

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Part 1**

Scripture: Romans 13:11-12

Code: 45-106

Well, let's look to the Scriptures as we open God's Word to Romans chapter 13. Romans chapter 13 verses 11 through 14, I want to read the text so that you'll have it in mind and then we'll begin to look into its great truth, Romans 13 beginning at verse 11:

"And do this knowing the time that now is the hour to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer 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 put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in immorality and shamelessness, not in strife and envyings, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts."

Now this text contains one of the most practical, one of the most direct exhortations in all of Scripture and that is found in verse 14, the first half of the verse, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." That is really what a Christian is to be, one is who is cloaked, who is clothed, who is garmented with the character, the disposition, the attitude, the habits and the virtues of Jesus Christ.

When there was a search among unbelievers for a title even for those who followed Christ, the title chosen was "Christians, little Christs." That's still true. We are to put on Jesus Christ. That's what Christian means. Even the ancient rabbis used to talk about the true worshiper of God putting on the cloak of the Shekinah. In other words, becoming like the one he worshiped.

Now this whole concept of putting on Jesus Christ is so rich that we need to begin in verse 14 and then back up because we need to have the concept in mind and then we'll see the other verses and how they relate to that. But the heart of Paul's exhortation is here in verse 14. In fact, I would like to suggest to you that you maybe put a little asterisk by it because I really think it's the heart of the whole exhortation from chapter 12 verse 1 to the end of chapter 16. I think it's the essence of all the exhortation that Paul says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ. I mean, you really cannot say any more than say to believers, be like Jesus Christ, can you? That's the supreme exhortation.

Now the practical teaching given to the early Christians was very heavily engaged in vivid imagery. As our Lord, of course, taught in parables, so the Apostles used analogies and images to express their teaching. And one of the most vivid and continuous images that was used in teaching in the New Testament and in the early church was this idea of putting on a garment...being clothed with

something, taking something off and putting something on. It appears in many many New Testament passages. And it encompasses justification, that is salvation, as well as sanctification, that is spiritual growth. But the idea of putting on is an oft-repeated picture. Just as an individual puts on garments, he is to put on Jesus Christ.

Now as I said, this imagery is used in reference to justification or salvation and also in the reference to sanctification or spiritual development. And I want to just point that out because I think it's a very good place to start.

Turn with me for a moment to Colossians chapter 3 verses 9 and 10 and we're going to get a little lesson in theology as we go along here. In Colossians 3:9 Paul has been telling the Colossians that they are to put off certain things. Verse 8 says put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth, lie not one to another. Again you see the same imagery, don't you, put off this garment, put on this one. But what he says is put this off and then verse 9, "Since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man that is continually being renewed in knowledge."

Now there's a past tense reference to a time, a point in time when a believer puts off the old man and puts on the new man. And that is a reference to salvation so that Paul sees a very vivid picture in salvation. It is like throwing off an old cloak and putting on a brand new one, so you are clothed in an entirely new way from head to foot. Now there the past tense reference in Colossians 3 views the salvation work.

Now I want you to go back to Ephesians chapter 4 for a moment and verse 22. And here we have a similar use of this same image. Verse 22 says that you have put off concerning the former manner of life the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind so that you have put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. And again the imagery here is that at salvation you have put off the old man, just like in Colossians, and you have put on the new man. Therefore, verse 25 says, you want to put away this and put away that and so forth.

Look at Galatians, backing up even further in the epistles of Paul, Galatians chapter 3 and verse 27. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ," that's salvation, placed into Christ, baptized not in the sense of water, this is a dry verse, but using the word "baptized," using the word "baptized" in the sense of placing into, placing into...we even use it that way. Boy, he had his baptism of fire, or whatever. We don't necessarily mean it was real fire, he was placed into a difficult situation. We were placed into Christ at salvation. So he says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have...what?...have what?...put on Christ."

So there again is a reference to this same image in reference to putting on Christ at salvation. Each of those three passages then refers to the putting on of righteousness, the putting on of Christ's likeness, the putting on of a new creation, the putting on of a new man created unto holiness which occurs at salvation. That is the initial putting on the righteousness of Christ in justification. When you became a Christian in a sense then, and this is so important, you did put on Christ. That's right what it says in Galatians 3:27, you have put on Christ.

Now it's important that we make this distinction or we're not going to understand what Romans 13 means when it says to Christians "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." How can you say put on Christ in Romans 13:14 when in Galatians 3:27 you say if you're already in Christ you have put on Christ? Must be two different things..and it is.

So, first of all, at salvation we put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of taking on His righteousness...taking on His holiness. In Romans 3:22 we read, very simple, "The righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." In other words, when you believe the righteousness of God which is in Christ is placed on you. In Romans 4:5, "But to him that works not," that is you don't attain salvation by works, "to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." There again saving faith results in a cloak of righteousness.

Chapter 5 verse 17, and there are other verses, I'm just selecting some, "For by one man...if by one man's offense death reigned by one," that is by Adam's one sin all men fell, "much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ." As we received the cloak of sin in Adam, so we received the cloak of righteousness in Christ.

Chapter 6, the very same thing. Starting in verse 1 he talks about the fact that we don't sin because we know God will forgive it. Then in verse 3, "Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized," and again that's a dry verse, placed into Christ, "were placed into His death, we were buried with Him by baptism into His death and as He was raised from the dead so we will be raised to walk in newness of life." Why? Because we were planted in the likeness of His death, we'll be in the likeness of His resurrection and we know therefore that the old man is crucified with Him, the body of sin is destroyed, henceforth we are not the slaves of sin, we are freed from sin because if we're dead with Christ we believe we also are alive with Him. And so what's happened is the old has died and there is a new creation, a new creation.

Paul writing to the Corinthians says, "If any man be in Christ he is a...what?...new creation, old things have passed away, all things have become new." In that same chapter, chapter 5 of 2 Corinthians, verse 21, "He hath made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might be made...what?...the righteousness of God." So when you come to Christ you are garmented in the righteousness of Christ.

Now one other illustration of that is in Matthew 22, would you look at that for a moment? In Matthew 22 in verse 11 we have a picture of a marriage feast that God is giving for His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. People are invited to come to the marriage feast. And the King comes in to see the guests who are there and He sees a man, verse 11, who doesn't have on a wedding garment. He is not properly clothed. And He said to him, "Friend," actually it means fellow, it's not a word of any kind of intimacy or infinity at all, "Fellow, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment? And he had nothing to say, he was speechless. And the King said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, take him away, throw him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Now what is this saying? That you can't crash the Kingdom without the proper robe. You can't get in unless you have the garment. And what's the garment? You know what the garment is? It's what? It's righteousness. And that's Isaiah 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

And so, when you came to Christ you put on Christ in the sense that you put on His righteousness, you put on His holiness, you put on His nature. And God sees you as righteous in Jesus Christ. It's a beautiful beautiful picture. And you will notice, won't you, from the parable on, even through the Pauline epistles, this imagery of putting on a garment as emblematic of putting on the righteousness of Christ. So when you became a believer you did that...and the best word to use is in a positional sense. You did that before God and God sees you in Christ. We receive then a declared righteousness. The old theologians used to call it a forensic righteousness. It is a declared righteousness. Inherent in it is also a real righteousness because in 2 Peter 1:3 it says we have received or become partakers of the divine nature. So God sees us as righteous and we have a new capacity to really be righteous.

So when you read then in Ephesians or Colossians or Galatians about the fact that you already have put on Christ, you already have put off the old man put on the new man, you already have put off the old man with its sin and put on the new man with its holiness, that means in salvation that in fact is what happened. God sees you as holy in Christ. And there is a new capacity.

But that brings us to the second dimension. Putting on Jesus Christ also is an exhortation given to believers. How can you say to a believer who has already put on Christ, put on Christ? Very simply. What he is saying is this has happened to you positionally, let it happen to you practically. I used to think of it in terms of an athlete who puts on the uniform of a great team. It's one thing to wear the uniform and be on the team, it's something else to play up to the reputation of the team. So act like it. Or I think of it in the terms of someone who is given a responsibility to be a judge and he puts on the robe of a judge, it's one thing to wear the robe of a judge and be in a position of a judge, it's something else to act as a judge ought to act, right? It's one thing to be a teacher and something else

to act as a teacher ought to act. It's one thing to be a preacher, it's something else to act as a preacher ought to act. And may I suggest to you it's one thing to possess the personal gift of the righteousness of Jesus Christ and it's quite something else to live up to that.

So as I've said through the years, you know what the Christian life is all about? You know what spiritual growth is all about? It's all about becoming what you are, becoming in practice what you are in...what?...position. And that's the objective of our growth.

That takes us then to the idea that even though we have put off an old man and put on a new man, we still have to keep doing that. And so the picture of this taking off and putting on fits the believer just as well. For example, let's go back to Colossians chapter 3 and let's look at it from that angle and we'll find both of those aspects included here. He says in verse 9, "Since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and," verse 10, "have put on the new man..." You say, "Well, doesn't that end the issue?" No, you back up to verse 8. He says, "Now, put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, dirty talk out of your mouth and lying." Wait a minute. He goes right on to say, "Since you have put off the old man with his deeds, put off these things." So he's making a very clear contradiction in terms...unless he has two different things in mind and he does. You have put them off in position, put them off in practice. When the Lord sees you He sees you as righteous in Jesus Christ. But when you see yourself you know you're not all God sees you to be in that sense. And so since you have put off the old man before God, since you have a new capacity for righteousness, then continue to put off those things.

Look at verse 12. "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, patience, forbearing one another, forgiving one another," and so forth and so on. "And above all things," verse 14, "put on love which binds everything perfectly together." So here he is saying to people on the one hand, you put off this and you put on this, now put off this and put on this. One is positional and the other is practical.

Now go to the sixth chapter of Ephesians, backing up again to Ephesians. And we read earlier in chapter 4 that we have put off the old man, we have put on the new man, but here's another of the same kind of thing in verse 11, Ephesians 6, "Put on the whole armor of God." And here's another picture of the Christian who has put on the righteousness of Christ in a positional sense before God, but still needs to put on the practical armor that's going to make him be what God wants him to be.

And then to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, 1 Thessalonians chapter 5...we'll come back to this later if we have time...verse 8, "But let us...1 Thessalonians 5:8...who are of the day...that is who are believers...be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and for an helmet the hope of salvation." And again it's the same idea. He's talking to Christians. You Christians who are of the day, not the darkness but the day, put on these things. So on the one hand we have put them on, on the other hand we have to put them on. So there is an indicative and an imperative. There is something

that is true about us and something that ought to be true about us. There is something that has happened and something that must happen. And that's what he's saying.

So, in Colossians...pardon me, in Romans...we go back now to 13, in Romans chapter 13 verse 14 when he says "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ," he is not calling for salvation, he is calling for sanctification. He is calling for the believer to be in practice what he is in in position. I mean, we know he's talking to believers, that's the whole essence of this exhortative portion. And in verse 3 he says, "Let us...let us." He knows who he's speaking to and he's speaking here to those who have in position put on Christ and need to do so in practice.

Then he looks at the same basic command from the backside. Look at verse 14 again. And he says, "And do not provide, or make provision, to fulfill the lusts of the flesh." That's the backside of it. On the one hand, put on Christ. The backside of that is don't make provision for the lusts of the flesh. Obviously the two go together. If you put on Christ, you won't do that. If you do that, you'll put on Christ. Christ and sinning in the flesh are mutually exclusive, right?

Now the word "provision" is a fascinating word. May I just draw it to your attention for a minute? The word means forethought, or thought in advance. It has the idea of planning something, the idea of setting your plans for the purpose of fulfilling your desires that are evil. Don't plan to sin, he says. Don't make your plans to sin. And may I suggest to you that that is precisely what a sinful person does? Plans out, maps out, strategizes, conceives his sin. Before he sins he conceives the sin. And the sin conceived in the mind is attracted to the lusts and therefore the sin is played out in the action.

In Psalm 36, "The transgression of the wicked says within my heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes, he flatters himself in his own eyes until his iniquity is found to be hateful, the words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit, he has ceased to be wise and do good." Here it comes, verse 4, "He devises mischief upon his bed. He sets himself in a way that is not good." Psalm 36:4, that's right. He plans it and he sets himself in the track that he has planned and he pursues the sin on the track that he's devised in his own mind. What the Lord is saying through the Holy Spirit in the Apostle Paul is don't plan your sinning. There are those times when we're caught in a paraptomas, Paul calls it in Galatians, where we're tripped up inadvertently. Those things are going to happen. But we will not do anything in our own thinking if we're going to put on Jesus Christ to plan for that to happen.

In Psalm 52 the psalmist says, "Why are you boasting yourself in mischief, almighty man?" Verse 2, "Your tongue devises mischief." Verse 3, "You love evil more than good and lying rather to speak righteousness." You devise mischief because you love it.

In Proverbs 6 there's another word from the Old Testament that speaks directly to this issue, Proverbs 6...I think it's verse 12 where we ought to start, yes..."A worthless person, a wicked man walks with a perverse mouth, he winks with his eyes," in other words, he tells you one thing and winks

at somebody else meaning he's lying, he's deceitful. "He speaks with his feet." What does that mean? He says, "Oh sure, I'll do that," but he kicks the guy next to him to let him know he's not really telling the truth. "Perversity he teaches with his fingers," he plays all kinds of games. "Perversity is in his heart. He devises mischief continually, he sows discord." Verse 16, "These six things does the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination to Him, a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood...here it comes...a heart that plans wicked imagination and feet that are swift in running to mischief." That's characteristic of a person who engages in sin, they plan it out, they map it out, they strategize it and then they follow the track that their strategy has laid. In Proverbs 24 verse 8, "He that devises to do evil shall be called a mischievous person."

So what is he saying? There's no place for evil planning, no place for evil devisings, no place for evil strategy if you're going to put on Jesus Christ. And can I take it just a bit further? He also says in this verse, "Make...and make, literally, no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts." He identifies that the problem lies in one area of our being...what is it? Make no provision for the...what?...the flesh. And do I need to remind you from our series on Romans 7 of what the flesh is? That's your humanness. The flesh is that part of you that is still bent on sin. It has a proclivity to do evil. It is your humanness. And it is in your flesh, and that's not just your physical body, that's your humanness, it covers your thinking, your mind, your emotions. Yes you have in you a new creation, yes you have in you a new nature, you have in you a new man, as it were, but that new man is encased in your humanness. Until our humanness is transformed, the redemption of the body of Romans 8:23, we're still going to have a problem, aren't we? And the problem is in our flesh...our humanness. That's why in Romans 7 Paul says the things I want to do deep down in my heart, the things my new nature wants to do are restrained and restricted and retarded by my flesh...he uses that very term. And so he even says it is not I but it is sin that is in me, that is in my flesh, Romans 7.

So the flesh is our humanness. In Romans 6 he calls it our members, our bodily parts. So the point that he's making is that we do make no provision, we make no plans to pander to the lusts of our humanness if we're committed to putting on Jesus Christ. So you can look at it both ways, put on the Lord Jesus Christ is positive and don't make provision for the flesh is negative.

You say, "How do you deal with the flesh?" Well Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9 verses 25 to 27, "I beat my body into submission," didn't he? I mean, I have to stay on top and control it or the flesh will run away.

Now let me suggest to you that to feel lust or to feel a desire to sin is evidence of the presence of sin in us. To fulfill that desire is evidence of the power of sin over us. And as long as we are in our mortal bodies and in our flesh we will feel the presence of sin in us. But at no time do we need to yield to the power of sin over us by virtue of the provision of Christ in the power of the Spirit of God.

So putting on Jesus Christ is absolutely essential. I mean, frankly, folks, that is THE essential part of all practical Christian living right there. Put on Christ...put on Christ. Just a marvelous thought. And I want to develop that thought. And I'm not worried about how far I get cause you'll be here next week, so will I by God's grace.

First Corinthians chapter 1, and I want to just develop that thought, 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 30, just a beautiful statement, "But of Him are you in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." Oh, wonderful thought. Wisdom that leads to righteousness that leads to sanctification that ultimately leads to our full and final...what?...redemption. Christ is all that to us. So we put on Christ as our righteousness. We put on Christ as our sanctification. And some day we will actually put on Christ in our new glorified body and we will be like Him, right? Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ is what it's all about. You put on the Lord Jesus Christ when you're saved. You put on the Lord Jesus Christ as you're sanctified. And you put on the Lord Jesus Christ as you're ultimately glorified because you become like Him.

Look at Colossians chapter 2 verse 6 for a similar thought...similar thought. And this brings together some of the things we've said already. Verse 6 of Colossians 2, "As you have past tense as you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, you've put Him on, so...what?...walk in Him." And that's what we've been saying, isn't it? If this is true about you then act like it. "Rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith..."

Look at 1 John chapter 2 verse 6, it says this, "He that sayeth he abideth in Him," you say you abide in Christ, you say you've put on Christ, you say He's your garment of righteousness, "then you ought also so to walk...what?...even as He walked." If that's true about you it ought to be manifest.

Go back to Galatians chapter 3 and verse 19. In Galatians 3:19...I'm sorry, it's 4:19, I knew that wasn't right, Galatians 4:19. This is a marvelous statement, too. Paul writes, "My little children, of whom..." and he's saying by saying my little children that they're what? They're Christians, they're his children in the faith. But he says, "I travail in birth," he uses a very strong verb meaning like a woman having birth pains to bring forth a child. He says, "I'm in birth pains until Christ be formed in you." Isn't that a great statement? That should be the heart of every pastor, the heart of every disciple, the heart of every mother, the heart of every father, the heart of every husband, the heart of every wife toward the one God has given them. I have pain, I feel pain until Christ be formed in you. Yes you have put Him on in justification, but oh, my pain is that you would put Him on in sanctification. You see, we are to be stamped with the image of Christ. We say we abide in Him, we ought to walk as He walked. We say we're His children, He ought to be formed in us. I mean, if I'm His child, I ought to look like Him, right? There ought to be a manifest family resemblance.

He should be in us our beauty...over us our comfort, around us our defense. There are other passages and I don't want to exhaust you with them but they're so rich. Second Corinthians 3:18



needs to be drawn into this discussion. It says this, "We all with unveiled face," Moses in the Old Testament had a veil on his face, but in the New Testament the veil is taken off, we see, we see. What do we see? The glory of the Lord. And as we look at the glory of the Lord, and this is such a key thing, that's why every time I sign an autograph, every time I sign a book, I always write 2 Corinthians 3:18 under my name, always. If you've ever received anything from me that I've signed, that's what you'll always find because this verse is so monumentally important. We gaze into the glory of the Lord. And are changed into the same image from one level of glory to the next level of glory by the Spirit of the Lord.

You say, "How do you do that? How do you put on Christ? How do you become like Christ? How do you walk like Christ walked? How do you have Christ fully formed in you? How do you be rooted and built up in Him, as Colossians 2:7 says? How does Christ literally become your cloak so that the world sees you?" It is by gazing on His glory. And as you lose yourself in His glory by studying the Word and communing with Him and praying and meditating, you find that imperceptibly and you can't even see it the Spirit of God is moving you from one level of glory to the next, closer and closer to the very image of Jesus Christ. You don't have to concentrate on the Holy Spirit. You don't have to concentrate on techniques and gimmicks, just concentrate on Jesus Christ. People often ask me, "What was the key to my spiritual growth?" And I can go way back and tell you basically the great surge of spiritual growth in my life came through the first years of ministry at Grace Church when I taught the gospel of John. I spent all week long studying the gospel of John and on every page and every paragraph and every verse in the gospel of John you are confronted with the glory of Jesus Christ. And during that same period of time early in my ministry I studied the epistle to the Hebrews. And again it was the same thing. The result of all of that, there are no gimmicks and there are no short cuts, but that constant exposure to the glory of the Lord resulted in the Spirit of God without my being able to even see it, moving me from one level of glory to the next so that I would move toward Christ's likeness. I am still a long ways away but I am not where I used to be. And that's the way it is to be approached.

The true child of God will learn to lean on the power of the Word. The true child of God will learn to lean on the Holy Spirit, the Word and the Spirit. And thus as he leans on the Word and the Spirit and the glory of the Lord is revealed before Him, his deepest heart longing for holiness will be fulfilled.

Another way to put it is this. Galatians 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit and you will not...what?...fulfill the lusts of the flesh." So you can call it gazing on the glory of the Lord, if you want to use 2 Corinthians 3:18. You can call it walking in the Spirit if you want to use Galatians 5:16. It's the same idea. Or you can go to James 1:21 and you can say that it says if you receive the Word in you, it will save your lives. And you can see there it's the Word, it's the Word, it's the Spirit, it's the glory of the Lord. And as we give ourselves to the Word and obedience to the Word, therein walking in the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit simply means obeying the Scripture, that's all. As we gaze at the glory of the Lord and meditate on His glory and His person and His beauty and His wonder we find ourselves being clothed with

Christ and the lust of the flesh is crowded out and we don't make plans to meet its desires.

So, to simplify the Christian life may we suggest to you, be clothed with Christ and trample on the desires of the flesh. This is ultimately the goal of every Christian's life. All the righteous behavior Paul has called for in chapter 12, all the righteous behavior he has called for in chapter 13 whether he's talking about personal dedication in 12, whether he's talking about using your spiritual gift, or treating believers a certain way or unbelievers a certain way or your enemies a certain way, or whether he's talking about how you submit to the government or how you pay your taxes, or love fulfilling the whole law, everything he said from 12:1 to 13:10 basically comes down to this summary statement, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." He was totally dedicated to the Father, absolutely holy and not conformed to the world. He used all of His capabilities and gifts given to Him by God to the maximum. He treated every man, believer and unbeliever as they ought to be treated. He treated His enemies with love and forgiveness. He submitted to the ordinances of man. He paid His taxes and He was love supreme and love manifest. And if you want to do the whole thing, put on Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh.

And so, the Christian life in that sense is simple. It isn't complex. God is not asking us to do a whole series of things that we have to figure out, He's just saying be like Christ. And may I suggest again that that's why we're called to study the Word of God. That's why through all the years of my ministry, at some point in my ministry all the time I am teaching about the person of Jesus Christ, whether it's the gospel of John or the book of Hebrews, or the gospel of Matthew as it's been for many years on Sunday morning, because that's where the focus has to be so that we might be like Him. He is perfect righteousness. He is perfect love.

Now somebody is going to say, "How do you do that? How do you do that? How do you put on Jesus Christ?" Well he gives you three commands in the passage. Let's look at it, Romans 13. He gives you three commands. Here they are, "Wake up...throw off...and put on." Simple enough? Wake up, throw off, put on. And the scene is a military scene and the commands come with military snap and they sum up how to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, really a thrilling marvelous passage. First of all, "wake up" illustrates urgency...urgency. "Throw off" illustrates purity. And "put on" illustrates integrity...urgency, purity and integrity. And I mean, this is a powerful powerful statement.

Let's just look at least briefly, get a start on this first one, "wake up." Verse 11. "And do this, knowing the time that it is now an hour to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed, the night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, let us put on the armor of light."

Now the words in verse 11 and the beginning of verse 12, "the night is far spent, the day is at hand," express urgency. We've got to move fast. This is the time when opportunity is short, time is brief, the need for immediate action is on us, we are in a crisis situation. This is no time for complacency, this is

not time for loafing, this is no time for sleeping. The whole point here is wake up. It's almost daylight. What are you doing sleeping? Frankly, this is not just a problem for those to whom Paul wrote, this is a problem today as well. And from time to time it's a problem in all of our lives. We become very complacent. We think there's plenty of time. "Oh, I'll serve the Lord whenever I get around to it, no rush, no hurry." We talk like the apostates in 2 Peter 3:4 who said, "All things continue as they were from the beginning." Nothing ever changes. We've been here a long time. Other folks have been here a long time. Oh yeah, I hear about the coming of Christ, I hear about...it never happens, and it never happens so it never will happen. We just go along, we're not real worried about it. We're more in to making money, having fun, pursuing our career, getting comfort, possessions, a house, a new car, a boat. I mean, we're into that kind of stuff, we've got a lot of time. I mean...

So Paul says, "Look, among all these other exhortations, let me add this..." And I think what he intends to say with the *tote* there in verse 11 is "and do this...or add this to the duties I've already mentioned...to the duty of love, do this, wake up, will you? I mean, wake up." He's already told us what to do and he's even told us somewhat of the stretch of responsibility, all the way from personal dedication to how we treat the government. He's told us what to do and now he tells us when to do it and when to do it is what? Now...now. And then he tells us what to do or how to do it and that's to put on Christ. I think Phillips translated this obviously in a broad paraphrase but really captured the essence of verse 11 when he wrote, "Why all this stress on behavior? Because as I think you have realized the present time is of highest importance." That's good, that captures the essence. I mean, it's time to be a living sacrifice now, it's time to be dedicated to God, it's time to not be conformed to the world, it's time to use your spiritual gifts, it's time to be properly related to believers and non believers, it's time now to submit to the government, it's time now to pay your taxes, it's time now to start loving the way that God would have you to love, this is the time...now, no time to waste.

So notice what he says in verse 11, "Knowing the time," I mean, you know what time it is. And the word time here is not *chronos* from which we get *chronolog*, or *chronology* which means sequential time which means clock time but the word is *kairos* which means a season or an era or an epoch or an age. What he is saying is this is the season, this is the time in terms of the character of the age. The word is used often in Scripture of significant periods in redemptive history...Matthew 26:18, Mark 1:15, Romans 3:26, Revelation 1:3 and many other times. And the idea is that it means a season of great importance in the flow of redemptive history.

Now what he is saying is you believers better realize that you are living in a very vital season of redemptive history. What season is this? This is the season immediately preceding what? The return of Jesus Christ. That's a very important season to be alive...very important. And are you aware, do you know the time? Do you remember the indictment Jesus gave in Matthew 16? He was indicting the Jewish leaders and they came to Him in verse 1 and said, "We want to see a sign from heaven," they were always wanting Him to do tricks for them and entertain them. "And He answered and said to them, When it is evening you say fair weather for the sky is red. And in the morning foul weather

for the sky is red and overcast. O you hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky but can you not discern the signs of the times? You wicked adulterous generation."

You know what He says to them? He says you're great at predicting the weather but you haven't got a clue where you are on the spiritual clock. You're terrific at telling us whether it's going to rain, you just don't know what God's doing in the world...you wicked adulterous generation.

Certainly Christians don't want to be like that, do they? I mean, you know what time it is? We live as if we didn't. We live as if Christ was never going to come. We live as if we could just sleep our way right through till the dawn came and it all began and have no responsibility. We can't do that. If the ignorant wicked adulterous generation of Jews didn't know the signs of the times, it certainly shouldn't be true of us. I mean, this is it, folks, there isn't anything else. I'm not telling you Jesus is coming tomorrow, I'm not going to set a date, but I'll tell you this, it is next. And I'll tell you something else, we're 2,000 years closer to it now than they were. And there's a lot more grain in the bottom of the hour glass than there was when that was written. And there's only so much in there to begin with.

So, since you know what time it is, since you know God's kairos, God's redemptive epochs, it is an hour to wake out of sleep. Let's wake up. I mean, that seems basic. It's a call for spiritual alertness, spiritual vigilance, spiritual readiness, it's time to wake up. Now this isn't the only time Paul ever said this. I was thinking of 1 Corinthians 15, I think it's verse 34, yes...he says, "Awake to righteousness, wake up and stop sinning for some don't have the knowledge of God and I say this to your shame." I mean, do you realize that this could end soon? And there are a whole lot of people who don't have the knowledge of God, what are you doing sleeping? And he doesn't mean literally snoring, although there are some Christians who do more than that than they should...more of that than they should. What he's saying is you're not even awake to the priorities of life. And I think similarly in Ephesians 5:14, the capturing of the same idea, "Awake, thou that sleepest and rise from the dead and Christ shall give you life." It's the same idea. I mean, you better realize where we are in God's history. You better realize what the next event is, it's the imminent return of Jesus Christ and we're a lot closer to it than we've ever been before and tomorrow we'll be closer yet. And more grains will have fallen into the bottom of the hour glass, you better wake up. And there are people who know not the Lord. It is an hour to wake up.

The imagery is really very vivid. It's someone sleeping in the morning hours when it's still dark before the streaks of dawn have made their way through the eastern sky. It's time to get up. Dawn is near. And he's saying to those who love Christ wake up. I mean, it's a time for grasping of spiritual priorities. It's time to meet spiritual needs, to take spiritual opportunities. The Holy Spirit is calling for a motivated, prepared, dedicated Christobeying Christian to get up off his pillow, get out there.

I said to a young man the other day, they were asking me something about how you know when someone's called to the ministry, I said, "Well usually I know someone's called to the ministry if

they're in it and if they're not I question it."

"What do you mean?"

I said, "If they're planning to do it I wonder whether they're called. If they're in it I don't have any doubt." I mean, it's time to be in it, to wake up. I looked up Encyclopedia Britannica just out of curiosity and it defines sleep as a state of inactivity with a loss of consciousness and a decrease in responsiveness to events taking place. I think that's pretty fair. I can tell you when I'm asleep I have a decreasing consciousness to events taking place. In fact, my wife woke up for years with all of our kids and I never remember anything, you know. But there are a lot of people who are spiritual Rip Van Winkles, I mean, they'll sleep right on in to the Kingdom and you'll have to wake them up to tell them their crown is waiting. Now that's grace but that's certainly not God's purpose or intention.

I remember hearing a sermon, some of you were with me at a conference one time, and this preacher was preaching and he had basically two points...he was a wellknown black preacher and he said, "My first point is we've got to hurry." And he went on for about 25 minutes about "we've got to hurry." And my second point is, "Now that we is hurrying, where is we hurrying to?" And so he went on for another 25 minutes about "hurrying to." And I thought to myself as I thought back on that...yeah, we're hurrying and we're hurrying to but why are we hurrying? What's the hurry? Well the hurry is, it's near dawn. You say, "What happens at dawn?" Look back at verse 11 again, "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Whoa...salvation is nearer than when we believed. What does that mean? I'll tell you what it means. Does this mean we're not saved yet, we're getting there, we're working our way along? No. It doesn't mean that. It doesn't mean we're in the process of becoming Christians, this is written to believers. We know that because chapter 12 verse 1..."I beg you or beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice," we know he's talking to believers.

Well what is he talking about then? Well he couldn't be talking to nonbelievers because he couldn't say to a non believer, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed," because nonbelievers never did really believe. Our salvation is nearer must refer not to the present aspect of salvation but what? Future. There are three aspects of salvation, I'll close with this tonight, we'll pick it up...listen very carefully, this is so good, so rich, three dimensions of salvation...past, present and future. Past salvation, Ephesians 2:5 literally says in the Greek, "For by grace are you...what?" You know what the Greek says, "For by grace you are already having been saved." Yeah, there's a past tense to our salvation, I was saved when I believed, right? That's right. It's a perfect participle, you are already having been saved, it happened in the past and it continues in the present. That's justification...listen now...that is the soul's redemption from sin's penalty. That is justification which is the soul's redemption from sin's penalty.

But there's also a present salvation. You say present? Yes, yes...2 Corinthians 2:15 says, "Them that are being saved, them that are being saved." And in Romans, doesn't it give us similar indication? Verse 10 says of Romans 5, "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His life...or shall be being saved." We have been saved, we shall be being saved. So there is a past tense when we were saved. There's a continual sense when we are still being saved, still being cleansed, still being brought to glory. If the first in the past tense was justification, which is the soul's redemption from the penalty of sin, present salvation is sanctification where the soul is given the privilege of power...of freedom from the power of sin. When you were saved in the past the penalty of sin was cancelled, as you're being saved in the present, God gives you freedom from the power of sin, it no longer can dominate you unless you willfully allow it.

But there's a third dimension and that's the future dimension where we shall be saved not from the penalty only and the power but what? The presence of sin. And we'll be taken to glory and we'll receive the redemption of our bodies, Romans 8:23, that is the body's redemption that we call glorification.

Past salvation is justification, present salvation is sanctification, future salvation is glorification. Now clearly that's what Paul has in mind. It is the third tense of our salvation, the future that he sees, the salvation yet to come, the full redemption of body, soul and all that we are. This is what he has in mind. He's making his appeal, very simply, are you ready for this? This is the bottom line of the whole message. His appeal is based on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, on our glorification. It is an eschatological motive. We serve Christ. We wake up because dawn is coming and dawn represents the coming of Jesus Christ and we've got to get up and we've got to get at it because it won't be long before the morning comes. Wake up...wake up. This is a key incentive to holy living. All through the New Testament Christians are called to holy living based upon the coming of Jesus Christ.

In Philippians 4 Paul wraps up all his exhortations, all that he has to say and he says, "Let your gentleness be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand...the Lord is at hand." You've got to get your act together...the Lord is at hand.

In Hebrews chapter 10 the writer of Hebrews, the same thing, you know it verses 24 and 25, "Consider one another to provoke to love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see...what?...the daylight approaching." He uses the same imagery. You can see the day is coming, it's time to wake up.

We find it in James chapter 5 verse 7, "Be patient therefore, brethren, to the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it until he receives the early and latter rain, be you also patient, establishing your hearts for the coming of the Lord draws near. So murmur not one against another, brethren, lest you be judged. Behold the judge stands before the

door." You better get your act together, the Lord's coming, the judge is standing at the door. "Take my brethren the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction and patience. Behold we count them happy who endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, have seen the end of the Lord that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." Get your act together, patiently wait for the Lord, get sin out of your life, He'll be here soon. Always that seems to be a strong motive.

First Peter, same thing, chapter 4 verse 7, "The end of all things is at hand," in other words the Lord is coming, "therefore be sober minded, watch unto prayer and have fervent love among yourselves, show hospitality, use your gifts," and so forth and so on. The Lord is coming, the Lord is coming, the Lord is coming. Even the Apostle Paul had the sense of facing the Lord. He said, "I fought a good fight," 2 Timothy 4:7, "I finished the course, I kept the faith, so there's laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day and not to me only but also to all them that love His appearing." And in Revelation 22 John says the Lord keeps saying, "Behold, I come quickly...behold, I come quickly...behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to give to every man according as his work shall be."

In 2 Corinthians 5:10 Paul says we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the things done in the body whether they be good or worthless. And it just goes on and on and on and on. Now if Paul says to these people "wake up the dawn is coming" and we're 2,000 years later, I think we ought to wake up. And it's time for you to get your priorities right, people. Jesus is coming. We live in the light of His Second Coming. We're going to pick it up there next Lord's day, let's bow in prayer.

Father, we thank You for the hope of the coming of Christ. And it is as John says in 1 John 3, a purifying hope knowing that Jesus is coming encourages us to live as we indeed ought to live. We thank You for that encouragement, that the same Jesus who is taken up from us shall so come in like manner as we have seen Him go and therein lies the motive to be witnesses to the world, beginning in our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. May we live in the light of the Second Coming. May we know that indeed there continually day after day, hour after hour drips more sand into the bottom of the hour glass and ever comes nearer the coming of Jesus Christ. We sometimes believe we see the streaks of dawn, the dawning of the day of Christ and we would wake and be ready. Thank You for that great hope. Thank You for the confidence that if we know and love the Savior He comes for His own. Thank You also for that instruction that indicates to us that when He does come He comes to reward those who have faithfully served. And may we find that when we stand before Him it will be not having just waken from sleep and still in our night clothes, but clothed with the armor of light as a true soldier. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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