



It Is High Time To Awake

“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 armour of light” (Romans 13:12).

Bulletin VCRM40

30 September 2026

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 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 armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:11-14).

INTRODUCTION

It is really high time to act right now. There are some things in life that we can afford to postpone. You can postpone cleaning the garage, painting the house, replying to an email, and even getting around to certain things that are important. But there are some things you cannot safely postpone indefinitely. For example, **if your house is on fire, you do not say, “I will deal with it tomorrow.”** If someone shouts, “Wake up! There is danger!” you do not respond, “Give me another five minutes.” The urgency of the situation changes your response.

In this scripture, Paul is speaking with exactly that kind of urgency. He says: “Now it is high time to awake out of sleep.” Notice the words **“high time”**. It means the time is already advanced. The opportunity to delay has passed. Paul is not merely saying, “One day you ought to wake up.” He is saying: **Wake up now!** Why? Because: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand.” And because: “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

The Christian life is therefore not a life of spiritual sleepwalking. God has called us to be **awake, alert, prepared and actively living for Christ**. Our central message today is: **WAKE UP, CLEAN UP, SUIT UP AND LIVE UP**. Or, expressed in four major movements, they are:

1. **WAKE UP — Recognise the Time**
2. **CLEAN UP — Cast Off the Works of Darkness**
3. **SUIT UP — Put On the Armour of Light**
4. **LIVE UP — Put On the Lord Jesus Christ**

1. WAKE UP — RECOGNISE THE TIME

Romans 13:11: “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep....” Paul begins with awareness. Before there can be a change in behaviour, there must be a recognition of reality for the reasons summarised in points A-C below.

A. We must know the time

Paul says: “Knowing the time....” Christianity is not supposed to be lived unconsciously. We need to understand the spiritual season in which we are living. Jesus repeatedly told His disciples to watch. In **Matthew 24:42** He said - “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” And again, in **Matthew 25:13** He said, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein

the Son of man cometh." The Bible repeatedly calls God's people to spiritual alertness. It is high time because **time is passing**. **Psalm 90:12** says "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." We do not know how many days remain. Therefore, make today's day count.

Imagine a security guard employed to watch a building throughout the night. His responsibility is not simply to occupy the chair. He must remain alert. If he falls asleep while a burglar enters, his physical presence is not enough. He was there—but he was not watching. There is a difference between **being present** and **being awake**. And there is a difference between attending church and being spiritually alert. A person can sit in church every Sunday and still be spiritually asleep.

B. Spiritual sleep is dangerous

What does spiritual sleep look like? It can mean becoming careless about sin, losing our hunger for God's Word, prayer becoming occasional rather than essential, becoming comfortable with things that once troubled our conscience, knowing what God wants but continually postponing obedience, and allowing secular commitments to gradually erode away our time with / commitment to God. Paul says: "It is high time to awake out of sleep." Why? Because sleep reduces awareness. A sleeping person does not see what is happening around him. Likewise, spiritual sleep can cause us to become insensitive to spiritual realities.

Ephesians 5:14 commands "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." There is an awakening that only Christ can produce. It is high time to awake because **eternity is approaching**. Paul says: "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Every believer should live with eternity in view. **Colossians 3:2** commands "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." This does not mean neglecting earthly responsibilities. It means putting them in eternal perspective.

C. Our salvation is nearer

Paul gives another reason for urgency: **Romans 13:11** "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Every day brings us closer to the fulfilment of God's purposes. Every day that passes brings us one day closer to eternity. For the believer, the coming of Christ is nearer. Our final day on earth is nearer. The resurrection is nearer. The completion of our salvation is nearer. Therefore, **time is not something we merely possess—it is something we are spending**.

Imagine that you are watching a countdown clock. Every second disappears. You cannot stop it. You cannot store yesterday's seconds for tomorrow. Time moves in one direction. The question is not: "**How much time have I got?**" The question is: "**What am I doing with the time God has given me?**" Paul says: **Ephesians 5:15–16** "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Ask yourself: Am I spiritually awake? Am I growing? Am I praying? Am I obeying God's Word? Am I witnessing? Am I serving? Am I preparing for eternity? If Jesus came today, would I be found faithfully occupied?

It is high time to awake, but why is the urgency? Because Christ is coming.

Jesus said in **Revelation 22:12** "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." The return of Christ should

not produce fear in the faithful believer. It should produce **readiness**. Jesus said in **Luke 12:40** "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." The question is not: "**When exactly will He come?**" The question is: "**Will I be ready when He comes?**"

2. CLEAN UP — CAST OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS

Paul continues: **Romans 13:12** "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness..." Notice the word "**therefore**." When God reveals the time, there must be a response. Awakening must lead to action. Paul says: "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness." Because:

A. Christianity requires putting off the old life

The Christian life involves both **putting off** and **putting on**. You cannot properly put on new clothes while deliberately holding on to filthy old clothes. Paul says in **Ephesians 4:22–24** "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." There is an old life to put off, and there is a new life to put on.

B. Darkness represents works that do not belong to Christ

Paul becomes specific. In **Romans 13:13** he said: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying." He identifies several categories of such works of darkness, including:

1. "**Rioting and drunkenness**" - This speaks of uncontrolled, excessive and immoral living. The Christian is not called to live under the control of substances, appetites or pleasures. **Ephesians 5:18** "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Notice the contrast: **Do not be controlled by wine; be controlled by the Spirit.**
2. "**Chambering and wantonness**" - These refer to sexual immorality, impurity and unrestrained behaviour. Scripture does not treat sexual purity as an optional extra. **1 Thessalonians 4:3** says: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication." God calls His people to holiness. **1 Corinthians 6:18** commands: "Flee fornication." Notice the verb: **Flee**. Sometimes the correct response to temptation is not negotiation. It is escape. For example, if you hear a fire alarm in a building, you do not stand beside the flames asking: "How close can I get without getting burned?" You get out. Likewise, some temptations should not be managed at close range. They should be fled.
3. "**Strife and envying**" – Paul then moves from outward immorality to inward attitudes – Strife, Envy, Conflict and Jealousy. This reminds us that darkness is not merely what happens in the body. It can also operate in the heart. **James 3:16** says: "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." You can:
 - a) be outwardly respectable and inwardly full of envy.
 - b) avoid drunkenness but still be intoxicated with jealousy.
 - c) avoid sexual immorality but still be consumed by bitterness.

God wants the whole person. Cleaning up also requires **MAKING NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH**. Paul adds a very practical instruction in **Romans 13:14** "...and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." This is

extremely important. Paul does not simply say: “**Do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.**” He says: “**Make not provision.**” In other words: **Do not prepare the environment in which temptation can succeed.** This implies two things:

- 1) **Do not feed what you are trying to kill.** If you continually feed a sinful appetite, do not be surprised when it becomes strong. **James 1:14–15** says “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin...” There is a progression from: **Desire → Enticement → Sin → Consequences.** The wise Christian interrupts the process early.
- 2) **Remove unnecessary opportunities for temptation.** Joseph provides an excellent example. Potiphar's wife tempted him. Joseph did not remain there to debate the matter. **Genesis 39:12** says: “And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.” Joseph **fled**. There are moments when running away is the wisest form of spiritual warfare. If something repeatedly causes you to fall, then:
 - a) Change the environment.
 - b) Change the habit.
 - c) Change the routine.
 - d) Remove the access.
 - e) Establish accountability.
 - f) Fill the empty space with something godly.
 - g) Do not merely pray: “**Lord, help me resist this temptation.**” Sometimes the answer to that prayer is: “**Then stop putting yourself in its path.**”

3. SUIT UP — PUT ON THE ARMOUR OF LIGHT

Paul says: **Romans 13:12** “...and let us put on the armour of light.” This is military language. The Christian life is not passive. There is a spiritual battle. Consider that:

- A. We need spiritual armour.** Paul develops this theme further in Ephesians 6:11: “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Then he lists the armour as the:

- a) belt of truth
- b) breastplate of righteousness
- c) preparation of the Gospel of peace
- d) shield of faith
- e) helmet of salvation
- f) sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:13 “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God...” The important word is **whole**. We need the whole armour.

- B. Light speaks of visible righteousness.** Paul says: “Let us put on the armour of light.” Light is not hidden. Jesus said in **Matthew 5:14–16** “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” The Christian should live in such a way that his life points people towards Christ. Not towards himself, Not towards his denomination, Not towards his personality, but towards **Christ**.

- C. **We must walk as children of light. Ephesians 5:8** notes: “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” Notice that Paul does not merely say: “You are in the light.” He says: “Walk as children of light.” Our conduct must correspond with our identity. If we say we belong to Christ, our lives should increasingly reflect Christ. Imagine a police officer wearing his uniform but behaving as though he has no connection with the police service. The uniform communicates identity. Likewise, the Christian's conduct should communicate his identity. We bear the name of Christ. Therefore, our behaviour matters.

4. LIVE UP — PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

The climax of the passage is verse 14: “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” This is the heart of the message. Christianity is not simply: **Stop doing bad things**. It is: **Put on Christ**.

A. Christ must become our pattern

We are called to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. That means allowing Christ to shape our:

- thinking,
- speech,
- attitudes,
- relationships,
- priorities,
- decisions,
- behaviour.

Paul said in **Philippians 2:5** “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” We need the mind of Christ.

B. Christ must become visible in our lives

Paul said in **Galatians 2:20** “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...” That is the goal. Not simply: “**I am a Christian**.” But: “**Christ is being seen in me**.” The question is not merely: “Do I attend church?” The question is:

- a) “**Can people see something of Jesus in the way I live?**”
- b) Can they see Him in the way I speak to my spouse?
- c) Can they see Him in how I treat difficult people?
- d) Can they see Him in how I respond when criticised?
- e) Can they see Him in how I handle money?
- f) Can they see Him in how I behave when nobody is watching?
- g) Can they see Christ in my workplace?
- h) Can they see Christ in my home?

IN CONCLUSION, REMEMBER THAT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A MATTER OF DAILY CHOICE. Romans 13:11–14 presents a powerful sequence that includes:

- a) **Wake up** - “Awake out of sleep.”
- b) **Cast off** - “Cast off the works of darkness.”
- c) **Put on** - “Put on the armour of light.”
- d) **Walk** - “Let us walk honestly, as in the day.”

e) **Put on Christ** - "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

f) **Make no provision** - "Make not provision for the flesh."

This is practical Christianity. Every day we make choices about what we will think about, watch, listen to, say, pursue, tolerate, encourage, reject. Paul is saying:

Live deliberately.

Imagine setting your alarm for six o'clock in the morning. The alarm rings. You press snooze. It rings again. You press snooze again. Eventually you say: "I have plenty of time." But suddenly you realise you have overslept. The alarm was not the problem. The warning was given. The problem was that you refused to respond. Romans 13 is God's spiritual alarm clock. So, **Wake up!** The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Do not press the spiritual snooze button. Do not say: "Later." "Someday." "When I am older." "When I have more time." "When things settle down." "When I have achieved my goals." **Now is the time.**

Finally, Romans 13:11–14 gives us four urgent commands.

1. **WAKE UP.** "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep." Wake up spiritually. Wake up to God's purposes. Wake up to eternity. Wake up to the opportunities around you.
2. **CLEAN UP.** "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness." Deal with sin. Do not make peace with what God has told you to remove.
3. **SUIT UP.** "Let us put on the armour of light." Put on truth. Put on righteousness. Take up faith. Carry the Word of God. Stand firm.
4. **LIVE UP.** "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Let Christ be seen in you. And: "Make not provision for the flesh." Do not deliberately create opportunities for temptation.

Let us regularly challenge ourselves with these five questions.

1. **Am I spiritually awake?**
2. **Is there anything in my life that needs to be cast off?**
3. **Am I properly equipped with the armour of God?**
4. **Is Christ genuinely being seen in my life?**
5. **Am I living ready for eternity?**

The Bible does not say: "**It might be time to wake up.**" It says: "**Now it is high time to awake out of sleep.**" The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Therefore: **Wake up, Clean up, Suit up, and Live up.**

And above everything else: **Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.** Let us not merely talk about the coming day. Let us **live as people who know that the day is coming.** **Romans 13:14** commands: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Amen.