Are You Awake?
Romans 13:11-14 (NKJV)

Please turn with me to ROMANS the thirteenth chapter. And let’s read verses 11-14.

ROMANS 13:11-14 (NKJV)

11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

INTRODUCTION

When I was a sophomore at Johnson Bible College (now Johnson University) I was carrying a very heavy 19 hour classload. I was also traveling with the New Encounter, the singing group that represented the college. And on weekends when the New Encounter wasn’t traveling, I was working with the mentally handicapped from the Knoxville area, under the direction of Jim Pierson.
By Thanksgiving of that first semester I was so exhausted I could barely function. It seemed that all I wanted to do was sleep. I attributed the exhaustion to my heavy schedule; but when my condition worsened, I finally went to see a doctor in Knoxville, who ran some blood test on me.

When the results came back, the doctor informed me that I had “mono-nucleosis, also known as “sleeping sickness.” In fact, the doctor said I had the worst case of it he had ever seen. I was sleeping for 18-19 hours a day, and I could only manage to stay awake for an hour or two before needing to go back to sleep.

As it turned out I had to withdraw from school and go back home to Indiana to recover. By the following August I had regained enough strength to go back to school and eventually graduate a year later than planned.

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Sometimes I wonder if there aren’t many in today’s Churches who are suffering from “a spiritual sleeping sickness.”

*Sleeping Christians* Don’t want to change their worldly ways.......they don’t want to give up their sinful habits........or alter their lifestyle ......or change their priorities.

*Sleeping Christians* are “hearers” of the word, but not “doers.” They can sit in Church Sunday after Sunday with their eyes wide open as if they are “soaking in” the word, but there is no stirring within their heart or spirit. In fact, sleeping Christians have very little, if any appetite at all for the word of God.

*SLEEPING CHRISTIANS* are all about “outward appearances and impressions.” They can “look religious”........”talk religious”.....and even “act religious”..........but inwardly there is no joy.......no vitality.......and no evidence of a close, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

*And most of all, sleeping Christians don’t want to be awakened!* They are so “comfy and cozy” in their spiritual sleep they want to hang a “DO NOT DISTURB” sign around their necks.
Brothers and sisters, let me ask you something: Are you “spiritually awake?” or “Do you have spiritual sleeping sickness?”

This is the issue the apostle Paul addresses in today's scripture text.

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First of all, Paul tells us.............

I. **Something We Must KNOW (vs. 11-12a)**

11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

12a The night is far spent, the day is at hand.

1. In these verses Paul mentions four things every “sleeping Christian” must know.

   (A) **Sleeping Christians must know the TIME. (v.11a)**

   v.11a “And do this, knowing the time......”

   Paul is clearly expressing a sense of urgency here. To every “sleeping Christian” Paul is saying, “Do you know what time it is? Look at what's happening in the world! Look at the chaos......look at how fast things are changing......look at how fast sin and wickedness and hostility are accelerating.

   Every breath we take......every second that ticks off the clock......every day that we mark off on the calendar is bringing us closer and closer to the return of Christ and the end of the world.

   And yet there are many who sit in the Church pews every week who seem to be totally oblivious to “what time it is!” Which leads to Paul's second admonition..........
(B) **Sleeping Christians must know its “high time” to WAKE UP!** (v.11b)

v. 11b And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.”

Remember when you were a teenager how you wanted to sleep till noon on Saturdays? Do you remember your dad or mom coming into your bedroom and saying, “It’s high time you got out of bed and got some work done around here?”

When Paul says “It is now HIGH TIME to awake out of sleep” he means **WAKE UP NOW! WAKE UP RIGHT THIS INSTANT! WAKE UP IMMEDIATELY!**

Paul is turning on the lights and opening the blinds and shutting off the fan and yanking the covers off the bed! Sleeping Christians will go on sleeping as long as they are spiritually comfortable! And every day a sleeping Christian goes on sleeping, opportunities to serve and do the Lord's work are passing by!

This brings us to the third thing “sleeping Christians” need to know..................

(C) **Sleeping Christians must know that SALVATION is nearer now than when they first BELIEVED.** (v. 11c)

v.11c “for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.”

The term “salvation” here is being used in the future sense. You and I were saved on the day we gave our lives to Jesus Christ, but we will not reach our full spiritual MATURITY until that day the LORD comes to take us home.

Many of us here this morning were young when we accepted Christ. Our hair was dark instead of gray. Our skin was smooth instead of wrinkled. Every day we live we are getting older and getting nearer to our completion.
And fourthly.........

(D) Sleeping Christians must know that NIGHT is almost over and the DAY is at hand. (v.12a)

When we think of night in the literal sense we think of the period between SUNSET and SUNRISE. Spiritually and prophetically speaking, the NIGHT began when Christ ASCENDED and it will end when Christ RETURNS.

As Christians we must live as though THE DAY of Christ’s glory is already here. We must live as though we will rise to meet Jesus one solitary second from right now.

Now that Paul has told us SOMETHING WE MUST KNOW, he now tells us........

II. Something We Must DO (vs. 12b-14)

12b Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

1. When you and I get out of bed each morning, we “put off” our pajamas or the clothes we were sleeping in, and we “put on” our day-time clothes we will work in.

If you showed up for work tomorrow wearing your pajamas or your nightgown, how do you think your co-workers would react? They would think you were two fries shy of a “happy meal,” wouldn’t they? And what do you think your boss would do? He or she would probably send you home to change or they would send you home and tell you not to come back.
2. Using the “night time, day time clothing” as an analogy, Paul issues two commands to all “sleeping Christians” in these verses.

(A) We are to “PUT OFF” the clothes of DARKNESS.

v. 12b “Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness.”

In the word of God, the children of GOD are always characterized by LIGHT and the children of the devil are always characterized by DARKNESS.

A true child of GOD doesn’t wear the same clothes Satan’s kids wear. Satan’s kids wear DARK clothes, dark meaning the clothes of SIN. God's children wear LIGHT clothes, “light” meaning the clothes of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

In these verses, Paul lists SIX SINS……SIX GARMENTS OF DARKNESS every Christian needs to “PUT OFF.” Three of them are PUBLIC sins, and three are PRIVATE sins.

3 PUBLIC SINS TO “PUT OFF”

(1) We are to “put off” REVELRY. (v.13)

The Greek word for “revelry” was originally used to describe military or athletic celebrations. Because those celebrations usually turned into drunken, immoral parties, the word “revelry” came to mean “wild, all-night parties of drunkeness, drugs and sexual immorality.”

No child of GOD has any business going to these types of parties.
(2) We are to “put off” **DRUNKENESS.** (v.13)

Of course we know what “drunkeness” is. Alcohol tears down the walls of restraints leading people to engage in sinful, foolish, stupid, or even criminal behavior. Drunkeness is totally “out of bounds” to the true child of GOD.

(3) We are to “put off” **LEWDNESS.”** (v.13)

Lewdness refers to all sorts of perverted, immoral behavior, and more often than not it involves sexual immorality. Several years ago, I learned that there is a “swinger’s club” over in our area of Beaufort Co. Married couples and couples who are living together get together at these “swinger” parties and swap partners. This type of abhorrent behavior has been practiced by the most hedonistic societies throughout history. Again, no child of GOD has any business getting involved in these types of activities.

Next, Paul mentions........

**3 PRIVATE SINS TO “PUT OFF”**

(1) We need to “put off” **LUST.** (v.13)

Lust refers to unrestrained sexual desire and passion focused on an inappropriate object. I heard a Christian man say years ago, “Its OK to check out what’s on the menu as long as you don’t order anything.”

We live in a society that is obsessed with sex and where we are bombarded with “lustful” images every day from commercials and TV shows to internet pornography.
This is an area every Christian, especially every Christian man must yield to the power of the Holy Spirit and exercise self-control and restraint.

(2) **We need to “put off” STRIFE. (v.13)**

Strife is bickering......arguing......”stirring the pot” .......belly aching......and complaining. And you and I would be wise to remember that Paul puts STRIFE in the same category as IMMORAL LUSTFUL PASSIONS.

(3) **We need to “put off” ENVY. (v.13)**

Envy is jealousy towards another person’s possessions or position. Envy is an obsessive desire to get what one doesn’t have that belongs to another.

Christian, are you *wearing the clothes of darkness?* Are you going to wild, immoral parties where there's a lot of revelry, drunkeness and lewd behavior going on? Are you involved in a private struggle with lust.......strife.......or envy?

If so, its time WAKE UP and REMEMBER YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD and “PUT OFF” the clothes of darkness!

Well when you “take something off” you have to put something back on in its place. This is true in a spiritual sense also.
(B) We are to “PUT ON” the clothes of LIGHT.

Paul mentions two garments of “light” we must put on.

(1) Every Christian must “put on” the ARMOR of LIGHT. (v.12)

v.12b “Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the ARMOR OF LIGHT.”

By using the word “armor” Paul is reminding we are involved in a spiritual WAR.

Paul talks about that “spiritual armor” in Ephesians 6:10-12. We to “put on” the belt of TRUTH .......the breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS.......the shoes of the GOSPEL.......the shield of FAITH.......the helmet of SALVATION.......the sword of the SPIRIT.......and the supernatural resource of PRAYER.

We must “put on” our spiritual armor every day and be prepared to do battle with Satan, our enemy.

(2) Every Christian must “put on” the LORD JESUS CHRIST (v.14a)

v.14a “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ.......”

To “put on” the Lord Jesus Christ literally means our whole lives are to be WRAPPED UP in Jesus. And by “putting on” Christ, we become like Him in our thoughts, our speech, and our behavior.

And you notice Paul goes back to the issue of sin one last time at the end of VERSE 14 when he says, “And make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust.”

What Paul means by that is NOT only are we not to indulge in sinful living, we aren’t even to “leave the door of possibility” open.
Martin Luther wrote a parable about Satan conversing with his demons one day about the progress they had made in opposing the truth of GOD and destroying the souls of men.

The first demon stepped before Satan's throne and said, “I met a company of Christians crossing the desert. I loosed the lions upon them. Satan asked, “And what was the result?” The demon said, “The lions destroyed their bodies, but their souls were still saved.” Satan shouted, “Its their souls I’m after!

A second demon approached Satan's throne. He reported, “There was a company of Christian pilgrims sailing upon the sea. I sent a great wind that drove the ship into the rock and every Christian aboard drowned. Satan asked, “And what was the result?” The demon replied, “Though their bodies were drowned at sea, their souls were still saved.” Satan screamed, “Its their souls I am after, their souls!”

A third demon came forward to give his report. He said, “For ten years I have been trying to cast a Christian into a deep sleep, and at last I have succeeded!” And what that, the corridors of hell rang with shouts of evil triumph!

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Christian brothers……..Christian sisters……..has Satan lulled you into a spiritual sleep?

It is now HIGH TIME to awake out of our sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed!