**It’s Time to Wake Up!**

Romans 13:11–14

Have you ever had an “I overslept!” nightmare? I’m not talking about a bad dream. I’m talking about a bad experience when you actually overslept….

I have this fear about Sunday morning…..Ask Sandra…I get up early on Sunday…

Have you ever had an “I overslept!” nightmare? It’s far worse when a person has fallen asleep spiritually and is not ready for Jesus’ second coming at Judgment Day.

It's Time to Wake Up!

The Bible tells us again and again that the day is dawning. The day of Jesus’ glorious return to usher in Judgment Day and the end of the world is on its way. We are living in a very special time.

St. Paul tells us these words about time in our text, Rom 13:11: **“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.”**

Today, this day, “salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.” Now is the hour. Now is the time. The season of Advent wakes us up. Advent means “coming.” During Advent we are reminded that at Christmas, Jesus is coming. We prepare for his first coming at the manger. Yet Advent also reminds us that we are to prepare for his second coming at the end of the world. The King is coming! Are you ready for his arrival?

This is no time to doze spiritually. Matthew tells us, “Stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. . . . The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Mt 24:42, 44). Spiritual dozing is not just embarrassing. It can have eternal consequences. If a person is not prepared to meet his God, this unpreparedness could result in eternal separation from him. The Bible spells that H-E-L-L.

Sometimes it’s difficult to consider the end of the world and the Day of Judgment. To bring this issue “closer to home,” I ask you this: What would you do if you knew you had one week to live? Suddenly, things you thought were important would look pretty insignificant. Take a moment right now. Imagine that you do have only one week to live.

Make a mental list of such things as people to forgive or spend time with, sins to repent of, unfinished plans to make, people you need to tell about Jesus, unresolved issues that need to be addressed once and for all, and the like. What are you waiting for? How do you know when your time on this earth will come to an end? Advent is a good trumpet call to each of us. It’s time to wake up.

Not only does St. Paul tell us it’s time to wake up, but he also tells us we need to be dressed for the occasion. To be dressed for the occasion means we are to throw off the rags of sin. Paul says, **“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”** (v 12). He speaks of putting on God’s armor of light and casting off rags of sin, dirty clothes of disobedience, and deeds of darkness.

In the Book of the Old Testament prophet Zechariah, chapter 3, we’re given a glorious picture of just how our filthy clothes of sin are taken off of us and replaced with the robes of righteousness. The prophet has a vision of a man, who represents each of us, standing before God’s judgment seat. He’s dressed in filthy clothes, the clothes of sin and disobedience. In this heavenly courtroom scene it’s clear the man is guilty. Satan, the accuser and prosecuting attorney, calls for his condemnation. All is hopeless. Then, the attorney for the defense speaks. He tells the accuser to shut up and be quiet. He announces that this man has been delivered from judgment. He has the filthy clothes removed and the man is dressed in white robes of righteousness. He is forgiven! He is not condemned!

Here is a wonderful picture of how we sinners are made right with our holy God. Here is a wonderful picture of justification. It’s a gift of God! It’s like a new set of clothes he provides for us! We cannot dress ourselves “for the occasion.” God, for Jesus’ sake, dresses us.

St. Paul says the same thing in our text. He tells us that we can **“put on the Lord Jesus Christ”** (v 14).

By Jesus’ death on the cross for our sin and his rising from the grave, he gives us victory over sin, death, and the devil. He exchanges our sinful dirty rags for his righteous white garment. He strips off of us our filthy garments and dresses us “for the occasion.,” We are now ready to stand before the eternal judgment throne where God declares that we are dressed in the righteousness of Jesus, our Savior!

We’re now dressed to live as God’s children as we wait for Jesus’ second coming and the Day of Judgment. St. Paul says in our text: **“put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh”** (v 14). That is to say, now, between Jesus’ first coming and his second coming, we are to live as God’s forgiven, well-dressed, wide-awake children. Dressed in God’s gift of righteousness, we are to demonstrate a different kind of life than unbelievers. We do this not to earn God’s love or to impress others, but to thank God and actively show God’s mercy and forgiveness by our lives.

The story is told in Spain of a father and his teenage son who had a relationship that had become strained. So the son ran away from home. His father, however, began a journey in search of his rebellious son. Finally, in Madrid, in a last desperate effort to find him, the father put an ad in the newspaper. The ad read: “Dear Paco, meet me in front of the newspaper office at noon. All is forgiven. I love you. Your father.” The next day at noon, in front of the newspaper office, eight hundred “Pacos” showed up. They were all seeking forgiveness and love from their fathers.

What a wonderful gift is the gift of love and forgiveness. All people crave this gift. This gift is yours! Though you have strayed from the love of your heavenly father, he seeks you out and will not rest until you are safe in his arms. To make you ready for world’s end and the Day of Judgment, you have been awakened and given a new suit of clothes. You have been dressed in the righteousness and forgiveness of Christ Jesus. You are ready.

This day and every day in Advent is a wonderful day to wake up and celebrate the love of God freely given to you in Jesus.

Amen!