

Time

by David Ravenhill

It is time to wise up, wake up, and take action to fulfill our purpose and destiny in the face of escalating moral and economic decay.

Duration: 45:12

Scripture: Proverbs 7:22, Romans 13:11-14, 1 Thessalonians 5:6, 2 Peter 3:14, Revelation 22:11

Topics: "Spiritual Readiness", "Christian Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual readiness and living a life pleasing to God. It highlights the need to be time-conscious, wake up from spiritual slumber, clean up from sin, dress up in the armor of light, grow up in behavior, lock up against fleshly desires, and act up by responding to God's Word.

Transcript

My wife reminded me to keep it short. I'm reminded of the pastor that came up to preach and he had a big band-aid over his chin. It was very obvious and so he thought he should give an explanation.

He said that morning he was concentrating on his message as he was shaving and he cut himself. On the way out somebody gave him a note and said, next week concentrate on your shaving and cut the message. I'll try and do that because this is the early service and we need to make way for the others.

Let's look to the Lord in prayer. Father, we just agree together that Lord, without you we can do absolutely nothing. And so Lord, we ask that you would come by the power of your spirit and do what you promised to do, lead us and guide us into all truth.

Lord, bring this word to life this morning. Lord, the letter kills, the spirit gives life. And so we ask Lord for the illumination and revelation of your spirit upon your word.

In Jesus' name, Amen. If you have your Bible, turn with me to the book of Romans. Romans chapter 13 and the last four verses.

I want to read it to you and then I will give you an outline and then we will look at that outline together. Verse 11, this do or do this, knowing the time. That is an important little phrase, 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 beads 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.

I'll give you the outline that I will be following. Number one, it is time to wise up. Number two, it is time to wake up.

Number three, it is time to clean up. Number four, it is time to dress up. Number five, it is time to grow up.

Number six, it is time to lock up. And number seven, it's time to act up if we want to add one more. Seven means perfection, so we'll get over the six and we'll put a seventh there.

All right, it's time to wise up. I don't know about you, but I remember that phrase when it was sort of in vogue a little bit more than it is today where we'd say, wise up, get with it. You don't know what's going on, you don't understand, you're not current with what's happening round about you, you've got your head buried in the sand, whatever it is, wise up.

I believe Paul is saying here in this portion of Scripture, wise up. And he says that by this little phrase, know what time it is, knowing the time. Now one of the problems that we face when we talk about time is that time is so vast.

How do you talk about time without breaking it down into increments? If I say to you, you know, what time are you going to come to my house? And you say, sometime. Well, I could sit there all day, all week, all month, all year, and you would still be honest about what you said because you didn't define time. You just spoke in a general sense that time.

And so we have to break down time into, again, segments. We begin with a second. We go to a minute.

We go to an hour. We go to a day. We go to a week and a month and a year and so on and so forth.

The word that Paul is using here is a word in the Greek for kairos. It's a Greek word, and it means this specific moment in time. Not time in a general sense, but time very specifically.

The Bible says today if you hear his voice. That is a kairos moment. Not tomorrow, not yesterday.

Today if you hear his voice. Do something. And so he says knowing the time.

We have kairos moments again in our life, don't we, when something happens and you remember that specific moment in time. My wife was crossing over 412 here about a year and a half ago, and a man came towards her, turned in, and totaled the car. That was a kairos moment.

She will never forget that moment. I will never forget that moment when she picked me up at the airport, and I'm looking for our car outside to make sure she's on time, and here I can't see anything, and all of a sudden she's waving, and she's got a white car, and I think, you know, where did that come from? She normally doesn't trade cars on me while I go on a trip for the weekend. But anyway, kairos moments.

We had a major kairos moment in this nation again in 2011. Not 2011, 9-11, where the attack on those Twin Towers, and I will remember very clearly where I was, at least somewhat where I was. I was in the Jumbo 747 flying to South Korea, and then going over down to Malaysia to do a weekend camp.

And we had left Dallas-Fort Worth Airport about 2 o'clock in the morning on 9-11. We were somewhere out near the Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska. Everybody was sleeping on board, and all of a sudden there was an announcement that there had been some sort of tragedy in America.

All planes were being diverted back, and so about 45 minutes later, we landed in Anchorage, and we were bussed down to a place called Seward, and I spent the next two days there in that hotel room watching those jets, you know, fly into the Twin Towers like everybody else, trying to figure out who was responsible and so on. But that was a kairos moment. I called my wife to let her know I was safe.

The next morning she called me to let me know that my mother had died. So 9-11 is a kairos moment. 9-12 was also a kairos moment in my life.

But Paul is speaking here about this specific moment in time. Let me ask you a question. What time is it? What time is it? I'm not asking you to look at your Rolex or your Timex.

I'm asking you spiritually, are you aware of the spiritual season in which we are living? Things are escalating at a rate that I have certainly not seen in my 70 years. We are seeing the nation unravel morally and economically in every other way. We're seeing the world literally come apart.

Humpty Dumpty can't be put together again by the act of man. Only God can do it. Thank God the day is coming when we'll have a new heaven and a new earth.

But right now, do you know what time it is? Do you know what is going on? Are you spiritually aware, spiritually conscious of the day and hour in which we live? Jesus reprimanded the scribes and the Pharisees because they were men. He says, listen, you guys, if I could paraphrase, I could get a job at the Weather Channel. You are experts in predicting the weather.

You can look at the sky and tell us what sort of a day it's going to be and so on, but you don't have a clue as to what is going on spiritually. You're blind leaders of the blind. They missed the day of their visitation.

I think that's one of the saddest verses in the Bible, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the one that they were supposedly anticipating, again, they missed the very fact that He was standing there in front of them. And so, again, what time is it? The Bible says a lot about time, redeeming the time, again, because the days are evil. John, in his epistle, says it is the last hour.

Matthew 24, we have, as you well know, Jesus addressing the disciples. They ask Him a question. What is basically going to happen prior to your return? What are some of the signs? And we get so familiar with that particular portion of Scripture.

I grew up hearing people preach about it. You know, wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, pestilence, all of those things, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be, the coming of the Son of Man, the love of many will wax cold, and so on. And one day I decided to go to the computer, and I downloaded a number of statistics.

Hopefully this will give you some idea of the time in which we live. Wars, for instance, 192 conflicts, major conflicts going on right now in the world. These are a couple of years old, so that may have varied a little bit.

We've had 150 major wars around the world since World War II. Earthquakes, between the years 100 and 1800, 1700-year period, there were 21 major earthquakes. Between 1800 and 1900, there were 18.

Between 1900 and 1950, 13. Between 1950 and 1991, 93. We have 130,000 earthquakes a year between 3 and 3.9. Let me not go through all of these, but we have 17 of a magnitude of 7 to 7.9 every year.

And the Bible says these are the beginning of birth pangs. In other words, when those contractions begin, they do not diminish as time goes by, but rather the speed and the distance between them is going to hasten. And so we are going to see an escalation.

If we don't, then obviously the Word of God is not right. We can rely on the Word of God. Heaven and earth will pass away.

My Word will not pass away. We are going to see an escalation of events taking place. Pestilence or famine, almost 10 million people die every year of famine.

Six million children under the age of five will die this year of hunger. Eight hundred million suffer from malnutrition. So again, wars, rumors of wars, famine, pestilence.

Thirty brand new diseases in the last 30 to 40 years, the last generation. With all of our antibiotics and all of our scientific information and so on, we are having diseases today that we did not have 60 or 80 or 100 years ago. AIDS, of course, is one of those.

Persecution, Jesus said that you will be hated by all nations except America. No, we will be hated by all nations. Whether we have a constitution or not will not protect us.

There is coming an increased hatred again against the church. I think we are seeing it almost every day. Everybody else is getting their rights, but the church's rights are being stripped at a rapid rate.

And that is true not only in America but around the world. My father used to say if the church doesn't concentrate in prayer, they will pray in concentration camps. I used to laugh when he said that.

Not outwardly, I respected my father. But inwardly, I thought, Lord, this is America. You know, that's not going to happen.

We have a constitution. I mean, this is the land of the free and the home of the brave and so on. But I believe that now.

I believe the day is coming when America, like China and other nations, will have an underground church where it will cost us and our freedoms will be taken away. Unless, of course, we... So, persecution. 163,000 martyrs every single year for the cause of Christ.

That's hard to believe, isn't it? Here we are again in America. We don't see that sort of thing around the world. North Korea, of course, the number one persecutor of the church.

Saudi Arabia, number two, and so on and so forth. You can go right down the line, that hatred that they have for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. False Christ.

We are warned again about deception all the way through Matthew 24. False Christ, false teachers, signs, wonders, and miracles all having to do with the supernatural realm. Last time that I checked, there were supposedly 2,000 in America.

The David Koresh type thing with their compounds and so on. With a little group of followers convinced that this man or woman is hearing from God and so on and so forth. I, many times, have thought to myself, you know, I could not be deceived.

Now, that's a dangerous place to get to. But I've often thought, you know, nobody's going to stand behind a podium like this and convince me that they are the Christ. Miracles and so on.

We're all going to be enraptured, caught up in it. We're going to go to the end of the earth to see what is going on and so on. But it can also be a false anointing.

Signs, wonders, miracles that Jesus warned about. And so, we need to be aware of that. We have Oprah Winfrey with her, you know, new religion and so on.

I mean, everywhere you see, again, these false Christs rising up. Drugs, another major problem around the world. Revelation talks about the fact that the whole world will be deceived by her sorcery.

The word sorcery is the Greek word for pharmakia. The word pharmakia, obviously, is the word that we get the word pharmacy from. And so, we've got a nation addicted to drugs.

Isn't that right? You know, not just, you know, the bad and banned drugs, but other drugs as well. Once you get on, you hardly ever get off and so on and so forth. I'll leave that to the doctors.

But the other one, of course, is pornography as it was in the days of Noah. So shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man where God himself finally gave up, if you like, found at least one righteous man, Noah. But he said the thought of man's hearts were only evil continually.

All man could think about was sin and vice of every conceivable sort, the cesspool of their minds and so on. And yet today, we have a major problem. I have here in my statistics, and I had some other ones.

Somebody asked me for them last night. But there's between 25 million and 250 million pornography. So, it runs literally in the millions and millions of websites.

As you know, anybody here on the computer, you've got the pop-ups and so on. I mean, there's every conceivable temptation facing us today. It is a \$57 billion a year business.

We spend \$3 billion on child pornography alone. \$4.5 billion on phone sex. \$2.5 billion pornographic emails go out every single day.

27,000 people visit pornographic websites every single second. 76% of ministers said they visited a pornographic website. What a tragedy.

One out of every five children will be abused. And it goes on and on. Again, a major, major problem.

Human trafficking, 27 million slaves, sex slaves around the world. Again, a \$32 billion international industry. I watched a documentary on ABC television about a year, maybe two years ago now, of a reporter that was doing some investigation on the sex trade industry.

They traced him from flying from New York City. They timed him. In five hours, he landed, including the trip, into Haiti.

He had bought himself a, I can't remember if it was a boy or a girl now, and when I say bought, I don't mean bought for the evening or for the night, but purchased that individual so he could use him and abuse him or her, you know, as long as he wanted and then discard him or literally kill him at the end of that period of time. Within five hours of leaving New York City, here just off the shores of America. But, of course, that sort of thing is going on here in America as well.

Catastrophes. Luke 21 says that men will be perplexed at the roaring of the seas. In other words, we will not understand why the seas are so, well, all I can use is the word tsunamis that are taking place.

We see, again, the devastation there in Japan and then the other one down in Indonesia and so on. All of these things are predicted 2,000 years ago in the Word of God. And so, again, I ask you the question, what time is it? Do you know what time it is? We need to be conscious that what Jesus said 2,000 years ago, we are seeing the fulfillment of.

We read the daily headlines. I tend to be a little bit of a Fox News addict. Nancy will vouch for that.

But, you know, they are telling you what happened yesterday. The wonderful thing about this book is it tells us what will happen tomorrow. And it's the only one of its kind that does that.

So, again, it is time to wise up. Number two, it's time to wake up. He says it is the hour, not the day, not the month.

In other words, right now. Now, time, of course, determines everything. I woke up in the middle of the night several times.

It's something that I tend to do. I looked at the digital clock. It said 12.45 and then it said 2.30 and then it said 3 something.

And time determines your reaction, doesn't it? Your response. Obviously, when it says 2.30, I'm going to try and roll over, get another couple of hours of more sleep, and so on. If it says 6 o'clock, then it's time for me to get up.

And so, you know, it depends on the time. Once you know the time, then you respond accordingly. That's why Paul says, knowing the time, do this.

In other words, the time establishes whether we act or react to what we do. And so he says, now it is time to wake up. I had to wake my wife up this morning.

She did not want to get out of bed, especially, and I had to remind her that I was speaking and we, you know, had a couple of hours and we needed to get ready and so on and so forth. You know, she was awake, but at least she was aware of the time, but she wasn't quite fully awake yet. We need to wake up.

And the enemy loves a sleeping church, isn't that right? 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 6, it says, let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. Let us not sleep as others do. Obviously, it's not talking about the natural sleep.

That is something that God gives to His beloved, but it's talking about the sleep of apathy, the sleep of lethargy and complacency, that lukewarm place where you've got to, you know, sort of a case or us or our attitude. Well, you know, I can put it off for another day. I don't need to read the Word of God today.

I don't need to have any sort of devotional life. And we begin gradually to sort of, as the Bible says, we begin to wax cold. Incidentally, that was one of the other things that Jesus talked about there in Matthew 24.

He says, the love of a few, no, the love of many will wax cold. That implies that they had a love for God. In other words, He's not addressing unbelievers.

He is addressing believers. You can't love somebody and say, well, they don't know that person. Obviously, they knew the person.

They were madly in love with him at one particular stage, but they had gradually, incrementally began to lose their first love. One of the strongest messages, I think, in the book of Revelation there is to the church of Ephesus. That church had had so many accolades going for it.

Again, they tried every man that stood in the pulpit, make sure he was a genuine apostle. It was squeaky clean in every sense of the word. It was a church, again, where everybody was involved.

Every pastor would love to pastor the Ephesian church. It says, I know your zeal. I know your toil.

I know your labor. You know, one expositor says those words mean toil at the expense of muscle ache. In other words, you've worked so hard.

It's like working in the garden all day long and you come in or the next morning you wake up and your whole body is aching because you're using muscles you've never used before. That's what, you know, the writer is saying there to the book of Ephesians. And you think, boy, wouldn't it be great to have a church where every single person is so involved that they literally spiritually they've got muscle ache, so to speak.

That's quite a commendation. I know your works. I know your zeal.

I know your toil. And then he drops a bombshell, but he says, you've lost your first love. You've lost your first love.

No, he doesn't say that. He says you've left your first love. You see, lost is accidental.

Left is volitional. If you go to the mall and you take your two-year-old at Christmas time and you're looking around the shops and you get distracted, your little two-year-old waddles off somewhere and all of a sudden you realize you've lost your little two-year-old, you panic. You know, you start crying out his name and, you know, Johnny, Mary, where are you type thing.

If you can't find him or her, then you go to somebody and you say, listen, could you make an announcement? My little two-year-old has wandered off. I don't know where he is. And so on.

You cannot be arrested for doing it. But on the other hand, if you go to the mall at Christmas time with your two-year-old and you have one plan in mind, and that is to leave him, then you can be arrested. You know, well, I think this would be a good place to ditch my two-year-old.

Some of you may feel like doing that if you've got a two-year-old. But, you know, you can't do it. You're going to be arrested for doing it.

Why? Because you have not lost him. You've left him. And the Bible says you've left your first love.

The Ephesian church was a purpose-driven church of the New Testament. It was purpose-driven, but it was not presence-driven. It was not presence-driven.

There's a big difference, isn't there? You can have, you know, all the different classes for left-handed people and short people and fat people and so on and so forth, but you can also lose your first love. And we need to understand that is one of the things. So it's time to wake up.

The enemy loves a sleeping church. Loves a sleeping church. Samson, remember, was terrorizing the Philistines.

The Philistines could not figure out why this man was so strong. Possibly, you know, when we get to heaven, we'll see some little runt of a guy. And we can't believe our eyes because it wasn't anything to do with his physical stature.

It had everything to do with the anointing of the Spirit of God upon his life. But they sent Delilah in as the undercover agent to try and figure out what's going on with this guy. And, you know, he played around a little bit at her expense and toyed with her a little bit and try this and try that.

You know, finally she tried tears. That's hard for men to resist. When the tears start, we sort of dissolve and he dissolved.

And he says, okay, I'll tell you. And he says, the secret to my strength is I'm a Nazarite. I've been set apart for God.

I don't do this and I don't do that. I live a godly life, a holy life, a life of separation. My hair is an indication of the vow that was placed on me, first of all, by my parents and then obviously something that he took up himself.

But he says, if you were to cut my hair, he said, I will become weak like other men. And now she knows for the first time he's telling the truth. She has the key to the demise of this man and yet she is powerless to do anything until she gets him to sleep.

And she makes him fall asleep on her lap and while he is sleeping, the enemy comes in of course and he is destroyed. Lost his vision. Lost his testimony.

Lost his strength. All of those things have been taken from him. Why? Because he was sleeping.

And we find again, I believe, the church today, hopefully not this church, but many churches are asleep. We have Peter sleeping when he should have been praying, ended up denying the Lord. We have the ten virgins, five wise, five foolish.

They all slept. The bridegroom came. They were not ready.

Five of them, again, while they were sleeping. Matthew 13, we have the story of the man who sowed good seed in his field. But it says that while he slept, the enemy came.

Again, it is while we're sleeping spiritually that the enemy moves in. When we get into that place of lethargy and apathy and indifference in our spiritual walk, we open ourselves again to the attack of the enemy. And we need to guard against it.

So it is time to wake up. It's time to clean up. Now, if you are observing this, you will notice that Paul is doing something.

He is taking a page out of our everyday routine and he is applying it spiritually. Everybody here over the age of hopefully five where you were able to dress yourself this morning. I did not have to help my wife get dressed.

She is capable of doing that. And spiritually we should be capable of dressing ourselves. But before you dress yourself, you clean yourself up.

Before you clean yourself up, you wake up. Before you wake up, you become at least... You know, the alarm goes off and you become conscious of what time it is. Isn't that right? And so what Paul is doing here, he's simply taking a page out of our everyday routine, but he's saying, listen, do this not just naturally, but do this spiritually.

Every day that you get up, be conscious of the fact that this is a day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad. This is a day where I need to walk in holiness and cleanliness and so on.

I need to avail myself of the grace of God, the blood of the Lamb, and so on. So it's time to clean up. I believe this is going to be the number one message in the last days.

After all, this was the message that ushered in the Lord Jesus Christ. John the Baptist had one message of repentance. Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

I believe there's going to be a prophetic voice raised in these last days, a message of repentance to the church where we need to get right with God. He's coming back after all for a bride without spot or without wrinkle. My father used to say, and he married many, many people back in the war days, back in World War II, passed to the church in England.

And in those days, of course, it was almost impossible to get material for wedding dresses. And he said they would literally take the sheer curtains. And the old-fashioned sheer curtains, of course, had a lot of embroidery in the bottom and so on.

And then they would bleach them and they would make them into wedding dresses. And my father said, I've seen many, many brides. Big brides, small brides, and so on and so forth.

But he says, I've never yet seen a dirty bride. Or a poor bride maybe, but never a dirty bride. Jesus Christ is coming back for a bride without spot or wrinkle.

And you and I make up that bride, or we will make up that bride. And without holiness, the Bible says, no man will see the Lord. Not some men, but no man.

Those are pretty strong words, I realize that. But we need to heed the admonition of God's Word. That we are to lay aside the deeds of darkness.

Darkness is anything that stands contrary to the Word of God. We are to walk in the light. And if we do that, obviously, then we are in a right relationship with God.

And that's the place that God wants us to be. Thank God for the grace of God. Thank God for the blood of the Lamb.

That it still is there and avails for all of us. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from what? All sin. Not just some sin, but all sin.

And there's nothing greater than being clean. Isn't that right? Even in the natural. You know, if you've been working outside and you've got all dirty for whatever you've been doing, and the first thing you want to do is come in and take a shower or a bath, whatever.

And, you know, just that feeling of being clean. Getting all that grease and grime off you. Putting on some other clothes and so on.

Spiritually, the same thing is true. Listen, if you're dirty this morning, thank God for the blood of Jesus Christ. You can walk out of this building a brand new, you know, creature, absolutely spotless in the eyes of God.

That is the amazing thing about grace, isn't it? That we can be clean. But this message of repentance. Again, Jesus came to Peter.

Remember there He girt Himself with a towel just before the Passover meal and began to wash the disciples' feet. Peter, typical Peter, began to object and said, Lord, this is not right. You know, You're the leader.

You shouldn't be taking the role of a servant, basically. But Jesus said, Peter, if I don't wash you, you can have no part of Me. And I believe that Jesus is coming to the church today.

And He's saying, listen, unless you allow Me to wash you, you can have no part of Me. Two cannot walk together unless they be in agreement. And we cannot have fellowship, true fellowship, true intimacy with God and have uncleanness in our life.

And we need to come to that place of saying, Lord, I need to be washed. I need to be washed as there is my life, Lord, that You know about and I know about and I bring them to You today. Wash me in the blood of the Lamb and I shall be washed whiter than snow.

The Bible closes. And I've often turned to this portion of Scripture, Revelation 22, right at the end of God's Word with this final plead, if you like. 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 still keep himself holy.

Hear that final, listen, let me just say one thing as I close. That's what the Bible is saying. Let me just say one final thing.

If you're going to be filthy, go ahead and be filthy. But if you're going to be holy, keep yourself holy. The last final challenge to the church.

And we have to respond again. It is time to clean up. Number four, it's time to dress up.

Notice that you do not dress up before you clean up. Again, we don't do that in the natural, do we? We don't come in from the garden and say, listen, I'm just absolutely filthy. These clothes are filthy.

Look at the state of my clothes. I think I'll go and put on some new clothes. And so, you know, you just put on brand new clothes over a filthy body.

I don't think so. No, we clean up first. There is an order here that is going on.

And so he says it is time to dress up. Now, what do we dress in? Again, in America, we have so many choices. I am amazed at the amount of different types of clothes that we have in America.

You know, if you play golf, there is literally a specific type of clothes. If you want to be, you know, trendy, that you put on the golf clothes and even certain shoes and so on. If you go in fishing, you have a whole different attire.

Isn't that right? You know, if you go in cycling, you have virtually nothing on. But anyway. But you've got all these different types of clothes for different activities.

If you go in swimming, well, that is true. But we have invented or created, I guess the word is, more clothes styles than any other nation in the world. We have our, you know, formal wear, formal gear that we put on if we're going to a wedding or some special function.

If we're frolicking with the kids on the floor, we'll put on our sweats. You know, depending what you are doing, you have clothes that fit that particular occasion. Now, notice what we are told to put on.

He says, put on the armor of light. Put on the armor. Now, that suggests to me that you're not going to be playing tennis.

That you're not going for a stroll. You're not going fishing. You are going where? To war.

In other words, we are in a conflict. There is a battle going on. Your adversary, the devil.

Not mine only. Yours. Goes around seeking whom he may devour.

The enemy is out to sabotage again the grace of God in your life, lure you back into sin, bring temptations and trials and pressures and so on and so forth. And we have to war. Or as Paul says to Timothy, fight the good fight of faith.

There is a fight. There is a conflict going on. And we play a role in that.

You know, God does His part, obviously, but we also have a part to play. We are not just sitting there and say, God take care of everything. He gives us the equipment.

My father used to say, Christianity is like a do-it-yourself kit. God supplies all the material. We have to put it together.

And I think there's a certain measure of truth to that, isn't it? You know, lay aside this and put on that. God doesn't dress us. He doesn't dress you in the natural.

He doesn't dress you in the spiritual, but He provides the righteousness if you want it. And you can put it on. And you can put off the deeds of darkness and so on.

And so it is time to dress up. Put on the armor of light. Get involved.

There is a battle going on. Notice again, it is light as opposed to darkness. We've got rid of the darkness.

We've got rid of all those other things. Now we put on the light. So it is time to dress up.

Number five, it is time to grow up. He says, let us behave properly. Again, the way you dress determines your actions.

Right? The type of clothes you wear. We live right opposite a dentist. I won't mention his name because he hasn't paid me to do any advertising.

But we live right opposite a dentist. If I were to look out and see him come out in the morning with a hard hat on and, you know, a plaid shirt and jeans and steel-booted boots on, steel-toed boots I should say, and a chainsaw, then I know he's not going to be doing root canals that day. At least not on me.

Because he is dressed appropriately to cut down trees and so on. On the other hand, if I see him with a tennis racket and, you know, T-shirts and white shorts and white tennis shoes, obviously I know he's relaxing. He's going to play tennis.

Again, the way you dress determines what you are doing. And here it says that the way we dress, if we put on the armor of light, then it should affect our behavior. Now it goes on to elaborate even more.

It says put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, can you imagine being dressed in a Jesus Christ outfit, if I could put it that way? You would expect people to act like Jesus.

Isn't that right? Again, if I appeared before you with a clown outfit on, you know, great big mop of purple hair or something and a red nose and multicolored jacket and, you know, big baggy pants and shoes about three feet long and so on and a bow tie that lit up and glistened and so on, you would expect me to clown around. If I stood up here and I had a very serious message dressed in a clown outfit, you'd say, listen, there is something wrong with this picture. He's dressed like a clown.

Why doesn't he act like a clown? If we are dressed like the Lord Jesus Christ, what? We should act like it. Let your behavior be excellent, the Bible says, among the Gentiles, among the world. In fact, the Bible warns us that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ has been blasphemed because of the actions of the church.

That was 2,000 years ago. In other words, do we pay our bills? Do we show up on time? Are we men and women of integrity and so on? Do we testify to the fact that we are different? We serve a risen Savior and so on. And so it is time, he says, to grow up.

Let you behave properly. Let us behave properly, not in carousing and drunkenness. William Barclay describes this scene as men walking through a city.

They're drunk, they're out of control, they're obnoxious, they're loud. They couldn't care less about the fact that people are trying to sleep. And he said they're just making a ruckus, if you like.

Now, hopefully that does not apply to anybody here. I trust not. Sexual promiscuity, he says, avoid that.

It's the desire, he says, for the forbidden dead. Having no values when it comes to sex, at least outside of marriage. Sensuality, having no shame regarding sin.

That open, blatant, you know, acknowledgement. It was only, listen, just a matter of a few years ago. Well, Ellen DeGeneres was basically kicked off television because of her lesbian stand.

And now, of course, she's the darling of Hollywood and so on. Things have changed just over in a matter of years. Isn't that right? We have Elton John and Rosie O'Neill and all the other ones again that are bragging they've come out of the closet.

There's no shame whatsoever. And again, shame is gone. And the Bible says we should not be involved in those things.

Strife and jealousy, that spirit that is never content, always lusting, always wanting something else. Paul says those things should not be a part of the Christian life. Again, we have laid aside the deeds of darkness.

We have put on, again, this armor of light. We've put on the Lord Jesus Christ. And it should impact the way in which we live, the way in which we speak, the things that we listen to, and so on.

And the last thing, it's time to lock up. Verse 14, it says, And make no provision for the flesh. Make no provision.

I looked up the word provision yesterday in the dictionary on the computer, something that is done in advance to prepare for something else. In other words, you do it in advance in preparation for something that you want to do later. Make no provision.

If I were to come to your house and I notice that there you have your pickup truck, and on the back of the pickup truck there is a trailer, maybe with a boat on it, a canoe on it, there's sleeping bags, there's fishing rods, maybe a jet ski and various other things, I am going to conclude that you are either just coming back from vacation or you are leaving for vacation. You've made provision. You've got all the various things necessary in order to have a good camping trip.

You've got the sleeping bags, you've got the tents, you've got all the things. You've made provision to accomplish a given end. And the Bible says make no provision for the flesh.

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. They cannot please God. And I think the highest thing that you and I should do is to try and live a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

I think too many of us bask in the fact that God loves me irregardless of what I do. And while there is a certain measure of truth to that, there is a higher standard. Jesus said, I do only do the things that please the Father.

The Father said, this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Paul says, I have as my ambition, whether at home or abroad, to be pleasing to Him. And, you know, my wife and I have raised three

daughters.

We have one in Michigan, China. They've been there for over 20 years. One in Salt Lake City, another one down in New Zealand.

And my wife happens to be a little bit of a perfectionist. And so she made sure that the kids made their beds, even from the age of about three or four. You know, as good as a three-year-old can make the bed.

And I used to walk by their bedroom after they got going to school, and I would be proud of the fact that they'd made their bed. The room was tidied up, the toys were in their rightful place, and so on and so forth. And it would please me to see the way in which they were acting.

Now there are other times, for whatever reason, when I would walk by the room, and the bed was not made, there were toys scattered on the floor, and so on. Well, I did not deprive them of their meal when they got home. I didn't beat them black and blue.

I still love them, and I always will, and so on. But they just didn't please me. You see, God loves you regardless, in one sense.

But He's not always pleased with us. And we should come to that place, again, where we make no provision for the flesh, because those who are in the flesh cannot please God. And I want to please Him, don't you? One day I'm going to stand before Him, give an account.

And so we have to make sure that we are not preparing to do something intentionally. We're not waiting for everybody to go to bed so we can get onto that Internet site. We're not reading some books, listening to some music, associating with certain friends, and so on, letting our value system slip and erode away because God sees everything, doesn't He? And as I said last night, we need the fear of God back in the house of God.

The fear of God, which is to hate evil. Again, fear has within it an automatic deterrent. If I fear heights, you're not going to get me standing on the edge of a 60-foot drop and looking down.

If I fear that thing, I'm going to stay away from it. The Bible says the fear of God is to hate evil. And we should have a holy hatred for sin, because God has a holy hatred for sin.

And just as the doctor hates to see a patient sick, God hates to see the body of Christ sick, especially when there is a cure for that sickness, the blood of the Lamb. And we should come and avail ourselves. Go to the great physician and say, Doc, I need help.

I need to be washed. I need to be cleansed, and so on. I have been making provision for the flesh.

I've been doing things. I've been hiding it from my parents. I'm hiding it from my children, whatever the case may be.

We have in the Book of Proverbs a man who made his way into the prostitute district. Remember, takes his way to the prostitute's house. She comes out, begins to flatter him, throws in a little dab of spirituality.

I've just paid my vows this morning, made my offerings, and so on. I've just been to church as well. Why don't we just have a hangout together and have a good time? Nobody's going to catch us.

The man of the house is away. He's got a big bag of money. He's not going to be back until the full moon, and so on.

And he falls for it. Tragedy is, at the end of that chapter, it says many of those that have been slain that way. All it takes is just that one step in the wrong direction, and we begin to progress.

And before we know it, I think it was Steve Hill that used to say, sin will take you further than you ever intended to go. It will keep you longer than you ever intended to stay or make you do things you never intended to do. That's what sin does.

Again, it is a bondage. It captivates us and holds us, and we need to have those chains broken and be set free. And so it's time again to lock up.

And the last one, number seven, it is time to act up. I know that is a negative sort of a statement in one sense, but it means to do things in a different manner. It's to act in a way that is different and more radical.

Now, I'm applying it, obviously, in a positive way. We have used act up in a negative way. But Paul says, do this.

In other words, act it out. Do something about it. Don't just hear it.

Don't be hearers of the Word, but do us also. And so we need to close again and say, am I prepared to do what the Word of God says? Again, this Word is everything that pertains to life and Godliness. This is just as real, just as real a message today as it was 2,000 years ago.

And we need to, again, respond to that message and say, Lord, I'm not right. I'm not in a place that I should be. I may not be dabbling in any sort of gross sin and so on, but I've certainly allowed a little bit of apathy.

I've certainly lost my zeal and my passion for the things of God. I've left, again, my first love. I'd rather spend an hour watching the NFL than I would in prayer, whatever it is.

It's amazing. I know, trading on Tulsii. But it's true, isn't it? The thing you love is the thing that you gravitate to.

If you love fishing, boy, you'll be out there all the time. If you love golf, you'll be out there every time. It's clear.

If you love shopping, you'll be out there every time there's a sale. If you love God, you'll spend time in the presence of God. There's no other way of looking at it, is there? And we need to say, Lord, I need washing this morning.

Let's just close in prayer. And we have a moment here. If you just want to come and spend some time, you want to just kneel where you are or just sit where you are, but just ask God.

Say, Lord, I want to respond to this message. Lord, give me a time consciousness. Lord, I've been so caught up in things, I'm not even aware of what's going on spiritually around about me.

Lord, open my eyes to the season in which we live. Lord, if you would have come today or I were to go to you today, Lord, I want to be ready. I don't know when the Lord is coming back.

But I know this, that it could be my last day on earth and it could be your last day on earth. And I want to be ready. I want to be clean.

Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow as the old hymn says? Are they washed in the blood of the Lamb? Ask Him this morning. Avail yourself again of the grace of God. And say, Lord, put within me just a new zeal, a new passion, a new longing, a new desire for the things of God this morning.

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