yesterday, today, and forever. Lord, you're still pleading, come unto me, Lord, you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, learn of me.

Father, we thank you, you're our savior, you're our healer, you're our deliverer this morning. Whatever the need is, there's nothing that's greater than you are. You're able, again, to do exceeding abundant above all that we could ever ask a thing, and so, Lord, I pray right now in these closing moments that, Lord, there would come just a stillness of the Spirit of God.

Lord, that conviction that only you can bring. Have your way, we pray. If God is speaking to you right now, just make your way forward.

These altars are open. There are people that will pray for you. Don't listen to the voice of the enemy that says, listen, I can do it any time, and so on.

I believe that God is waiting right now. If you've been involved in things, you've given place to the devil, you've started to do things that you know you shouldn't be doing, you're dabbling with different things that you know, as a believer, those are not the things that are pleasing to the Lord, then you come and let God just touch your life. I'm not a beggar when it comes to altar calls, so that's, I'm just gonna wait just for a moment before we turn the meeting back over to Pastor Milt.

Thank you. Let me just say one other thing. I'm gonna take the liberty of doing this.

When I pastored, I would tell people if you come and you're kneeling at the front, you'll be left alone. If you're standing, I'm going to assume you want prayer. I believe there are times when the Spirit of God was speaking to me, and I wanted just to come to the front, spend time in the presence of God.

I didn't want a bunch of hands laid on me. Didn't want people crowding around me. I knew that God was dealing with me, and I was mature enough to be able to just get through to God himself.

This is an altar where we come to meet God. He is the greatest of all the counselors, and if you want to come this morning, you know that God is speaking to you. You want to be left alone.

You don't want anybody to pray for you. You just want to spend time alone with God. Feel free to come, and you will be left alone if you're kneeling, and if you're standing, we're gonna assume that you are looking for somebody to come and pray with you, give you some counsel, or whatever the case may be.

I love you. God bless you.

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