

Romans 13:11-14

Any of you who have had the opportunity to spend an evening in a motel or hotel room are acquainted with the convenience known as the **wake-up call**. You don't need an alarm clock. All you have to do is stop at the front desk, let them know what time you would like to be awakened, and the next morning they will **call** you on the telephone at that time. The **wake-up call** is really quite a nice **service** which they provide.

However, in **another** sense, a **wake-up call** can **also** serve as a **warning**. For example, in **football**, when a tough linebacker really **crunches** one of those little wide receivers as he catches a pass while moving across the middle of the field - we say that the **receiver** was served a **wake-up call**. It's as if the linebacker is saying, "Hi there. Just in case you didn't **realize** it, this is **my** part of the field. I wanted you to know that I'm still here, and that every time you come **through**, I'll be bringing you a little **greeting** just like the **last** one." In other words, **stay out** of my territory if you don't want to get **hurt**!

That's the kind of **wake-up call** God is giving to **us** in today's text. As we look at our text there are two things which seem to stand out. First of all, God's wake-up call is an **urgent** one. And secondly, it is a call which **demands** a **response**.

Our text begins, "*And do this, since you **understand** the present time. It is already the hour for you to **wake up** from **sleep**, because our **salvation** is nearer now than when we **first** believed.*" I think it's important for us to realize what kind of **sleep** this is, from which the LORD wants us to **wake up**. It is a **spiritual** sleep - a sleep of **ignorance** or **indifference** - a sleep into which even **good Christians** occasionally drift. That spiritual **sleep** can take lots of different forms. On the one hand, it includes Christians who are so **weak** and **insecure** in their faith, that they are continually falling into the grasp of **open sin**. And on the **other** hand, it includes Christians who feel so **secure** in their faith, that they have actually become **inactive** in **doing** any good works. Perhaps this **second** group is in the **greater** danger. They are like the people who **start** a project, but never **finish** it - like those who have put their hand to the **plow**, but can't make a straight furrow because they continue to look **back** - like those who have the **form** of godliness, but deny its **power**. **Both** groups are **asleep** as Christians. **Both** groups need to **wake up**!

Paul goes on to say that we are to **understand** the present time. We are to be **aware** of the nature of the times in which we live. We are to live **in** the world, and still not become a part **of** it. And as the times **change**, we must recognize that time

itself is ticking away, and the Last Day is getting closer and closer. As **Christians**, we need to keep our eyes fixed on **God's** clock, and recognize that **He** says, **It's Time To Wake Up**, because our salvation is **nearer** than we **think**.

Now, you and I know that we already **have** salvation. Jesus **earned** that salvation when He lived a **perfect** life. And He gave that salvation to **us**, when He offered that life as a **sacrifice** on the cross. But what Paul is talking about here is the **full realization** of our salvation - the time when we will actually **set foot** inside of **heaven** for the very first time - the arrival of the **Judgment Day** - a day which is getting **closer** all the time. In fact, Paul goes on to say, "*The night is almost over, and the day is drawing near. So, let us put away the deeds of darkness, and put on the weapons of light.*"

The picture which Paul uses here is that of **getting dressed** in the morning. He says, **It's Time To Wake Up** - and that means you need to get **out** of your **pajamas**, and **into** your **work clothes**. Those of you who have school-aged children are certainly familiar with **this** phrase, or at least one **like** it. "Let's **go**, guys. It's **6:30**. Up and at 'em. **It's Time To Wake Up!**" The first time you bring that **wake up** call, it's simply a gentle reminder meant for their information. But when you go back to the bedroom again at **7:00** and there is **still** no movement, the **tone** of your phrase **changes**. "I **said**, **It's Time To Wake Up**. It's time to get dressed. Get moving **now**, or you're going to be **late** for school." And **that's** the tone which **God** is using with **us** in today's text.

You see, this is not the **first** time we have received a **wake-up** call from God. The **first** one came at our **conversion** - when God gently **turned us away** from the path which leads to destruction, and **gave us** our precious **faith**. For **most** of us, that happened through the simple act of **baptism**. And God has **continued** to send us **wake up** calls through His **Word**, as bits and pieces of that Word **finally** take hold of us, and we put them into **practice** in our lives. But Paul makes it very clear that we don't have the **luxury** of lying around **every** morning, and waiting for **another** wake-up call - because **time** is running out. There is much to be **done**, and it needs to be done **now**.

What exactly **is** it that needs to be **done**? Paul is quite clear about **that** too. He writes, "*Let us walk **decently**, as in the **daytime** - **not** in carousing and drunkenness, **not** in sexual sin and wild living, **not** in strife and jealousy. Instead, **clothe yourselves** with the Lord Jesus **Christ**, and do not **give any thought** to satisfying the desires of your **sinful** flesh.*" The first thing we note here is that there is a marked **difference** between behavior in the **daytime**, and behavior in the **nighttime**. Even

though criminals seem to be getting **bolder** and more **brazen** all the time, there are still a much higher percentage of crimes which are committed under the cover of **darkness**, than there are in broad **daylight**. God wants **our** activities to be **daytime** activities - things which don't need to be **hidden** in the dark. So, Paul encourages us, "*Do not give **any thought** to satisfying the desires of your sinful flesh.*" Don't even give your sinful nature an **inch**, because it will end up taking much **more** than a **foot**!

Secondly, we note that we are to **change** our **clothes**. I don't know too many people who don't **enjoy** getting **new clothes**. When our children were still at home and they got new clothes, they had to try them **on**, and they had to **model** them - ie. They showed mom and dad how they **looked** in them to make sure the size, and the color, and the style were all **acceptable**. That's **exactly** what the LORD wants us to do with **Him**. He wants us to **put Him on**, and then **show Him off**! Jesus wants **His** qualities to be **evident** in our lives, so that it will be obvious to **everyone** just how much He **means** to us - just how **proud** we are to have Him as our Lord and Savior.

The only **problem** with getting new clothes in **our** house, is that when you get **new** clothes, you have to get **rid** of some of your **old** clothes. That's true of our **spiritual** clothes too. How can God be glorified in us, if we still cling - even **secretly** - to "*carousing and drunkenness ... sexual sin and wild living ... strife and jealousy*"? If we think we can have it **both** ways, the only people we're **fooling** are **ourselves**. And if we think that we can **make up** for some of those things by going to church, or bringing an extra offering, or doing something good for charity - then we're **sleeping** - and **It's Time To Wake Up**! God doesn't **want** an hour of worship **here and there** - or a hundred dollar check or a twenty dollar bill **off and on** - or an **occasional** appearance to volunteer for something, or provide a cake, or anything **else** like that. God wants **us**, body and soul - **100%** of us - **100%** of the time. And if He doesn't have **us**, then He doesn't want the **outward** things either. Christianity is not **measured** by the quantity or the quality of the works **we** do - as if we had to meet some kind of **quota**. Rather, Christianity is measured by the kind of people we **are** - people who are **grateful** for the love which God has **shown** to us. Like the hymnwriter says, "*Love so amazing, so divine, **demands** my soul, my life, my all.*"

My dear friends, we may have already received our **final** wake-up call from the LORD. Time is running **short** - the **Judgment Day** is near. We've putzed around on the **edges** of Christianity for long enough. We've been **asleep** for too long. **It's Time To Wake Up** - time to wake up to all the **wonderful** things which God **has** done for us, and **continues** to do for us. It's time to **realize** how **blessed** we are to have **Jesus** as our Savior from sin, and to consider how **miserable** we would be **without** Him. And after we have seen again what **great things** God has done for us,

it's time for us to **respond** - not just with a lick and a prayer - not with just enough to **get by** - but to respond with our **whole lives**. Let's get **off** the fence - jump in with **both feet** - and show the **world** that our Savior means **everything** to us. Amen.