

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Part One

by John Piper

John Piper emphasizes the urgency of understanding our time in relation to love and living out our faith through Christ.

Duration: 44:53

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Romans 13:8, Romans 13:11-12, 1 Corinthians 6:6, Philippians 1:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:4

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Living"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the concept of time and its connection to love and behavior. He begins by emphasizing the need to understand the time that is being referred to in the passage. He highlights the importance of waking up from the distractions and illusions of the world and being aware of the present time. The speaker then explores the implications of this time for our behavior, emphasizing the need to cast off works of darkness and put on the armor of light. He concludes by urging the listeners to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and not to indulge in the desires of the flesh.

Transcript

The following message is by Pastor John Piper. More information from *Desiring God* is available at www.DesiringGod.org Romans 13, verses 11 through 14. Besides this, you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep.

For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone, the day is at hand. So then, let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. Father, up north, where they're listening to this prayer and message, and here, I am sure in both services there are women who wish they could have children and to this point have not been able to. And if this is of you, I just ask that you would come now and work.

And grant to a husband, he may be the difficulty, or the wife, she may have the problem. And I pray that you would heal and grant the heart's desire of some couples who have been so longing for children this way and haven't been able to yet have them. We come to you as a father who loves children.

You adopted us and you caused us to be born anew. And so we ask that you'd come. Glorify yourself in this way, we pray.

And help me now open this passage of Scripture faithfully. In Jesus' name, Amen. Well, here we are making the transition now between verses 8 to 10, where we spend three weeks, and verses 11 to 14, where we will spend, Lord willing, two weeks.

The connection between 8 to 10 and 11 to 14 is not as clear in the words, besides this, that begin verse 11, as I would like it to be. The original language simply has the words, and this, and this, knowing the time. And Paul, several times, connects units of thought with, and this.

Let me read you a couple so that you can get the sense that I think is here. For example, 1 Corinthians 6.6. Brother goes to law against brother. In other words, Christians are suing Christians.

Brother goes to law against brother, and this, before unbelievers. And they do this before unbelievers. Or here's another one, Philippians 1.28. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and this, from God.

When you say, and this, it picks up what was just said, without repeating it, and means it, as it moves it forward. So, Romans 13.11, taking what went before. Oh, no one anything except to love one another, and this, knowing the time.

That works. Oh, no one anything, that's the main point of the preceding paragraph. Only love, and this, knowing the time.

Knowing the time is another incentive, or motive, for fulfilling, oh, no one anything but to love one another. I think the words, besides this, in the ESV here, are right if the this refers back to the motive, love fulfills the law. In other words, oh, no one anything except to love one another, because love fulfills the law, and besides this motivation, there's another one, you know the time.

That works. In either case, the point is, knowing the time is added as a new motivation, a new incentive to accomplish what went before. So, let me sum up what I think the link, the flow of thought is between these paragraphs.

Let me be Paul for a minute. I'll talk out loud and try to paraphrase what I think Paul is saying here. Paul is saying something like this.

For two chapters, I have been telling you one main thing, namely, to love each other and to love your enemies. Let everything be done in love. Chapter 12, verse 9, let love be genuine.

Verse 10, love one another with brotherly affection. Verse 14, bless those who persecute you. Verse 17, repay no one evil for evil.

Verse 19, beloved, never avenge yourselves. Verse 20, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. Chapter 13, verse 8, oh, no one anything but that, to love each other.

And that, knowing the time. Be big time into loving your church and your neighbors and your enemy, knowing the time. And so the point is, knowing the time.

You see that in verse 11, don't you? I'm not getting that out of the blue. I'm getting that word time from verse 11. Besides this, you know the time.

That too is an incentive to love. That too takes all of chapters 12 and 13 and gives a new push to it into Bethlehem Baptist Church. So my main aim in this message is to ask, what's the time? And what is there about the time that might make us more loving people? Those are my questions.

To get the bigger picture in front of us, let's just make sure you see the paragraph before we launch. I want you to understand both the messages, this one and the one to come. This paragraph, as I understand it, verses 11 to 14, has two parts to it.

And the first part describes the time that he's talking about. And then the second part describes the implications for behavior of the time, which are a way of unpacking what love looks like. But that's the next message.

So here, let's read these. Verses 11 through the first part of verse 12 is tonight's text. Besides this, you know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep, for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

The night is far gone, the day is at hand, period. That's the end of that unit. And the next unit gets at the practical, spiritual, moral implications of the time.

Let's keep reading, middle of verse 12. So then, let's cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let's walk properly in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. That's the next sermon.

We're sticking with verses 11 and the first part of 12 in this message. So, question. What is the time? You know the time, Bethlehem.

You know the time in which you live, don't you? And does the character of this time impel you to love people? That is a zero connector with your brain. It just shows how much we need to saturate ourselves with the Bible. Because the Bible is just so rich with motivations that we don't know about.

We wonder why we're not more loving people. We don't know our Bibles. We don't know how this argument works.

We don't get up in the morning and say, The time, the time in which I live drives me to love. Who does that? Paul does. And this, chapters 12 to 13, and this, knowing the time.

There was something about the time that made Paul think, Chapters 12 and 13 will really come true if we know the time. So, my question is, what is it and why does it impel us to love? You know the time. I think the first step in answering the question about how time, this time, relates to love and behavior is to notice something between, the connection between the end of this two-chapter unit and the beginning of this two-chapter unit.

Look back at chapter 12, verse 2. And I wish most of the translations did not translate the word, I own as world, but would translate it as age. It is a temporal world, not a word, not a spatial word. So I'm going to translate it that way.

Verse 2. Do not be conformed to this age. Be the right literal translation. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

And he's been unpacking that as love. And so clearly Paul has a conception of the time in that verse as very negative. Don't be like your time.

And he lets that be an incentive to get a new mind, a mind that's been transformed. Don't conform yourself to this time, conform yourself to something else. It's very negative.

It's dominated by Satan. He's called the God of this age. Second Corinthians 4.4. It's fallen, it's dark, it's sinful, it's got sickness in it, it's got death in it, little babies die in this time.

But that is not his point in verses 11 and 12 at all. The time in verses 11 and 12 have a very different function. Here the time is positive in which we live.

So all of you pessimists, all of you naysayers, all of you doomsayers, listen up. Because the point in verses 11 and 12 is we live in an incredible, explosive, just around the corner time. That's the point here.

Verse 11, besides this, you know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. It's a waking up time. Why? Why? Verse 12, the night is far gone.

The day is at hand. And you don't sleep in the day. When the day is at hand, you get up.

You jog. You take a shower. You read your Bible.

You eat breakfast and you move out with life. You sleep at night. The day has come.

So he says in verse 12, cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light and let us walk properly as in the daytime. That's the message that's coming. I just want you to see how positive in Paul's mind here the dawning of this day is.

So what time is he talking about? 1 Thessalonians 5. 1 Thessalonians 5 is the closest parallel in all of Paul's writings to what we're reading here. And I'm going to read you a few verses from it. Because it seems to me, in the early church, as soon as a person got converted, it must be that they were instructed about the second coming.

Immediately, it is going to happen and it probably is going to happen soon. And so the time here, he doesn't even tell us what he's talking about. He just says to these Romans, and he's never even been there.

He has not instructed any of them. And he says, you know the time. You know what I'm talking about.

So he must have assumed everywhere the gospel spread, early on they got instruction about the time. So now let's unpack it where he did tell the church what he was talking about. Namely, let's go to, you don't have to go there, you can just listen if you want.

But I'm at 1 Thessalonians 5. And in verse 2 he says, you yourselves are fully aware. You're aware. Every Christian knows these things.

You're fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. The second coming of Jesus is going to come like a thief in the night. It's going to catch lots of people off guard.

So he says to them, you know the time. We've told you about this, but it's not going to catch you off guard. It's only a thief in the night to the night dwellers.

So let's read verse 4 following. I'll read it, you listen. This is 1 Thessalonians 5. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

You're all children of light, children of day. We're not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep as others.

You can hear the connections with chapter 13 of Romans. But let us be awake and sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night.

And those who get drunk, get drunk at night. There's another connection with chapter 13. Verse 8. But since we belong to the day, this day that's dawning, it's coming, it's here.

We belong to the day. Let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love. And for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

That's what Paul's talking about by the armor of light in chapter 13 of Romans. Verse 9. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, when he says, you know the time, he means not just negatively.

You know this is something not to be conformed to. It's full of sin, it's full of pain, it's full of misery, it's full of death. That's true.

That's true. But he's saying here, it's so much more. The day in which you live.

You are not in darkness. The age in which you live is very dark. Sinful, miserable, death, disease.

That's not the main reality for you, Christian. That is not the main reality for you, Christian. Even if you lose your child, that is not the main reality for you.

I'm really tempted here to jump to verse 14. The day has come. The light has come.

Christ has come. The Messiah has come. He has brought the new dawn.

The age to come is here. The kingdom is here. He takes these words in verse 12.

Put on the armor of light. Put on the armor of light. And look what he does with those words in verse 14.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm really eager to preach on that. Which I'm not going to do tonight.

But it does encourage me because it is a way of Paul's underlining what I tried to say last time. Justified by faith. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit by faith alone.

Clothed with Christ's righteousness by faith alone. So now we go to the law? No, we go to Christ. Romans 7.4. Here it is again.

Put him on. Put him on. Put on his righteousness.

Put on his fellowship. Put on his power. Put on his protection.

Put him on so that you walk with him as closely as you do with your shirt. Every day. You know how sad it is that people have a notion of salvation that you receive Christ once.

Now I'm saved. And then you live your life, what, with the law? Or with some other technique? No. Every day you put him on.

You put him on. You get up in the morning and say, Christ ride with me on my shoulder into this day. I'm starting to preach the next sermon.

I've got to stop. What is the time? What is the time? It is the overlap between this sinful age and the coming of the age of righteousness. We live in here.

The overlap between the age of sin and the age of righteousness. It's the overlap. We live in the overlap between this age and the kingdom of God.

We live in the overlap between this mortal life and eternal life. Eternal life is not just something out there. It's broken in and we live in here.

We're mortal but we're eternal. We're mortal and we're eternal. Those are the tensions in which we live.

We're justified and yet we're sinners. We're miserable and healing sometimes comes for barren wounds. That's the time.

That's the time. 1 Corinthians 10-11 The Old Testament events were written down for our instruction upon whom the end of the ages has come. The end of the ages came with Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5-17 If anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old has passed away. The new has come.

The new creation has dawned. It's going to be a new heavens and a new earth. It has come.

Colossians 1-13 God delivered us from the domain of darkness. He did it. We're delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred us now into the kingdom of His beloved Son.

So take those three. The new age has dawned. The new creation has dawned.

The kingdom of the beloved Son has dawned because the Messiah has come. The King has come. The life bringer has come.

Christ, when He came, all the future came with Him in measure. We live in these tortured days of tension between the already and the not yet. Jesus said it this way.

Mark 1-15 The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. The time is fulfilled.

Now, in Jesus, the time is fulfilled. In other words, when Christ came in the fullness of time Galatians 4-4 The age to come arrived. The kingdom of God arrived.

The new creation arrived. Eternal life arrived. Listen to Hebrews 9-16 Christ has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

We're not putting away sin every day of our lives, every time we do the Lord's Supper. It is finished. Oh, for the Christian, the decisive events of history are past.

Glorious ones are yet to come. But the decisive ones are in the past because Jesus came and did His mighty work. Listen to Hebrews 6-5 We can taste the powers of the age to come.

Now! Taste the powers of the age to come. This is called the mystery of the kingdom. I'm sure those who were at Tom Steller's seminar heard all this before.

The mystery of the kingdom of God is that the kingdom has come without obliterating the old age. Fulfillment without consummation. And we live in the overlap.

I tell you, when I first learned that about 1969 or 1970 when that was painted for me biblically so many things in my life fell into place. Pain fell into place. Suffering.

My imperfections fell into place. Everything seemed to fall into place. There's so much positive, so much good, so much right, so much power, so much of God here and I'm so rotten.

It all just seemed to... Oh! I'm in this crazy period when the kingdom has come and it hasn't all the way come and the old age has been trumped and killed and the devil has been defeated and sin has been... There's victory over it and there I live both and. Oh, so many things fell into place. So the time is the time between the two comings of the Messiah and the overlap between the age of sin and pain and death and the age of righteousness and joy and eternal life and power.

That's the time. Now, last question. What is it about this time that becomes a motive to love? Because that's the argument.

If I understand besides this or and this at the beginning of verse 11. Oh, no one anything except to love one another because love fulfills the law and this knowing the time. The only way to understand that I think is and do this because you know the time and if you know the time you'll do it.

Won't you? And now we have to ask then well, what is it about this time that would free us, empower us, impel us to be more risk-taking and more loving and more outgoing and more self-denying and self-forgetful and just free to be a person for others. What is it? And I have three things that I see in these verses. I'm going to take them in reverse order.

Start at verse 12, 11, 1 and 2. So here we go from the back. Number one. Verse 12 at the beginning of the verse.

The night is far gone and the day is at hand. I think Paul means those words to be a tremendous word of hope to suffering Christians. The night is far gone.

It's almost over. The dawn has happened. The day is at hand.

You can see it over the horizon. It's a word of hope for Christians who hate their own sin and long to be done with sinning. It's a word of hope for Christians for whom the last enemy, death, should be thrown to the lake of fire where it will be thrown according to Revelation 20, 14.

There are couples in this church who would say, Enemy! And it is an enemy. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. It's a word of hope to people like that.

The night is far gone. The night of death. The night of sin.

The night of misery. The night of sinning. It's all far spent and the day is at hand.

To which the skeptic replies, 2,000 years is a long dawn. It is. It is a long dawn from one standpoint.

And don't you have Christians all over the Bible saying, How long? How long, O Lord? Well, we have to groan. We don't even know how to pray as we ought. We have the Holy Spirit groan.

We groan waiting, waiting, waiting for our adoption, the sons, the redemption of our bodies. Now, in this hope, in this hope we were saved. Who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, I don't see it, Lord.

I don't see it. If we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. It's long.

Just one baby is enough to make it long. A tortured marriage is enough to make it long. Disease is enough to make it long.

Loneliness is enough to make it long. It's not wrong to cry out, How long, O Lord? and plead for his coming. It's a good thing to do.

But there are two key differences between the biblical way of looking at this and the skeptical way of looking at this. Here's the first one. Jesus is the light of the world, and he has come.

The dawn has come. And when he came, it was the end of the fallen age. He defeated sin.

He overcame pain. He defeated death. He defeated Satan.

The decisive battles are over. The kingdom has come. Eternal life has come.

And Isaiah 61-3 has been, is now, and will be fulfilled, which says, The glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples, but the Lord will rise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you, and nations will come to your light, and the kings to the brightness of your rising. That's happening.

When that dawn happens, as it did in the coming of Jesus, no one doubts. No one should doubt. The day is coming.

When the light of dawn appears before the sun rises, the sun is not far away. And so the first difference is that the biblical orientation is on the already of Jesus mighty triumph, and therefore the rising of the sun at the second coming is sure. That's the first difference.

And the second difference is given to the skeptics explicitly in 2 Peter 3.8 where it says, Do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. That was spoken explicitly to people who were mocking the second coming hope. So beware of saying 2,000 years is a long dawn.

You can say it when you're hurting and you see the world hurting. That's a good way to say it because it turns into a cry, Come Lord Jesus. But if you think biblically, you'll know though it is long, it is finished.

The decisive demolition of the old age has been accomplished. And the dawn will yield light. And there will be a high noon of second coming someday.

And the second difference is God doesn't reckon time the way He does. It's been two days since Jesus left. Two days.

Now, my answer to the question is if we didn't have this hope that this evil age was conquered and the dawn is sure, we would not have the resources to love each other. I think that's His argument. If you knew the time, if you knew the sureness of the day, if you knew the fact that the rays coming over the edge were precursors of the most glorious experience you will ever have, unless you can feel the certainty of that, I think life is going to grab you and make you try to get as much kicks out of these few years as you can get.

But if you have that hope and you know this thing is passing away, what a free person, what a free person you will become. I don't need to live for money. I don't need to climb the corporate ladder.

I don't need to have the finest house or the best car or the fattest portfolio. I just want to give my life away. Jesus may show up any minute.

I want to give a good account and say, I love you when He comes and have my life back up. Here's the second thing He says about the time that I think yields love. Now we're into verse 11 at the end.

For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. That's a word of hope to those who groan at the incompleteness of your salvation. Are you among that number? I hope you are.

Every Christian should groan at the incompleteness of your salvation. And you know what I don't mean by that. I don't mean that your sins aren't forgiven.

I don't mean that your guilt isn't already removed. It is. I don't mean that you aren't justified fully and totally.

You are. I don't mean that your condemnation has not been taken away. It has because Paul is so explicit in Romans 8. There is therefore... I wonder who knows the next word.

Now! No condemnation. That's important. That tells you something about the time.

There is therefore now no condemnation. But you know, don't you, being forgiven for sin, having guilt removed, being justified, and having no condemnation is not the main thing about salvation. You know that? The whole point of being forgiven, having guilt removed, having righteousness clothed around us, having condemnation taken away, is that every barrier might be removed to see, know, love, and be with Christ.

And to stop sinning, which is the way you act when He's not very beautiful in your eyes. That's real salvation. I'm thankful for my justification and my forgiveness and my no condemnation hangs over John Piper.

The wrath has been removed from John Piper. But there's one Christ-exalting reason for being glad about that, and it isn't meeting my mother or getting my back aches taken away. It's seeing Christ forever in His presence, enjoying Him.

That's what's so good about being forgiven. And this text says to all groaning Christians, justified, groaning Christians, it's getting nearer every day. You are closer to your dream world today than you were

yesterday.

You are closer to your dream marriage than you were yesterday. You are closer to your vistas of all satisfying glory than you were yesterday. Take heart as you groan.

Every groaning day brings you closer to salvation in its completeness, namely, the glory of Jesus Christ seen and savored, satisfying your soul forever. Finally, oh, I didn't say anything about love there. I think it's obvious, but that hope, that hope in the midst of all my frustrations with my own sinning, my own losses, my own pain, that hope is the power to love.

I could give you lots of other texts about the relationship between hope unleashing love. I'd take you to Colossians 1.5, but I'm just trusting you that that's worked in your experience. That when you are a hope-filled person, you're a more loving person than when you're a depressed, discouraged, self-conscious person.

Finally, the third thing he says about this time that makes it love unleashing is the first part of verse 11. You know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. The implications of this are very big for Americans who live in the Disneyland of the world.

Paul says there's a night that's got sin in it, it's got misery in it, it's got death in it, and it's far gone. The age of love and joy and life has broken in. That hour, that night is for sleeping.

Don't sleep. If you look around, do you think people are sleeping? They're building skyscrapers. They're bringing the Discovery Shuttle back safely.

They're finding cures for West Nile disease. They're not asleep, are they? They're sound asleep. They're sleepwalking.

They're in a dream. Glitz, flash, skin, swagger, muscle, brilliance, scientific achievement, art, military might, business, industry are sleepwalking without Jesus. This is not the time to be asleep.

This is the time to wake up! Christ has come! The new age of glory and righteousness and Christ's exaltation has dawned. The sun is just about to break over the horizon and He has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wake up! Don't live in the glitz and the flash and the skin and the muscle and the prowess and the brilliance and be deceived into thinking, I'm really awake! You're asleep without Jesus.

Rather, would you not rather than sleepwalk, would you not rather awake to the reality of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and walk into His light and begin to do what you will do forever in Heaven. Serve the King of Kings with more joy, more creativity, more productivity, more satisfaction, more love than you ever dreamed imaginable. Wake up! Wake up! From the dream world and the sleepwalking of the Disneyland, which is America.

Oh, how many soporifics there are in this land. What in the world is soporific? Sleeping pills are everywhere. Watch out for them.

I close. There's a connection now with love. And this time, I don't have to use my own words to say it because here's the quote from the Apostle John.

Few things get me more excited when I see something I've just labored over for hours in the Apostle Paul and I turn and there it just lies on the face of it in John or James. And listen to this. See if this isn't the whole sermon in one John sentence.

This is 1 John 2.8. It is a new commandment that I am writing to you and we all know what that is. It's the commandment of love. It is a new commandment that I'm writing to you which is true in him and in you because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

So both Paul and John say, Oh, no man anything except to love each other knowing the time. The darkness is real. It is very painful.

But it is passing away and the true light is already shining. The Christ has come. The Kingdom has come.

The eternal life has come. Righteousness has come. Healing in measure has come.

Not fully. Oh, so many blessings have broken in. Walk in those blessings.

Don't live in the night. And don't sleepwalk in the glitzy night. So, if the darkness is passing away and if the true light is already shining and that true light is Jesus Christ the presence of the love of God then those who wake up from the dream world of unbelief and walk in the light will love each other.

You will. Let's pray. So Lord, I ask again as I have now for these many weeks that Paul's relentless engagement with the life of love to each other and love to our enemies would take deeper root at our church.

Oh God, grant, I pray that as we ponder the time in which we live the darkness is passing away. The true light is already shining. We are children of the light.

Though they slay us we will live. Oh God, grant, I pray that we would be released in the next few minutes at the end of these services to love each other. To take whatever risks love in the sanctuary means.

Not to mention the harder ones that we have to deal with later this week. Come and do this, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

We invite you to visit Desiring God online at www.DesiringGod.org There you'll find hundreds of sermons, articles, radio broadcasts and much more all available to you at no charge. Our online store carries all of Pastor John's books, audio and video resources. You can also stay up to date on what's new at Desiring God.

Again, our website is www.DesiringGod.org Or call us toll free at 1-888-346-4700 Our mailing address is Desiring God 2601 East Franklin Avenue Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406 Desiring God exists to help you make God your treasure because God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12845.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-piper/put-on-the-lord-jesus-christ-part-one/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net