

Unashamed (21): Wake Up, O Sleeper!

(Romans 13:11-14)

I. Introduction

- A. In my office, I have an old grandfather clock that my Dad really wanted me to have
1. It really is a beautiful piece of furniture; it is way too classy for my messy office
 2. It's lousy clock; it's right twice a day. It doesn't do much but it looks great (*like me*)
 - a. But it used to work. I remember lying awake as a kid unable to sleep as it chimed
 - b. The Westminster chime on the quarter-hour is horrible when you can't get to sleep!
 - 1) Bing-bong-bing-bong keeps going off to remind you that you aren't asleep yet
 - 2) It leaves you hanging as you anticipate whether it's going ring out the hour
 - 3) You need clock to bong-bong-bong... 3 o'clock and I can't sleep. Thank you!
 3. I remember an old couple that had same clock, and the wife couldn't sleep one night
 - a. The clock started chiming and it got stuck chiming the hour—15, 20, 25 times!
 - b. So she shook her husband all in a tizzy, "*Wake up Joe, it's later than you think!*"
- B. And that introduces our text this morning from our series on Romans titled *Unashamed*
1. **Quick Review:** Paul is dealing with a church which is, like so many, in turmoil
 - a. Most churches have issues, but the ones at Rome center in Jews and Gentiles
 - 1) Even in our theme statement verse, Paul lets the cat out of the bag (**Rom 1:16**)
 - 2) He keeps making statement like that all through the book—we've traced those
 - b. Paul says that Jews and Gentiles are on equal footing—both needs God's grace
 - c. First part of the book, Paul builds this wonderful case for the need for God's grace
 2. But where we have been recently is what we would like call "*practical part of book*"
 - a. Paul would take issue with that! He'd say, "*Nothing is more practical than grace!*"
 - b. Beginning in Romans 12, Paul has been applying grace to how they live their lives
 - 1) So he's been telling them to treat one another graciously (**Rom 12:10, 13, 16**)
 - 2) That might not be as DEEP as justification by faith-- what justified people do
- C. Now Paul is going to say, "*Get busy and do that stuff; it's later than any of you think!*"
1. Paul has a deep sense of urgency here in us putting into practice this "*applied grace*"
 - a. Clock is ticking; we need to wake up and smell the coffee. It's later than we think.
 - b. Our text this morning wants us to catch this sense of urgency as we live out grace
 2. Let's read the text first together and then talk about it. **Reading: Romans 13:11-14**

II. Wake Up O Sleeper

- A. Again, Paul wants us to know there is a sense of urgency— *“the hour has already come”*
1. Many N.T. passages like this tell us that *“Today is the day”* and *“now is the time”*
 - a. We don’t have to hunt hard or go far (**Jam 5:8, 1 Pet 4:7, 1 Jn 2:18, Rev 22:10**)
 - b. These texts cause us cognitive dissonance. This isn't fake news; it's old news!
 - 1) How could Peter say. *“The end of all things is near?”* Well, it was for him!
 - 2) The world will end in your lifetime... for you! You might as well deal with it!
 2. Paul begins by saying *“understanding the present time”* or *“know the time”* (ESV)
 - a. NT has two words for **time**. **Chronos** (*chronological*) and **kairos** (*era, age, epoch*)
 - 1) This is **kairos** (age/era). We need to wake up and understand what comes next!
 - 2) Paul looks at his watch, *“We’re closer to the end time than when first believed”*
 - b. Something I’ve noticed recently, *“I’m not getting any younger, and some of you...”*
 - 1) What is true of us physically is also true spiritually, right! Time to get BUSY!
 - 2) My 96-year old grandmother, *“I just don’t if I’ve don’t enough for the Lord”*
 - 3) My uncle, *“Well, Momma, you’re 96. Don’t you think you’d best get busy!”*
 - c. Paul point exactly... to all of us! To you and you and me. Wake up and get busy
- B. Get busy doing what? We’re to get busy being like Jesus and not being like the world.
1. You probably know *“Christian”* was first applied to disciple at Antioch (**Acts 11:26**)
 - a. That was almost certainly an insult leveled by Gentile unbelievers at the church
 - 1) Most literally, Christian doesn’t really mean Christ-like or belonging to Christ
 - 2) What it really meant was “little-Christ.” And that was meant as an insult.
 - b. But the “Christians” there thought, *“Wait a minute, that’s what we want to be!”*
 - c. That’s what Paul is calling us to be in our text— *two different points here*
 2. **First**, waking up means we can’t just be like the darkness around us (**Rom 13:12-13**)
 - a. Not unique for NT to tell us to get rid of worldly acts (**Eph 4:25, Col 3:5, 1 Pet 2:1**)
 - 1) These and similar texts are written to Christians saying avoid similar behavior
 - 2) Why? Because the old person that was crucified with Christ won’t stay dead
 - b. We can slip back into old patterns of behavior and they become “us” all over again
 - c. What happens if we’re careful? We read Romans 1-8 without Romans 13-16, right
 - 1) We convince ourselves that we’re saved by grace so our actions don’t matter
 - 2) Paul slaps us the back of our head, *“Wake up! It’s later than you think!”*

3. **Second**, waking up means we will be more accurate reflections of Jesus (**Rom 13:14**)
 - a. The imagery of “*clothe yourselves*” is a familiar one (**Gal 3:27**, **Col 3:12**)
 - b. We don’t just wrap ourselves with Jesus; we take on his characteristics
 - 1) Jesus told the disciples that when they saw him, they also saw God (**John 14:9**)
 - 2) It’s works in a smaller, imperfect way with us—people see us, they see Jesus
 - c. Like old Amy Grant song, people see us and say, “*They have their Father’s eyes*”
 - 1) These an pretty famous quote attributed to Ghandi by E. Stanley Jones in 1925
I like your Christ, but I do not like your Christians. Christians are so unlike your Christ.
 - 2) I’m not sure Ghandi said that; I am sure that isn’t how it’s supposed to work!
 - d. We are to become transformed into the very image of that Christ (**2 Cor 3:18**)

III. Conclusion

- A. So why don’t Christians look more like Christ? Let me illustrate with a story
 1. I once got a call while at camp from my major professor telling me I was misinformed
 - a. I was told I had 3 months to finished my master’s thesis; what I had was three weeks
 - b. I left Camp Idlewild to camp in Memphis until I finished the paper or it finished me
 2. Well, I finished with 2 days to spare; you can read it in the Harding library (don’t!)
 - a. I don’t remember a whole lot from the experience except I don’t want to do it again.
 - b. I do remember waking up 2” from a guard rail just this side of Richmond on I-64
 - c. I was 16 hours into a 17-hour trip home and was asleep at the wheel. Not good!
 3. And that’s the problem we face in our Christian life. *Asleep at the wheel*. Not good!
 - a. We get just a little too comfortable with the things around us, and we settle in
 - b. We get to focused on living life just like everyone else around us and we doze off
 - 1) We forget that life has an **expiration date**; we forget we’ve got limited time
 - 2) *It’s later than we think!* We’ve got to get things done before the lights go out!
- B. Paul says in our text that there is a battle between the light and the darkness
 1. Same imagery as in **Ephesians 5:8**. We were once in the dark; now we are the light
 - a. In case we’re confused, he goes remind us what the light looks like (**Eph 5:9**)
 - b. Athletic teams wear different colored jerseys why? So you can tell difference.
 - 1) A recent MLS broadcast caused minor controversy; both teams wore white
 - 2) Minor controversy; it’s soccer and no one watches. *Supposed to tell difference!*
 2. You tell the difference between the light and dark—by how we live (**Eph 5:13-15a**)
 3. Wake up, O sleeper! Later than you think! Which side are you on? Can anyone tell?