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Romans 121 Put on Christ! Romans 13:11-14

Romans 13:11-14, *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. ¹²The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. ¹³Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.*

Apostle Paul frequently uses the imagery to explain the spiritual truth from the vantage point of the Roman soldier.

A Roman soldier drafted to be a part of the army had a tremendous responsibility built around life and death.

He was engaged in warfare for the protection of his emperor and the subjects of the empire.

He had a responsibility to lay his life on the line, protect his own life in order that he might protect the lives of those he represented and defended.

Consequently,

- he needed to be alert,
- he needed to be properly armed,
- he needed to be trained and
- he needed to be ready.

Some Roman soldiers on the eve of battle had engaged themselves in some drunken party etc. During the night they had engaged themselves in this drunken orgy. Now the dawn was coming, and the dawn meant battle.

It was time, as they neared the dawn, to wake up and to throw off the party clothes and to get alert, to put on the armour for the inevitability of what was approaching.

The text is like the blast of a announce while it is still darkest before the dawn these slumbering drunken soldiers out of their sin and sleep. Calls them to throw off the deeds and the garments of the night and clothe themselves necessary for battle.

That is behind the imagery here.

The imagery behind the spiritual message here.

Paul here is speaking to the Christian along the same terms. To put on the proper garment, the proper armour to face the inevitability of the hour in which we live.

The armour which you put on, the garment which you wear is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we became soldiers, when we joined the army, we put on Christ in the sense that we were clothed with His righteousness. It is true that at the time of salvation God garmented you in the righteousness of Christ.

Otherwise, we would not be saved because if we were not covered in the righteousness of Christ, our own sin would be exposed.

Our sin must be covered, dealt with, taken away and he does that in Christ, Christ bearing our sin. We then are made righteous in Him as He garments us with His own holiness and His own divine nature.

So, at the point of salvation, we put on the righteousness of Christ.

God graciously covered us with that, that we call justification. This makes us right with God. We have on the righteousness of Christ positionally.

We are already justified, covered by the righteousness of Christ, but practically we need to put on Christ's righteousness as well.

Not of justification but of sanctification.

We must yield to the righteousness of Christ.

We must appropriate it.

We must put on Christ, put on His holiness, His virtue, and His character.

Putting on the Lord Jesus Christ then is a command to practical day-to-day sanctification.

It's not related to looking backwards.

Titus 2:11-12, *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*

Salvation came.

Salvation transformed, justified, made us righteous before God.

Salvation instructed us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly and righteously and godly in the present age.

So, salvation in its justifying work makes us righteous. In its sanctifying work it commands us to become righteous.

We want to bring our practice into line with our position.

We want to become who we are.

We want to live up to our identity.

Ephesians 4:1, *I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,*

We want to walk worthy of the calling to which we have been called.

We were saved, granted the righteousness of Christ before God. Now we need to live saved lives, live righteous lives.

Sanctified living. It is a command for us to become in practice what we are in position.

Great urgency in this text. It has three commands.

- 1. Wake up,**
- 2. Throw off,**
- 3. Put on.**

1. Wake up.

V 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.*

It is time to wake up.

Immediate action is called for.

It is time for us to act.

This is no time for sleep, this is no time for slumber.

There are pressing things at hand.

Time to wake up. The spiritual command here.

It's not time for sleep. It's time to be awake.

It's not time for the drunken stupor and slumber that was affected in your sin last night. It's no longer time for the deeds of darkness in which you may be engaged in your night life. It's time to wake up.

What does that say to us spiritually?

Call to understand that there is something we are supposed to be busy doing.

It is a call to look at priorities.

It is a call to see what you are doing with your life.
This is not the time for sleeping and slumbering and loafing.

- This is the time to be alert.
- Time to wake up.
- Time to get your priorities right.

There are some pressing demanding things at hand in the light of the imminency of the dawn.

"Now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed."

There are three dimensions in Salvation:

Past, present and future.

Past salvation has already occurred.

That occurred when you put your trust in Jesus Christ.

Present salvation is going on all the time as we are being kept saved, as God continually forgives our sin so that there is nothing accumulated against our account before God that could damn us.

He ever lives to make intercession for us.

He keeps on forgiving, as 1 John says.

So, there is a past aspect and a present continual aspect of salvation.

There is a **future** aspect of salvation.

The salvation of our body in Romans 8, when we are fully redeemed and fully delivered.

- First is justification.
- Second is sanctification.
- Third is glorification.

What Paul referring here is that you are nearer to your glorification than you have ever been.

We as Christians are nearer to the return of Jesus Christ than when we believed. We are 2,000 years nearer than when this was written.

If there was a sense of urgency then, there should certainly be a greater sense of urgency now.

Paul is referring to the return of Christ for His own and to the return of Christ about judgment.

He looks at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ from both sides frequently in his writings sometimes referring to the rapture of

the church and most often referring to the judgment of the ungodly.

We are soon to be taken to be with Christ and that will initiate the Day of the Lord in which the ungodly will be destroyed and damned forever, it is time to get your priorities right.

It's time to wake up.

This is no time to be slumbering and sleeping.

This is a time for alertness.

The same Jesus who is taken up from you shall come in like manner as you have seen Him go. We got to live in the light of the return of Jesus Christ.

- ✓ The period of man's day is ending.
- ✓ The period of God's Day is coming.

The millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ is coming and before it the Day of the Lord judgment and before it the rapture of the church.

Only God knows how much time!

It's not given to us to know.

But I will tell you this that we in a monumental moment because right now you are nearer to it than you have ever been in your entire life.

It is next in God's redemptive plan.

What must happen prophetically before the rapture?

Nothing.

The trumpet when it blows, we are out of here. The Day of the Lord follows immediately with preliminary judgment and then the full judgment of the Day of the Lord.

It is the next event on God's calendar.

2 Corinthians 5:11, *Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.*

2 Corinthians 5:10, *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

It is time for Christians to be evaluated and rewarded.
Also time for unbelievers to be judged and damned.

The urgency of that moment should compel us to wake up and get out of the night of this era of man's day into the sobriety, the sober-minded establishment of the priorities that matter eternally.

How far gone is the night?

Isaiah 21:11, *The burden against Dumah. He calls to me out of Seir, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?"*

Only God knows.

But the next event is the return of Jesus Christ, the taking away of His church and then our work is done.

Then the ministry we would have done and then the judgment begins to fall. This is intended here to have a two-fold effect on us, to make us urgent in our service to Christ and urgent in our evangelism of the lost.

This is the key to holy living.

People who don't live in the light of the return of Christ don't have the most compelling motivation. We must live in the light that Jesus Christ could come at any moment.

"The night is far spent and the day is at hand."

The night is almost gone.

When Paul wrote this some 2,000 years ago, we were past the half-way point. There was less left than had already passed of time, or he wouldn't have said, "It's almost gone." It's far spent. Most of man's time is gone.

Paul was past the mid-point even then and we are another 2,000 years past it. Man's day is ending, and God's Day is coming and that means judgment.

If you knew Jesus was coming to take you away and to start judgment next Sunday, would it alter your week?

It would have a dramatic effect on how you live your life. Really the only way to live.

There are things in life we must do by way of necessity, but our lives need to be filled with the comprehension of the priorities.

This is not a time to get caught up and engulfed in the night of the world. This is a time to realize the night is almost gone and the day is on the brink.

Night represents the present era.
It represents man's day.

It is also the symbol of sin and evil.

- Ugliness and beauty are indistinguishable in the night.
- Gold and rocks are indistinguishable in the night.
- Friend and foe are indistinguishable in the night.

All those blends together when night drops the curtain.

Are not most people mistaking ugliness for beauty, rocks for gold and foes for friends?

The world can't discern real value.

They have accepted the counterfeit for the real and the false for the true.

Again, night is filled with danger. Whether to a traveller crossing a dark piece of land, to a ship feeling her way along a rock-bound coast. Dark is danger.

He that walks in darkness, doesn't know where he is going because darkness has blinded his eyes.

For vast tracks of time darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness has covered the people.

It is the night of Satan's reign.

It is the night of the power of darkness.

It is in this night that we live but it is in this night that we must not sleep.

It is time to wake up, the day is imminent.

The day is at hand. Certainly, to the day of Christ's return, the Day of the Lord, and the day of the establishment of His kingdom.

In **2 Thessalonians 2:1-12** there is a very similar warning.

We are near the day. It hasn't come. There are some things that are going to indicate it. But we need to have our priorities right in the meantime.

We live in a very serious times, closer to the return of Christ than we have ever been.

Matthew 16:1-3, *Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. ²He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; ³and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.*

This is not a time for being engulfed in the darkness.

This is a time for understanding the urgency of the hour in which we live.

It is a time to awaken from sleep.

It is a time for spiritual alertness, vigilance, readiness, and a time to get your priorities in place.

It is a time to wake up.

"Sleep" The dictionary defines sleep as, "*a state of inactivity with a loss of consciousness and a decrease in responsiveness to events taking place.*"

Now that well describes some people listening to this sermon. It well describes many Christians who are in a state of inactivity with a loss of consciousness and a decrease in responsiveness to what is really happening.

Some people make things happen, some things watch things happen and most people don't know what's happening.

They just sleep through it all. Not a time for that.

"For now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed,"

Closer than ever to the return of Jesus Christ.

Closer than ever to the end of the age.

This becomes an incentive to holy living, an incentive to ministry, an incentive to evangelism.

Time to wake up.

2. Throw off.

To throw off.

V 12, *Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*

Now if the dawn is breaking.

Then it is,

- Nearer,
- Coming,
- Imminent.

In the battle, then the soldier better get out of his pyjamas.
Put off, lay aside the deeds of darkness.

What does that mean?

Sins.

Ephesians 5:8, *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.*

Don't behave in a way that is characteristic of the darkness.

1 John 1:5-6, *This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness*

at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

We have no part with the darkness.

The idea here is of the soldier who has partied himself into oblivion and he was sound asleep. He is still in his party clothes, or his night garment and it is now time to wake up and put off the clothes he wore in the wild orgy of the night.

It's time to face the priority of what he is as a soldier and what awaits him.

It's a time to put aside the clothing of debauchery, no place for moral or spiritual slumber during the night of the world's sin.

We have a specific task in the dawn of redemption. Take off your party clothes, get serious. Put off the works of darkness.

What are they?

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

Revelry/Carousing, ***kmōs***, meaning wild rioting.

Originally that word had reference to a group of friends who accompany a victor. Somebody won a race at the games and got his laurel wreath, and all his buddies came around and they just

celebrated and danced their way along the street as they were celebrating his victory.

It then came to mean a noisy group of street carousers, half-drunk people parading in the night through the town with torches and music and dancing in honour of Bacchus or some other deity, Bacchus the god of wine.

It finally came to mean just drinking and sex parties, typical sins of the darkness.

That's got no place in your life.

Have nothing to do with that. Put that stuff out of your life. Get serious about holy things. The "putting off" is a cleansing act.

- It's repentance,
- it is purification,
- it's purging.

Secondly, **drunkenness**, which has the idea of a drinking bout. Soldiers, being the macho men that they are, no doubt wanted to compete with one another to see who could gulp greatest volume and still be standing and thus they engaged in intentional drunkenness. But all drunkenness is an offense to God.

"Put away sexual immorality,"

Koit means a bed. Put away going to bed illicitly, the forbidden bed, adultery, fornication, another typical pagan preoccupation.

Put away sensuality.

Two other things, **strife**, which has the idea of fighting, contending, a spirit of antagonistic competitiveness coming from the desire for singular power or prestige or prominence or possessions, an unwillingness to take second place, a lack of humility, unwilling to be a servant, a kind of an egomania.

Of course, with it comes its partner, **jealousy**, which is to envy someone else.

All these are the typical passions of the night. This is a representative list, not an exclusive one.

They are the deeds of the darkness.

They are motivated by the prince of the darkness.

They are passions that violate and abuse God's purpose and intention for us to move toward righteousness.

God didn't save us for this.

Salvation didn't instruct us to be carousing drunks, sexually involved, sensually compelled, engaging in strife and jealousy.

Salvation instructed us to be godly and righteous, to live sensibly.

Through the night the soldiers in the classic military camp of Rome, knowing that there was battle the next day and they could die in it, I suppose gave themselves over to a wild party, sex, and drinking, competing against one another.

As the hours before dawn have come, they have fallen into the deep sleep of drunkenness and now the bugle blows.

It's time to wake up.

Understand what they are all about.

Time to throw off the filthy garments of the night of sin.

3. Put on.

V 12, *"Put on the armour of light,"*

V 13, *"Behave properly as in the day."*

Put on your day clothes and act like you should act when everybody can see you.

Put on the armour of light.

Clothe yourselves.

- Light represents purity,
- Light represents holiness,
- Light represents righteousness, virtue.

Seeing you know these things are coming to pass.

Put on your armour. You are going into battle, this is serious.

- Put on the breastplate of righteousness,
- Put on the helmet of the hope of salvation,
- Put on the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace,
- Take the shield of faith,
- Get the sword of the Spirit,
- Get your armour on,
- You are about to do battle.

V 13, walk becomingly as in the day. Conduct should be holy.

Live like the spiritual soldier of God you are.

Be properly adorned in holy array, in full view of everyone.

Be the soldier you were saved to be and act like it.

V 14, *"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."*

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 New Testament passages.

It encompasses justification, that is salvation, as well as sanctification, that is spiritual growth.

But the idea of putting on is an often-repeated picture. Just as an individual puts on garments, he is to put on Jesus Christ.

This imagery is used in reference to justification or salvation and in the reference to sanctification or spiritual development.

Paul has been telling the Colossians that they are to put off certain things.

Colossians 3:8-10, *But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

Now there is 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.

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 that 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.

Ephesians 4:22-25, *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour," for we are members of one another.*

Galatians 3:27-28, *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

We don't necessarily mean it was real fire. He was placed into a difficult situation.

We were placed into Christ at salvation.

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.

As **Galatians 3:27**, you have put on Christ.

Now it's important that we make this distinction or we are not going to understand what **Romans 13** means when it says to Christians, "Put 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.

First at salvation we put on the Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of taking on His righteousness, taking on His holiness.

Romans 3:22, "*The righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.*"

When you believe, the righteousness of God which is in Christ is placed on you.

Romans 4:5, *But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,*

There again saving faith results in a cloak of righteousness.

Romans 5:17, *For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)*

As we received the cloak of sin in Adam, so we received the cloak of righteousness in Christ.

Romans 6:3-4, *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Why?

Because we were planted in the likeness of His death.

We will be in the likeness of His resurrection.

We know therefore that the old man is crucified with Him and the body of sin is destroyed. Henceforth we are not the slaves of sin, we are freed from sin because if we are dead with Christ we believe we also are alive with Him.

What happened is the old has died and there is a new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17, *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away, all things have become new."*

2 Corinthians 5:21, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

So, when you come to Christ you are garmented in the righteousness of Christ.

Now one other illustration of that is in **Matthew 22**.

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. King comes in to see the guests who are there and He sees a man, who doesn't have on a wedding garment.

Matthew 22:11-13, *"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹² So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. ¹³ Then*

the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

What is this saying?

You can't crash the kingdom without the proper robe.

You can't get in unless you have the garment.

What is the garment?

It is righteousness.

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."*

When you came to Christ you put on Christ in the sense that you put on His righteousness, His holiness, and His nature.

God sees you as righteous in Jesus Christ.

It's a beautiful picture.

From the parable on and 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 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. Meaning in salvation that is what happened. God sees you as holy in Christ. 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?

What has happened to you positionally, let it happen to you practically.

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.

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.

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 and it's something else to act as a preacher ought to act.

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.

Do you know what spiritual growth is all about?

All about becoming what you are.

Becoming in practice what you are in 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 must keep doing that.

The picture of this taking off and putting on fits the believer just as well.

Conclusion:

Be like Him.

Put Him on.

He clothes you positionally.

He clothes you in justification.

Let Him clothe you practically in sanctification. Become like Jesus Christ.

Pursue that goal.

One thing I do, pressing toward the mark which is Christ's likeness says Apostle Paul.

We say we abide in Him, we ought to walk the way He walked, John said.

Put on Christ.

We are living in the darkest part of the night which comes just before the dawn.

We are nearer to Christ's return than anybody in human history has ever been.

How near?

Only God knows.

This is not a time to be fooling around with the sins of the night, this is a time to set them aside, establish your priorities and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

V 14, "*Make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust.*"

Don't respond at all to the flesh, no matter what it is!
Whatever it is, make no provision for it.

This is not a time to be indulging oneself in things which pander the flesh. This is a time for serious living. This is a time when dawn is coming, and dawn means judgment for us and for the ungodly. It's a time to put on Christ.

This is the consummate thing in Christian life.

As you gaze into His glory and pour yourself into the Word of God and see Christ revealed, as you spend time with Him in prayer, He will transform you by His Holy Spirit into His own image and you will be putting on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is how you will be the kind of believer who fulfils the law, which is the issue back in verses 8 to 10.

Put on Christ. Become like Christ.