

Romans 13:11-14 - Part 1

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 February 2013

Preacher: Nathan Raynor

[0 : 00] Well, a very good morning to you all. It's very good to be here this day. I missed last week's service, not because I was sick, although I think a lot of people believe that to be the case, which is normally the case, so I can understand why, but I had a family, a whole family that was very, very sick, but we're doing much better today, and I do appreciate your prayers.

I'm very, very thankful this morning to be here with you all, not to be sick. I'm very, very thankful for our glorious God who sent us a Savior to redeem our souls, that we might even come together and worship this day in spirit and in truth.

I'm thankful this day to celebrate the first year birthday, I guess I should say, birthday of our little guy, Judah. Today is his birthday, and we're so blessed to have him, and I'm thankful today for God's written word to us.

We are continuing our study through Romans, so you can go ahead and turn there to the book of Romans, chapter 13. And we've been working our way through now this practical working out of these doctrines that he's presented to us in the first 11 chapters.

We've come to chapter 12 and seen that our reasonable service is the sacrifice of our whole selves now to God in light of these glorious truths of the gospel, this salvation that we have by faith through grace.

[1 : 32] And he's gone on to talk about how we can sum up then our godliness, what that should look like in the little phrase at the beginning of verse 9 of chapter 12.

Let love be genuine. And he begins to expand upon that, abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good, and he works that out even more practically going through the end of chapter 12 and into the beginning of 13.

A couple of weeks ago when I was with you, we talked about verses 8 through 10, when he starts out to say, Oh, no one anything except to love one another.

He goes on to say that love is the fulfilling of the commandment, that if we love genuinely, as he said in verse 9 of chapter 12, then we're fulfilling the commandment. We are living as God would have us live.

And he even expresses to us that this is a continuing debt of love. In light of what God has done for us, we're to be moved to continue on and on and on to love others, both in practical ways and with the gospel itself.

[2 : 44] Today we're going to look at verses 11 through 14, and we're going to address a particular part of it today, and we're going to deal with the rest of it next week. I think there's too much richness in it to try to cram it into one, but join with me in reading.

We're going to read verse 8 all the way through the end of the chapter, through verse 14, to set some context for us. Owe no one anything except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and any other commandment are summed up in this word, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this, you know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep, for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

The night is far gone, the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

[4 : 07] Join me in praying for God's blessing on this time. Father, we praise you for your written word. It is a grace to us. We praise you also for the preaching of your word, not because I have any good in and of myself, but that the proclamation of your written word, the explanation of what it means, has in it power.

And I pray, God, by your spirit, that you will ignite my tongue, and you will soften all of our hearts to receive the truths contained herein, and that apply them to our lives, that you might find us more obedient, being transformed in the image of your son as a result of our activity together in these coming moments.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So Paul has laid out for us this continuing debt of love, not a love by the world's standards, not our romantic comedy version of love, but a much, much higher version of love, an idealistic version of love.

He says that it's a genuine love, a love that's rooted in the gospel truth, that seeks the great end of other people before yourself, that wants the best for all that you encounter.

He says that's the fulfilling of the law, but then in verse 11, he begins to explain to us further how it is we're going to love this way by saying simply, besides this. So love is the fulfilling of the law, which is a great motivation in and of itself to love, but then he says, besides this, you know the time.

[5 : 41] He goes on to further explain that, but what an interesting little phrase here. Besides this, so another reason we ought to love this way is because we know the time.

So I'm going to ask two questions this morning. The first is, what does he even mean? What does Paul mean by knowing the time? And some clues to that are in the following verses.

He qualifies it. What does he mean by the time in 11b through 12a? If you will allow me to break these verses up in that way. He does so with a metaphor that seeks to explain the reality of the time that we all know.

The metaphor. Look at it firstly. In 12a, he says, The night is far gone. The day is at hand. And then in 11b, The hours come for you to wake from sleep.

So he's using this analogy to say to us, Listen, the night is gone. The night is over. It is now the daytime. And as those who know the time, speaking to believers in this case, those who are found in Christ, it's time for you to wake up.

[6 : 58] We ought not slumber any longer. We've been made alive in Christ, and now we ought to be about the activity of love.

You can see also Ephesians 5, 1-21, verse 14, Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, that Christ may shine on you.

Speaking to those believers who had become lackadaisical in their Christian living, who had ceased pursuing Christ by loving those around them. Wake up.

It's not nighttime any longer. It's now the day. Walk as one who is awake in the daytime. So this metaphor, to help us better understand understand the time that he's talking about, which helps us to understand a reality found in 11c, the third portion of verse 11.

He says, For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. What does he mean by that? So, we're to wake up, be in the day, walk, begin to move, and be active in this activity of genuine love.

[8 : 11] Because salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. Is Paul here suggesting that we must live in a certain way in order to obtain salvation?

Is it coming, and if we're not living the right way, we won't be able to grab hold of it? Right? No. Clear and emphatic answer to that. He's not saying at all that it's our work that brings us salvation. Look back in the book of Romans, the first 11 chapters, to be certain, but just focus your attention on Romans 5, 1 and 2, where he says, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, not by works, we've been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him, we also have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. Right? So then what does he mean? Right? Look at the rest of verse 2, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

So we have been redeemed, but we are waiting for the full consummation of that to happen. Right? We are waiting for the full realization of us being delivered from this world, from the weight and the baggage of our sinful flesh.

[9 : 31] Right? The very end of chapter 5, verse 2, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Right? We long for that day when our full salvation will be finished.

There's a picture all throughout the scriptures in talking of the kingdom of God, of what has arrived and what is in the process of being, of arriving. Right? You have been sanctified as a believer. You've been set apart for God, but you are still being sanctified in that you're being perfectly set apart for God. Right? So that's what he's referring to as he's saying that it's coming. It's on its way. Salvation is close at hand. And what he's saying is that the reality that Paul's saying here is that believers know to be true of the time is that the kingdom of God is here. It's arrived. It's at hand. We've arrived at the juncture between the passing away of the reign of sin and death to the reign of Christ and the subsequent joy and hope and glory that accompanies him. [10:39] Right? We stand between those two ages, those two worlds. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10-11 that the Old Testament and events were written down for our instruction on whom the end of the ages has come.

That is, the transition between this age and the age to come has arrived in Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5-17 states, If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. So if you are found in Christ by your faith in Him, then you are a new creation. The new creation. It's come. Colossians 1-13 reads, God delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. So then, the kingdom of our great deliverer has come. Just as Jesus said in Mark 1-15, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. And now, we, as God's very own, long to see the full realization of this kingdom. [11:52] Recall back in Romans 8-23, it says that we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption of Son, the redemption of our bodies.

That is the place in which we exist right now. The time that he's referring to. Many of you may not recognize, know what the Christ Family Church logo looks like. I'll encourage you as you leave to look up at the sign on the hill, the temporary sign, temporary slash permanent sign that's up on the hill. You'll notice that it's a silhouette of trees with the rising sun.

That's meant to be a picture of this time that we all live in. Those of us who have been redeemed standing together, facing and awaiting the coming of our King, who is currently in the process of shedding light on this world.

What happens though? Why is something a silhouette? You're looking at something from behind and it's in silhouette. It's because one side of it is exposed to the magnificent light of the sun and what's behind it is not.

[13:00] That's why it appears dark to you. There's no light on the backside of it. So we're in between those two places. This reign of sin and death where Satan prevails in this world and Christ, who has come and is ushering in his kingdom.

kingdom. It's not an interstitial gap. That term makes sense to you, right? Where there's this gap where this kingdom is done and this kingdom is coming and we stand in between it, between two worlds in that way.

But it looks more like this. It's a Venn diagram. It's an overlap of the two happening. We live in a very unique time, the age of the church, right?

When this world and the things of this world still exist, but yet the new world, the new age, is on its way. This is the time that he is talking about.

Turn with me to 2 Peter 3. Paul says, besides this, you, believers, those in Rome who are believers and now us, those of us who have Christ, you know the time.

[14:14] Peter wrote some similar language. Chapter 3 of 2 Peter beginning in verse 3. Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires, they will say, where is the promise of his coming?

For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. Feels that way sometimes, doesn't it? Right? That the age is not passing away that we live in in this world and the age of Christ is not coming, it just seems to never come.

The world just seems to get more and more sinful and evil. That's exactly what Peter's writing about here. It's exactly what he's saying, that these scoffers will come and they will say, nothing's changed. Right?

You talk about this coming. Nothing's coming. Nothing's changing. Nothing's getting better. It's only getting worse. Verse 5, For they deliberately overlooked this fact, that the heavens existed long

ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

But by the same word, the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

[15 : 42] The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and the heavens will pass away with a war, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn. But according to His promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Peter says the same thing to us here.

You know the time, and when it doesn't feel like the old age is passing away and the new age is coming, we can rest sure that God is faithful to His promises.

We can recognize that we're finite in our understanding of time, yet God is infinite. That's what He says, right? The earth, the heavens created, existed long ago. Long ago they existed.

[16 : 50] Outside of even your scope of eternity past, they existed. And God will in fact bring His promises to pass. So how then should we live?

We should be living lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming day of our Lord. What is Peter referring to?

God's time is God's time. It is perfect. It will come to pass when it comes to pass. Why would He even use the word hastening? It's our great goal, our great mission as the church, to find everybody in this dark, dark world, every corner of it, every recess, the place that they're hiding, and share the good news of Jesus Christ with them.

We want to try to press light into every possible dark place because when the church's numbers are complete, Christ will return. So He's speaking in human terms, right?

There's an urgency that we should feel to get it done. God, He is patient. He will accomplish His purpose. It will come to pass when He wants it to come to pass, but we are to press on to love genuinely, to carry the gospel, the greatest expression of love, to everyone that we can in the hopes that it's going to happen soon.

[18 : 11] It's that dark shadow at our back that should drive us to the face of Christ. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth will go strangely dim in the light of His glorious grace.

That is the motivating factor. So let's ask the second question, even though I'm already working on answering it. So how does a knowledge of the time motivate us to love properly?

How is it that it does so? So verse 12, back in Romans 12b, so then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

So we have this knowledge of the time, and He says, so then. So since we have this knowledge of the time, we understand the analogy, right? We ought to then walk properly. It's a casting off, a throwing away of the works of darkness and a putting on of the armor of light.

Right? It's all these things He's been discussing in chapter 12 and this part of 13 up until now. It's all those things is what we ought to be putting on. Right? He's simply adding further clarity to everything He has said to the point so far with a summary.

[19 : 28] Right? He's helping us to see that as those of the light we should walk in light. Right? The night is gone. It's time to quit slumbering. It's time to live in the day. Not doing the things that are hidden in darkness, but doing the things that happen in the light.

We're to cast off the one thing. Language is strong in the Greek. Throw it away. It's not a, like, take it off and put it down to be picked back up later. No, it's a casting off.

It's a throwing it away. In disgust of it. Getting it away from you. And putting on another thing. We're to cast off the works of the past age and put on the works of the age to come.

We're to cast off evil and put on righteousness. Right? Paul, in fact, further clarifies what he means by putting on the armor of light in verse 14 when he says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

We'll get into more practically what that looks like. What that looks like. When we are enthralled with who Jesus Christ is, the work of darkness is no longer beautiful to us.

[20 : 34] The work of light is. We'll talk about this more next week, but when you find yourself tempted by sin, when you find yourself loving it, it's because you don't love Christ the way you ought.

It's because you don't behold him for who he truly is. His person and his work is drifting from your heart. put on Jesus Christ.

Right? And you'll flee from the works of darkness. And you'll flee to the works of light. You will love it. As Christian, life is not easy. We've been put in this overlap.

Right? We so desperately, at least I hope you do, want to be rid of your flesh. This baggage. Paul in Romans chapter 7 talks about this great struggle in himself and cries out at the end, who will deliver me from this body of death?

He says, praise be to Jesus Christ our Lord. Right? What he's referring to when he talks about the body of death was a old Roman punishment. If you murdered somebody, they would tie that individual to your back.

[21 : 44] The dead body to your back. And as that flesh rotted away, that rot would spread to your body and it would kill you. You have to carry around the dead man on your back.

And that's how Paul refers to his flesh. Right? His flesh and it's killing me. It's infecting my new nature. Right? Who would deliver me from it? Jesus Christ.

Put on Jesus Christ. Cast off the old. Put on the new. Remember in Romans 12, 2.

Not too long ago, we talked about this. Paul said, do not be conformed to this world. Also could be translated age. Right? It's the same word used here for the time.

Okay? It's the same Greek word. He's talking about a period of time. Don't be conformed to this age that we live in, this time that we live in, the typical cultural normities.

[22 : 43] Don't be conformed to that, but be transformed. Be transformed. Be different then.

Because you don't belong to this age any longer. In verse 1, it's our reasonable service because of who we are.

Because of who we are. Because Christ has redeemed us. It's our reasonable service, our spiritual worship, to offer up our whole bodies as living sacrifices. So our knowledge of the time includes in it the knowledge of who we are.

and that's the motivating factor. Understanding the time that you all know includes, if you properly understand it, it includes who you are in the time.

One who's been freed from the bondage of sin. Body of flesh, carrying it around, absolutely.

Temptation at every turn, absolutely. Failure at every turn, yes.

Right? But you've been set free from that bondage. You don't have to go on sinning. You've been given life in Christ. You've been given His Spirit to abide in you and motivate proper living out of you.

[23 : 54] So many Christians these days are woe is me, Christians. My flesh, always at my heels, always tempting me. You've been set free.

Live in that. You were a child of light. Walk as children of light. You don't have to be a slave to your sin. We've been redeemed, bought with a price.

The blood of Jesus Christ. So it's knowing who we are. It's the recognition of this reality that we live in this overlap, but that we've been set apart to walk in the way of our Lord.

Ephesians 5, 7, and 8 says, Do not become partakers with them, for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.

We close with a passage from 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, and please turn there with me. I'm going to read verses 1 through 9 together.

[24 : 59] 1 Thessalonians 5, verses 1 through 9. Now, concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. You catch that?

Besides this, you know the time. You have no need to have anything written to you, for you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

While people are saying there is peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you were not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief, for you are all children of light, children of the day.

We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then, let us not sleep as others do. He's not speaking of literal sleep, right? Do not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

For those who sleep sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

[26 : 03] For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord, Jesus Christ. The day of salvation is nearer now than when we first believe.

I can't begin to tell you when the world's going to end. I wouldn't be so arrogant to even try. I would be wrong, I can guarantee you that.

But I can say with confidence to you, it's nearer now than it was when you first believed. We get a little bit closer to it as each day passes.

And the reality of that, that we are children of light, we have been redeemed, we are God's own, because of what he's done for us, and he's coming back to finish it.

This world will someday pass away, and he will restore it, we will have a new heaven, and a new earth, that we will abide in forever. Those that don't know Christ will abide in eternal destruction.

[27 : 09] The lake of fire, a miserable place, more for its separation from God than from its physical torture. That's the reality of what's to come.

And that is why the knowledge of the time, where we are, and what we know is coming, should motivate us to genuine love. It's a response to the great love that has been shown to us in Jesus Christ.

It's being poured out into us, and it should overflow in everything that we do. Let's pray together together.