

Leader's Guide

LESSON 24

Dr. Jerry Nelson

In response to the sermon on March 2nd.

Romans 13:11-14 Wake Up!

Key Points

In this passage we again turn our focus from the horizontal to the vertical, from the temporal to the eternal. This life isn't all there is. As believers, what do we have to look forward to, and how does that affect our attitudes and actions here on earth?

According to this passage, we eagerly await:

- The time of salvation
- Christ's second coming
- The end of the present age of evil

We eagerly (or not so eagerly) participate in:

- A change of attire

There is something within each one of us that looks forward to the day of Christ's return. We long to see an end to sin and suffering, to experience the joy of our full inheritance, to see Jesus face to face. But that day feels like a long way off. What are our thoughts and attitudes in the meantime? Do we live "just holding on?" Are we sleeping? Are we still holding on to the deeds of darkness? Are we living in light of his eminent return? Whatever our "inner" thoughts may be, they become "outerwear" in our words and actions.

The clothing mentioned here is important, for it is an outward reflection of our inner transformation. According to the scriptures, the imagery of what God wears and what we wear abounds. Our challenge is to be clothed with Jesus Christ—to both desire and will to live in the light, rather than thinking and acting upon thoughts of sin and darkness.

Personal Reflection

- As you prepare this week, we encourage you to look up the following verses:
Job 8:22; 29:14; 40:10; Psalm; 35:26; 45:3; 73:6; 104:1–2; 109:29 vv. 18–19 132:9, 16, 18; Proverbs 31:25; Isaiah 59:17; 61:3, 10; Ezekiel 7:27; 26:16; 31:15; Zechariah 6:13; Luke 24:19; 1 Corinthians 15:53–54; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5. NIV Study Bible
- These verses remind us of the characteristics that we can “wear”: characteristics of the consequences of sin, of a redeemed life, and characteristics of God himself. What are you wrapped in today? What does God wrap himself in? As we meditate on God’s holiness and righteousness, of the ways and means he uses to redeem us to wrap us in the righteousness of Christ, our heart’s response is worship! Take time to thank him for who he is and the great ways he has changed your inner thoughts, and freed you from wearing ill-fitting garments.
- This week’s discussion could easily center on our eschatological beliefs regarding the second coming of Christ, and quickly degenerate into differing millennial views. Timing is not the point of this passage—our attitudes are. Does the eminent return of Christ give us a sense of urgency? Does that urgency impact the way we live? What is our preference: deeds of darkness, or armor of light? It will be important to get to heart-attitudes and barriers that keep us from following and obeying the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions

1. What is it about “the present time” that will encourage us to holy living? (*We live in the now but not yet of the overlap of the present age and the age to come. We know that Jesus has come and he is coming again.*)
2. “Night/darkness” and “day/light” are metaphors to describe what realities? (*“Conformity to the pattern of this world” and “transformed by the renewing of your mind” of Romans 12:1-2.*)
3. What does spiritual “slumbering” look like in a Christian?
4. What impact does Christ’s imminent return have on our lives now?
5. What changes could/should we make if we lived with a greater sense of the imminency of Christ’s return?
6. How does one just “put aside the deeds of darkness?” (*The greater our love for God, the greater our hatred toward sin.*)
7. How do the phrases “put on the armor of light” of verse 12 and “clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” of verse 14 explain each other? What does this mean for us in the way we think and live today? (*Our clothing/preparation (12), our behavior (13) and our preoccupations (14).*)