

Understanding The Times

Romans 13:11-14

Pastor John Miller

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Romans 13:11-14

In verse 11, Paul says, “...knowing the time.” Paul is calling the believers in Rome, at the end of this 13th chapter in light of the day that they were living in and so much more the day that we’re living in today, “knowing the time” he was calling them to do basically three things. He wanted them to awake from their sleep, cast off the works of darkness, and (verse 14) put on the Lord Jesus Christ—three simple verbs that are actually commands. They are imperatives. He says that we are to wake up, take off, and to put on. It gives us a picture or image of getting up in the morning and taking off our pajamas or our clothes, putting on Christ, and living for Him, but it’s all in light of the present darkness and the end of times.

In Matthew 16, the Pharisees and the Sadducees came to Jesus asking for a sign from heaven. Jesus said, “A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.” What is the sign of the prophet Jonah? He goes on to say, “For as Jonas was three days and three nights...,” (A little footnote right there. I can’t resist it. Jesus believed in Jonah and that he went into a fish. If Jesus believed it—I believe it.) “...in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,” a reference to Himself, a Messianic title “Son of man,” that He would be crucified, buried, and three days later He would rise again. That would be the sign. It would be the resurrection.

In that little dialogue that Jesus had with them, He says, “You can tell the weather. If you wake up in the morning and it’s a red sky, you’ll say it’s going to be a stormy day; and in the afternoon, if the sky is red (the King James says ‘lowring’), but he says if it’s cloudy and red you know that tomorrow is going to be a beautiful day.” The sailors have a little ditty where they say, “Red sky in morning, sailor’s take warning. Red sky at night, sailor’s delight.” I’ve changed that, “Red sky in morning, surfer’s take warning. Red sky at night, surfer’s delight.” I’ve watched that for years, and it’s a true statement. They could discern the times of the weather and what’s going on—tomorrow is going to be a nice day, and today is going to be a stormy day—but He says, “You have not understood or recognized the day of your visitation. I’m the Messiah. I’m the Savior. I’m right here with you, and you haven’t noticed or recognized that. You don’t see that. You don’t understand that.” I think a lot of Christians are asleep in the sense that they don’t realize how dark it is. They don’t realize what time it is, and there’s a whole bunch of time statements in this passage—knowing the time. My question is: Do you know what time it is?

Do you realize how close it is to the coming again of Jesus Christ? He makes the statement here that our salvation is nearer, verse 11, than when we believed. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness...and let us walk without fulfilling the lusts of the flesh."

Let's look at these three commands, going back with me to verses 11-12. The first is wake up. Notice it in verse 11. "...knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand..." stop right there. Notice first of all that Paul says it's high time to wake out of sleep. Paul is talking about spiritual sleep. He's not talking to unbelievers about awakening spiritually. Sometimes the Bible uses the metaphor that unbelievers are asleep and need to be spiritually awakened. Here the Bible is using it as a believer that is spiritually asleep. Did you know a lot of Christians are sleeping? They are not awake. They aren't in tune; they are not aware of the Lord's soon coming. They don't realize how bad the world is getting, and they are apathetic, complacent, and lethargic. He's actually telling these believers, "Wake up!"

I think that it's time for us as believers to wake up to what's happening in the United States of America. We're being lulled into complacency, apathy, and carnality. It's so sad. We're like a frog that's in the pot heated up little by little until it was boiling, and when he could have jumped out and saved himself, he just sat there. Ever so slowly the moral breakdown, the moral decay, the moral corruption has taken place in the United States, and so often the church gets drawn and sucked into that. We have lower standards, and we're not living godly lives. We become like the world or the culture around us. There are many sleeping Christians today, and it's time for us to wake up. It's time for us to get to work. Satan is awake and working. He never takes a rest. He never slumbers or sleeps. He's always working, so we need to be awake and vigilant.

Secondly, I want you to notice, he says our salvation is nearer than when we believed. He's actually saying the same thing, but he's kind of saying it in a different way, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand," in other words the Lord's coming soon. "...for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." What does he mean by that at the end of verse 11? I thought we were already saved? I thought our sins were forgiven? I thought we were going to go to heaven? How is it that our salvation could be nearer than when we believed? Listen to me very carefully. The salvation he's speaking of here is glorification. It's going to heaven. It's when we're with the Lord.

I've said it a thousand times, I'll say it a thousand times and one. Again, listen very carefully, salvation has three tenses; past, present, and future. As a Christian, I have been saved—past tense. That's what we focus on mostly, "My sins are forgiven. I have eternal life. I'm going to heaven." That's what we would call justified or justification—where God declares us righteous. That's positional righteousness. I'm standing in Christ, and in Christ I'm complete. I happen to believe that is unchangeable. Once in Christ—always in Christ. Once in Christ there is now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. I have been saved period. The present tense is: I am being saved. That's what we call sanctification. That's a lifelong process of being made more holy, more righteous, or more like Jesus. Justification, past salvation, is a

work that God does instantaneously and completely. It doesn't change and it doesn't progress. Sanctification is a lifelong process—I'm always growing and becoming more like Jesus Christ. Some Christians, after salvation, have progressed further down the road in sanctification. Do you know some Christians that are just so godly, so holy, so full of the Spirit, and they are so walking in victory? You think, "I so wanna be like that," so grow in your sanctification. This is progressive, and you need to understand that.

A lot of times Christians get upset because if they stumble or fall, or they're not as good as they thought they should be or as spiritual as they'd like to be, they think they are not saved. They forget that positionally we're justified, we're righteous, we're complete—we stand in the righteousness of Christ. You can't get any more righteous. There's no more progressing in this and you need to rest in that, but you also need to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling as God works in you. You need to read your Bible, pray, respond to trials, troubles and tribulations properly. You need to serve the Lord and resist temptation. All the things of the Christian life cause you to grow in sanctification.

The third phase is glorification—future. Guess what? You're not glorified yet. If you don't believe me, go look in the mirror. But, one day when Jesus Christ comes back, we will be free from sin completely, and we will have new bodies. Is that going to be sweet or what? No more sin, no more Satan, no more sorrow, no more suffering, every tear wiped from our eyes, perfect bliss for all of eternity! I believe that what begins with grace ends in glory. When God justifies you, He sanctifies you, and then He will glorify you. I said all that to explain that when he says, "...for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed," he's talking about glorification. He's talking about that third stage of our salvation when we are with Christ, in His presence, free from sin, sickness, sadness, sorrow and death forever and ever. That salvation (and I believe even more than the people Paul wrote to when he wrote these words in Romans 13) is nearer than when we believed. If you've been a Christian for a year, you're closer than you were a year ago to going to heaven. If you've been a Christian for 30 years, you're 30 years closer; 40 years, 40 years closer to going to heaven—every day we're getting closer to heaven! Amen? We need to remember that, and I know sometimes it's hard. I know sometimes we get discouraged, Satan attacks us, and we start singing, "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen." It becomes our favorite song. We're singing the blues. Do you know what? Our salvation is nearer than when we believed. That means we are closer to heaven than ever before! If you've been a Christian a long time get excited because that day is fast approaching.

Thirdly, I want you to notice in verse 12, he says, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand," in other words it's almost going to dawn the new age, or the millennial reign of Christ, or the second coming, so it's very dark. Now, the Jewish day actually began at sunset. A Jewish day began when the sun went down, and it would get darker and darker. We use the phrase "it's always darkest before the dawn," so this is the idea. The darker the world gets, it's indication that it's darkest before the dawn. The Bible indicates the last days will be savage. They will be perilous. They'll be demonically influenced. Satan will up the ante. As we've been hearing a lot of politicians talking about "doubling down," well the devil is "doubling down" right now doing all he can to destroy Christians, to take people to hell, and to wreak havoc in this world. Satan

is alive and well on planet earth, and one of his biggest schemes is to get you to think that he does not exist. He does exist, and he's doing all he can to destroy your witness. Once you're saved, he knows he can't keep you from heaven, but he wants to keep you from having an impact for heaven and eternal things.

The first thing he says is wake up. Get awake spiritually. Don't be lethargic. Come alive to the Lord and to the Word, get excited about Jesus, and get serious about the things of God. Your salvation is nearer than when you believed, and the night is far spent and the day is at hand, so he says, "Don't let the world, the flesh, and the devil put you to sleep. It's time to wake up! Life is short, and the Lord is coming soon!"

The second thing you need to do is cast off. Again, he's speaking to believers here (the second half of verse 12 and all of verse 13), follow with me. "...let us therefore cast off the works of darkness," he's talking to Christians, "and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day," and then he specifically tells us that we should take off, "rioting and drunkenness...chambering and wantonness...strife and envy," so he tells us, in light of the times, that we need to take off. Now, when he uses the expression here, as in other places in the New Testament, "take off" he's actually referring to the idea of taking off a piece of soiled clothing or taking off a soiled garment. If you have on a dirty shirt, blouse, or dirty clothes, you take them off. As a Christian, you want to be clean. You have to remove these sins. Yes, you've been forgiven. Yes, you're being sanctified. Yes, you will be glorified, but you also have to resist the flesh, the world, and the devil. Take off these sinful things that would have you bound in these last days. He casts off the deeds of darkness. In verse 12, you are to take them off.

I want you to note, (again by way of a footnote here) he doesn't say have someone cast them out of you. When speaking to believers, he's not saying that you have a demon of lust or greed or envy or hate or pride that needs to be exorcised. I don't believe that a Christian can be demon possessed, and I know that people like to play with the word and say, "No, not demon possessed but demonized." The reality is it's the same thing. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. God is not going to live in a duplex with the devil—satan downstairs and God upstairs. Can he attack you? Yes. Can he hassle you? Yes. Can he oppress you? Yes. Can he come against you? Yes. How many will testify to that? Satan is real. Amen? You're probably saying, "Yeah. He lives at my house. He rides in my car every time I drive." Satan cannot possess you. So often throughout the church, times come and times go, and in my span of ministry I've seen it come too many times, where Christians blame their sin on demons and go to exorcist meetings. They get the demon of greed cast out of them or the demon of lust. I've heard of the demon of nicotine. Where, pray tell me, in the Bible is there a demon of nicotine? (You know, a demon smoking Marlboros or something like that—come on, give me a break!) Or the demon of alcohol, or the demon of pornography? They're not in the Bible. Satan comes with his demons and attacks you, but we need to also put off the flesh.

Paul breaks it down for us. This is really a radical picture, and he's talking again to Christians.

Of course, he's writing to Christians who lived in Rome, and the Greco-Roman culture was decadent. We think we're being progressive today because we have an LGBT focus and homosexuality as the cool, popular, acceptable thing. You can't imagine how rampant it was back in the Greco-Roman Empire. Many historians believe that a great part of the demise and destruction of the Roman empire was because of its homosexuality. That's just a fact of history, and how sad that we don't learn from history. Let me go over them for you. I want you to look at them. They're actually put into three groups of double sins. They're grouped together in doubles three times.

The first is rioting (in my King James Bible) and drunkenness. A better translation, literally, and trust me you can do your own homework, the word "rioting" is orgies. He's saying orgies and drunkenness. He is actually saying (in some translations, I'm going to paraphrase) drunken parties and orgies. It's in the Bible, and he's talking to Christians. Now, some of you are looking at me like, "Oh, Pastor John, let's just go to the next thing right now. Let's not talk about this." A lot of times we get this idea that sexual sin is not in the church. It is in the church. It's far too common in the church, but these sins should not be named among you who are Christians. I want to say that very clear. They are unacceptable. The Bible says, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality." The Bible doesn't condemn sex in and of itself. It is actually a wonderful gift of God, but sex outside the covenant relationship of marriage is sin. It is sinful. The only place that a person can have sex is in a marriage relationship, a heterosexual marriage relationship—one man and one woman. Think about how bizarre that sounds in our culture today. I mean, if I were to say that on the Oprah Winfrey show, they would crucify me on the spot! It just seems so bizarre today. It's so contrary to our pluralistic, relativistic culture around us. That's what God says. I believe God. I believe His Word. I believe the Bible is black and white, and I think it's very clear. It's not because God is a cosmic killjoy; He doesn't want you to have fun. He wants us to have fun. Once you become a believer, you don't want to be hanging out in these kind of sexually immoral parties, so "put off empty and harmful pleasures" would be a great paraphrase.

Here's the second—buckle your seat belts. My King James Bible has "chambering and wantonness." You can do your own homework. That King James word "chambering" translated, do you know what that word means? The word "chambering" was used for a bed chamber. It was used for where your bed was, so again it is clear that he is referring to sexual sins—sins committed in the bed chamber. "Wantonness" is the phrase in the King James that he is using there—chambering and wantonness. The word "wantonness" means that you feel no shame. It's sexual immorality and debauchery. How many people's lives have been destroyed because they have not practiced restraint in their sexual behavior or are yielded to the Holy Spirit and followed God's guidelines for purity. This would include pornography, adultery, and homosexuality. These sexual sins are to be put aside.

There is one more group of two sins named to put off in verse 13—strife and envy. It's dissension and jealousy. He goes from sexual sin to attitude sins. He goes to dissension and jealousy. These are Christians who can't get along with anyone. They are always arguing, fighting, and they're jealous. They are trying to compete with and outdo one another in the

church. You say, "John, do Christians do that?" Yes, they do, but we're to put these things off. Remember in John 11 when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead? That awesome story where Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." When Lazarus came out of the grave, he still had grave clothes on. Do you think he wore them for about a month? Do you think he left them on? I don't think so. Jesus actually made another statement after Lazarus came out of the tomb. He said, "Loose him and let him go." Now, He had already spoken life to Lazarus, he who was dead was now alive, now he who is alive needs to be freed. That is a beautiful picture of the Christian life. We were dead in our trespasses and in our sins, and God spoke to us, quickened us, and gave us life. We became alive unto God, but a lot of Christians are still walking around in their grave clothes. They are still going to parties, visiting the bed chamber, and viewing pornography over here, or still getting drunk, jealous, envying, fighting, or they're filled with pride. By the way, sexual sin isn't the only sin in the Bible, okay. I'm just trying to preach the text.

All throughout the Bible covetousness, greed, and pride are condemned, and do you know that God looks on the heart? Do you know that even Jesus said if you lustfully long for someone you commit adultery in your heart? Jesus said if you have hatred and anger toward somebody you've murdered them? God looks at the heart, so we're all guilty tonight; but as Christians, having been forgiven and given new life, Jesus said, "Loose him and let him go." Remember in John 8 when Jesus forgave the woman caught in the act of adultery? Jesus said, "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No man, Lord." Then Jesus uttered these beautiful words to her. He said, "Neither do I condemn you." And then He said, "Go, and sin no more." Isn't it cool that Jesus said I don't condemn you, but He also added don't do it again—"Go and sin no more." He didn't say, "Be careful. Next time lock the door—don't get caught!" "Listen, Lady. I can't be doing this every week for you, okay? Be a little more discreet next time, Sister." He said, "I don't condemn you, but go and sin no more." I believe that God says the same thing to you and me when we are born again and forgiven of our sins. It's our sins that put Jesus on the cross. Why would I willingly, deliberately go back and live in that? I've been set free! I want the grave clothes off, and I want to go and I don't want to sin anymore.

In 1 John 3:3 it says that when we have the hope of the Lord's return that it's a purifying hope. We're going to be living lives that are pure. Don't let the sins of the past come creeping back into your life. You got that? Sometimes after having been delivered, after having been saved, maybe you had a problem with lying. You got saved and God changed that heart, but maybe lately you're slipping back into that. Maybe you had a problem with sexual sin and you've been free for years, but you're in danger of slipping back. You've been watching movies you shouldn't watch, hanging out with people you shouldn't hang out with, or going to parties you shouldn't hang out at and you're starting to slip back. Do you know that those sins can once again take hold of your life? It's time to wake up! It's time to take off these sinful lifestyles and behavior.

In verse 13, Paul says that our lives should be lived in honesty. "Let us walk honesty." Do you know that word "honesty" could be translated becomingly. Our lives should be becoming of a Christian or a child of God. The first step is to wake up. The second step is to cast off, and

here's the third step, verse 14, we're to put on. The Bible not only gives us the negative, what we are to take off, but it gives us the positive, what we are to put on. I would say that verse 14 is one of the greatest single texts in the whole Bible for holiness, for living a holy life. He says, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

I want you to note three things that we're supposed to do, and they are linked together. First, we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, again, you say, "Well, Pastor John, what do you mean put on Jesus Christ? I thought we put on Christ when we were born again. I thought we put on the Lord when we're saved." Yes, we did. Well then, what does he mean by put on the Lord Jesus Christ? He means put on the Lord in the sense of think like Him, live like Him, walk like Him, depend on Him, rely upon Him, lean hard upon Him. He means that you've been justified, past tense of salvation, now be ye sanctified. You're saved and kept by God's grace, but grace is not a license to sin.

Christians have a tendency to live in one of two extremes. Either they live in license or liberty, (they are called the Libertines—they just live like anyone else) or over here they become legalistic and have a set of rules and regulations of how to be a good person or a holy person. In the middle is the life of the Spirit, where the Holy Spirit takes control of our minds, our hearts and our lives, and we hide God's Word in our lives. A Spirit-filled Christian is a Word-filled Christian, and we're walking in the Spirit relying upon Christ. All of those are the same concept of put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. You have to take off the things of the old nature and old life, and then you put on the mind of Christ. Even though you've been born again, you need to grow in likeness to Jesus.

By the way, that sanctified progressional period of Christian life, do you know what the goal is? Do you know what God is trying to do with you? He's trying to make you more like Jesus Christ. He's putting you through trials because He's knocking off the rough edges. Those of us that have a long way to go, He's got to do a lot of work on us. We should have a little sign around our neck: Be patient with me, I'm under construction. Jesus is still working on me. That's the goal of sanctification—likeness to Jesus Christ. When he says, "...put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," the image of taking off and putting on clothing is symbolic of putting on our thoughts and our behavior. I love Philippians 2, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." In Colossians 3:10, it says, "...put on the new man." We put on the Lord Jesus Christ by drawing on His strength and aligning our thoughts with His, yielding to His will, and surrendering to His Holy Spirit. We put on His power, His presence, His purpose, His pattern and the priorities of Jesus for our lives. We're filled with the Holy Spirit.

Notice the second thing we need to do when we put on. We need to put on the armour of light. For this, I want to go back. I intentionally skipped it to come back to it in verse 12, "...let us put on the armour of light." I would include that down in verse 14 with what we need to put on. We need to put on the armour of light. It's another way of saying the same thing—put ye on Christ. Have you read Ephesians 6 where the Bible says that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places? Then he tells us

that we have to put on the whole armour of God that we can stand and the seven items mentioned, listen to them. Put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, sandals of peace, take up the shield of faith, put on the helmet of salvation, take the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—and then, (I believe it should be included in the armour, that's why I said seven) praying always with all prayer and supplication and watching in the Holy Spirit.

Do you know if you put on the whole armour but you don't pray it's not going to do you any good? Actually, do you know how you put the armour on? You put it on by prayer. You put your belt on by prayer. You put your shield of faith on by prayer. You take the helmet of salvation by prayer. You take up the sword of the Spirit in prayer. You pray. When you're going to fight the devil, you fight him on your knees. That's the best advice I could give you. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Resist him on your knees. Resist him in prayer. Don't try to box with the devil, he'll beat you up. Get on your knees and pray. Do you know when the devil knocks on the door? I let Jesus answer the door. I just send Jesus, "Jesus, can you answer the door? Satan's knocking right now." Let the Lord deal with him. Get behind the Lord. Put on the Lord. Put on the mind of Christ.

Then notice, thirdly, under this point of putting on, verse 14. "...and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, that's the positive; and then he comes back again to the negative, "and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." This is how the New Living Translation renders verse 14. "Don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires." In other words, don't sit around thinking about, "Hmmm, how can I sin this weekend? What movie could I watch to really get me amped up to really do some wicked things this weekend?" Don't make provision for the flesh. I think in a lot of ways we sin because we choose to. You might be going somewhere on a weekend, and you know that going there you're going to be tempted. You know there's a good chance that you're going to say, "I'm going there anyway (evil laugh)!" You can make a decision. You can say, "I'm not going to go there. I'm not going to spend the weekend in Vegas by myself." "I'm not going to go to lunch with this lady from work." "I'm not going to hang out with this person." "I'm not going to go to this party because I know that if I do, I'll fall into sin."

This just popped into my mind as an illustration. When I got saved, I got saved in 1971. I was in San Bernardino, but all my friends moved to Encinitas. That's where we were all going. We were all going to live in Encinitas. We were all going to surf. We were going to make surfboards. That was where I was going, and then I went and got saved. I knew if I moved with all my buddies to Encinitas that I would start doing the same things I used to do—we'd be smoking pot, taking drugs, partying and surfing. I actually made a decision. I made a decision. It was hard! I made a decision—I'm going to stay in San Bernardino. Now, if you're a 19-year-old surfer and you lived in San Bernardino would you not want to go to Encinitas, California? Yes, I would, but I knew that I wasn't strong enough, that I wouldn't be able to handle it. I knew that I'd get sucked right down to the same kind of lifestyle that I was once living in—right down to that same pit! Several of the guys that I would've been living with went to prison for selling drugs. They don't live in Encinitas anymore, they live in Sing Sing—if that's even a prison anymore. I don't know. But, you make a decision! Don't make provision for the flesh to fulfill

the lusts thereof.

J.B. Phillips renders this, "Give no chances to the flesh to have its fling!" Don't give the flesh an opportunity to have its fling, and you know that most sinful behavior results from our thoughts being lustful and wrong in our desires and attitudes.

Sow a thought, and you reap an act;

Sow an act, and you reap a habit;

Sow a habit, and you reap a character;

Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.

Jesus said, "If your right hand offends you....," what should you do with it? Cut it off—not literally, okay? We'd all be stumps. We couldn't raise our hands to the Lord—none of us would have any left! We'd be cutting them off all the time. We'd all be gone a long time ago. He is saying take very seriously sin in your life. If your right hand offends you, get radical! Get radical! "Well, I don't want to offend that person. I don't want to be mean to them." Be mean to them. Tell them, "Look, I can't hang with you anymore." Cut off that right hand! If your eye offends you, pluck it out! Don't look at things that you know are going to cause you to sin. Jesus is telling us to take sin very seriously, and He gave us a reason. He said, "Because it's better for you to go through life "halt" or maimed. It's better for you to live in San Bernardino than to move to Encinitas and go to hell. That's a fair paraphrase of that. Better for you to go through life "halt" or maimed than to be cast whole into hell. Such good advice! A lot of times as Christians, we're not getting serious about sin. We're not taking serious the sins of the flesh.

Do you know that verse 14 is famous in church history in that it was used by the Holy Spirit to convert a man by the name of Augustine. Augustine became known as St. Augustine, and he's written his famous Confessions. St. Augustine was a very sinful, wicked man. He was an intellectual; he had an amazing mind. But, he lived in perverted wanton sexual sin, drunkenness and partying. He was just really in the Greek culture, but one day he was sitting in a courtyard, and on the other side of the wall there was a child saying a little Nursery rhyme or poem over and over, "take up and read, take up and read, take up and read." He heard these words and looked, and there was actually a Bible sitting next to him. He took it up, and it was Romans 13. As he opened Romans, his eyes fell on verse 14. He read the words, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." These are his own words taken from his Confessions, "No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended, - by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart, - all the gloom of doubt vanished away." His life was changed and transformed from verse 14—one verse! The Holy Spirit took that one verse and convicted him.

Now, if God can do that for Augustine, make him into St. Augustine, God can do that for you and me tonight. I believe the Word of God is alive and powerful, and God speaks through what He has spoken, so there's three things we need to do, in closing, again a reminder: Wake up, cast

off, and put on. Do you want to know why? Because Jesus Christ is coming soon. Amen?
He's coming soon. Let's pray.