

Romans 13:11-14

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[0 : 00] I am in Romans 13, Romans 13, verses 11 through 14, which is just a few verses. We'll get us through Romans 13 as we do it.

So if you are physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together and read the Word of God found in Romans 13, starting in verse 11 and going down to verse 14, which is the end of the chapter.

Paul says, But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, we do thank you for our mothers. We thank you for the mothers that are present and the opportunity we have to celebrate with them and, Lord, to celebrate them and their work and their contribution, not only to the home, but also to the church.

God, we pray now you would speak to us through your Word. We pray that your Word would resonate within us. Lord, that we would see the truth that it contains so that we would be moved to apply it to our lives as we leave this place for your glory.

[1 : 32] God, we ask that you would just, Lord, stay back any hindrance. Lord, any calls for stumbling. Lord, any attack of Satan that may be going on right now.

Lord, that your hand would be there, that it would move that roadblock. God, that it would show us your Word. Lord, and we would stay. Here we are, O Lord. Show us more of you that we may see more of ourselves.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. We have been making our way through the book of Romans, and we have now come to the very end of the book of Romans where we get into, really, the application text, how to live out the great truths.

And I don't want to continue to rehash this, but some of you may not have been with us for the last several months as we've been making our way through this great book. Romans is a powerful book, and it is a book of great truth, and it is really a book of just one great truth, and that is the truth of salvation by grace and faith alone in Jesus Christ.

That it is not of ourselves, not anything that we could do, lest any man should boast, but rather we are saved through faith and faith alone in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

[2 : 42] And Paul just continues to reiterate this truth, and he shows it to us while we need it. In Romans 1, 2, and 3, why we need salvation, because until a man or a woman desperately understands their own condition, they will not look to a Savior to rescue them from that condition.

And then he begins to go into the great problem of man, that though we are in this desperate condition, we cannot work ourselves out of this condition, we cannot attain deliverance from this condition, and we are of all men and all creatures most helpless.

But then he introduces kind of the hero of it all, not just kind of the hero, he is the hero of it all. He introduces the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

It says, But thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ my Lord, I can overcome all of these things. And he begins to speak of the salvation that comes through faith in Christ, and how we are eternally secure in Christ, and that in Christ we are sure, and we are steadfast, and we may fall, and we may stumble, but nothing can pull us out of his hands.

He takes a number of chapters, and he begins to put that on display through the people of God found in the Old Testament, that is, the nation of Israel. And we see the work of God throughout history of his people, how God brings about what he has promised according to his promises, because God's promises do not fail.

[4 : 08] We see that in Romans 9, 10, and 11. And then beginning in Romans 12, he begins to apply this. If you are saved by faith and through grace alone in Jesus Christ, and if God does keep eternally those who place their faith in him, then surely that will change the way you live out your lives on a daily basis.

Because if it doesn't, we haven't fully grasped that truth. The truth only goes as far as we accept it. Some things are true. There is a story that was told of a gentleman somewhere overseas in one of the Asian provinces who lived in a cave for years and years and years, and he lived in this cave, and he would only come out at night.

And he would come out at night, and he would forage and gather. And this is a true story, by the way. He would forage and gather his food, and he would go back into the cave, and he never wanted to leave the cave during the day lest he be seen.

Finally, someone stumbled upon that cave. It was something like 25 to 30 years later. Someone stumbled upon that cave. And when they went into that cave, they found this man that had been living in there for 25 to 30 years.

And when they brought him out and they reintroduced him to society, they found out that the whole reason he was living in there is because that he heard that World War II was about to come to an end, that Japan was getting invaded, and he was afraid to be captured, so he went into hiding.

[5 : 29] And though the war had been done for years, and it was over, and there was all these peace treaties and everything, he never saw any of the pamphlets that were dropped. He never saw any of the propaganda that was out there.

He never heard the news because he isolated himself from the truth, and he lived in his own reality. Something can be absolutely true, but until you accept that truth and begin to live out that truth, it doesn't do a thing in your life.

And what Paul shows us in Romans 12 through 16 is if these things are true, and they are, and we accept the truth of them, and we should, then this is what life will look like as we do.

And we begin to see that as in Romans 12, it speaks of how we interact with one another. Romans 13 begins to talk about how we live as citizens in the world in which we live. And now we get down to this very practical set of scriptures in Romans 13, verses 11 through 14, and I want you to see this morning, finding the ability to change.

Finding the ability to change. You know, I don't know of one person that I have ever met who did not have something about themselves they wanted to change. And I'm not just talking about physical characteristics.

[6 : 39] I always thought it'd be really cool to be able to dunk. I see these guys on television, you know, that can just straight up. I mean, like, dunk so easy that their head almost hits the rim. You know, they're looking down on the basketball goal.

And I know me, and I know if I had that ability, if I could change that about me and I could do that, I told my kids basketball would never be the same for me because I would never take another jump shot. I mean, if I could dunk all the time, I'd be dunking on everybody all the time just because I could do it.

I remember watching Barry Bonds' nephew who played for CPA out of Nashville. Hunter played against him whenever he played basketball. And this kid was a great, magnificent, Braxton Bonds was his name, magnificent point guard.

He played baseball and other things as well. It was phenomenal. And I remember watching him in a game, a region tournament, and he went baseline and dunked over this guy. I mean, just dunked all over him.

And it was the first dunk I'd seen him do in about five or six games we'd ever seen. And Hunter was beside me because, thankfully, we weren't playing him. He didn't dunk on us. And I looked at Hunter. I said, man, if I could do that, I would do that every time I touched the ball.

[7 : 41] You know, because to me it would be something new. And there's things we want to change about ourselves, and we think about those type of things. But that's not what I have in mind this morning. I'm talking about things on the inside, behaviors we have, things we think, things we say, our actions.

There's always something we wish we could change. Every one of us. Paul says that as much in Romans 1, 2, and 3. For the heart of all men is desperately wicked.

And we begin to look at ourselves. The reason the world wants to keep us so busy, and the reason that man tries to keep himself so busy, is because when we stop and think, the problem is, is we often think about ourselves and how we wish we could change.

And we keep ourselves so busy, and we move ourselves so fast, we don't ever see our own problems. We don't ever see our own issues.

And this is why we don't see as many people desperately seeking after a God to rescue them from that, because they just won't stop long enough to think about it. But we begin to see here this ability to change.

[8 : 46] We see, first of all, in Romans 13, verse 11, we see that the ability to change begins with an awareness of the time. See what Paul says here. Paul says, do this.

That all of a sudden shows us, now Paul is beginning to speak about something we need to put into practice. Right? Do this. This is a command. This is an exhortation. He is writing to the church.

Don't ever forget that. He is writing to the believers in Jesus Christ. He is writing to the church that is in one of the most desperate cities in all of history, that is the church at Rome. He is writing to a church that is surrounded by muck and mire.

He's surrounded by so much false believism. They're surrounded by so much false practices. There's so much scandal. So many different things going on.

He's writing to a church that lives in a city that if they had a girl born, that many of them would take that daughter and leave her abandoned on a hill just because they didn't want a daughter. They wanted a son.

[9 : 43] He's writing to a church that is in a place of desperation. And he tells this church, do something. Put it into practice. Live it into action. We see this, by the way, some of the most wicked things done around the world today.

Many of them are going on in our own land. Right? Many of them find their origination and all of their practices in our own land. We like to think that these things happen somewhere else, but most of them happen in our own land.

Most of them happen on a large scale in our own land. But we begin to see this. He's like, do this. This is something I want you to put into practice. And he says here, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from your sleep.

You can just stop right there. We begin to see that the way to find the ability to change begins with an awareness of the time. Now, stay with me because these build upon one another and I've saved the best to last.

Okay? It begins with an awareness of the time. He says, do this knowing the time. Friend, I wonder, do we really know the time in which we live?

[10 : 46] I mean, do we really know it? There's this great church in the book of Acts that when Paul preached to them, they would went home and they'd study the word of God. And they had this testimony about them. They understand their time.

They understood their times. And they would understand the word of God. And they would begin to put that into practice. We find it in the Old Testament as well. There's always these great counselors in the Old Testament. They're always described as people who knew the time.

They knew about the time. They were wise of their own days. They understood the time frame in which they live. Friend, we live in a time that is very unique throughout history. We live in a time of desperation.

We live in a time of opportunity. And we live in a time where we can put the two together. Where people are more disconnected than they've ever been while being connected to the thing that's in your pocket. We live in a time where more people feel in isolation, surrounded by crowds, than any other time in history.

I see it every day when I'm going down the road. Every day I see it. As kids get on the school bus and they say, Good morning, good morning, good morning, good morning, good morning. And of all the kids I pick up, maybe one even acknowledges I said something.

[11 : 48] Why? Because they're in that isolation of that iPhone with those earbuds in their ear. And some of those kids, I'm like, great, they're listening to music. That's a good thing, right? Some of them, I wish they had earbuds so they could listen to music and maybe go to sleep on the bus.

But people are so isolated. And I'm not knocking it. I have an iPhone, too. I got one, okay? I have earbuds, too. I like to get my praise on as well. So it's okay. But we live in a time of desperation because God made us for connection.

He made us for community. He made us to be together. You know why I encourage you to serve in the church. You know why I think it would be awesome if you were to come to the community today and stand behind the grill and get greasy with someone.

You know why I think it would be awesome if you went to VBS and you got so much glitter on you, you felt like a Hallmark card. You know why I think that if you were to do those things is because you are made to live in community with other people.

And even when you're doing something that doesn't seem fun on the outside, man, it does something to you on the inside. And it begins to connect you with people. And it begins to connect you in a land of desperation.

[12 : 51] We also live in a land of great opportunity. And we need to understand the time. What people around us need more than anything else is us. They need us.

And they need us to be present. They need us to be there. They need us to be people of our word. And they need us. We live, he says, knowing the time. And friend, also understand this. You don't know how long you have to be that connection.

He's writing to the believers, right? So this isn't a scare tactic. Knowing the time. So many people, one of the greatest problems in the world today is we live as if we have all the time in the world.

And we really do not. We have all of eternity to rest and to rejoice and to worship. We do. We have all of eternity to celebrate. Man, I plan on celebrating.

We have all of eternity to gather around his throne. And it says we will work in eternity because he will make us laborers in the eternal kingdom. But there will be no sweat. There will be no, I mean, if it is sweat, it will be great sweat.

[13 : 54] There will be no pain. That's pain that some of us feel from the week that we have now. But we will have all of eternity to serve him in those aspects. But we will not have all of eternity to serve those living among us right now.

And we will not have all of eternity to proclaim the gospel, the good news that the world desperately needs. We do not have all of eternity because by the time we enter the eternal kingdom, Jesus himself is there.

We won't have to tell everybody about him. Right? There will be nobody to tell. What I'm doing right now is a very temporal thing. I only have this life to preach in. Preachers are out of work when it comes to eternity in heaven.

Man, who's going to stand up behind a pulpit and tell you about Jesus when Jesus is there? I mean, you ever thought about that, right? Who's, I mean, even Paul himself, he's not preaching anymore. It says, knowing the time that the hour draws near.

Friend, listen, just hear me out. I know you're very busy right now and Satan makes sure you're very busy, but you don't have forever. You don't. Those things you want to change, those habits that are going on in your life, in my life, listen, we don't have forever to get to them.

[14 : 58] So, first of all, there's an awareness of the time. Number two, it's an acknowledgement of our condition. Acknowledgement of our condition. Paul, writing to the church, and if he wasn't writing to the church, then we would be okay with it, but he is writing to the church, so it seems to kind of step on my toes, and maybe it steps on your toes.

He says, knowing the time that is already the hour for you to what? To awaken from your sleep. Paul is writing to the church, the early church. I mean, the church that came to Christ while Peter was preaching his message at Pentecost.

That church, that Jesus Christ has just been raised from the dead not too long ago, and there are all these eyewitnesses to this physical reality, and Paul, writing to that church, says, Church, you're asleep.

Wake up. And if the church fell asleep in tens of years, like 20, 30 years after the resurrection, what do you think the condition of the church is today?

Hundreds of years after the resurrection. It is an acknowledgement of our condition. He says, now is the time. Wake up from your sleep, for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

[16 : 02] Now, this is kind of an oxymoronic statement. I'm trying to get there quick. It is, salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. Okay? So, salvation is by faith in Christ alone, and you come to faith in Christ alone by believing in Jesus Christ alone.

So, he says, salvation is nearer to us than when we are saved. Now, this is not the salvation that you experience when you find your redemption. There are three phases of salvation we find in Scripture.

There is past salvation. That is the instant moment you are saved, eternally secure, you are redeemed. That can happen in a public setting. It can happen in a private room. That can happen with one, or it can happen with a multitude of people.

And that is the moment that you accept that you were a sinner, and that Christ died for your sins, and that you messed up, and you accept him as the Lord and Savior of your life, you are redeemed in an instant. That is your salvation past.

And then there is the salvation present. I am being saved. That is my sanctification. He is making me his child. He, every day, he saves me. He has to save me every day, because Paul says in Galatians 2.20, I die daily.

[17 : 06] I wake up every day, and there's this old man I need to crucify, so every day I need a Savior to raise me back up, right? That is my present salvation. And then there's the future salvation. I will be saved, which means I will be delivered from this body that is a tent.

I will be delivered from this world of desperation. I will be delivered, and that's what Paul is talking about. Understanding the time and acknowledging your condition that every day that passes draws you closer to the day where you will stand before your Savior face to face because he has saved you from that desperate world that keeps tempting you.

He says, Wake up. Jesus himself gave the parable of the good stewards, and he gave the parable of the watchman over the house who, when his master delayed, began to behave in disarray and began to beat the servants and to take abuse, and then the master showed up one day.

And Jesus gave this point and said, it's like this, if he knew the day of his appearing, he would have been ready. And if the church lived in the reality, me included, that today could be the day when he appears to me, then everything will be ready.

You know why? There were so many believers in the early church that died for their faith. Every one of the apostles, except for John, that we know of, and many of the early church were crucified for their faith or persecuted for their faith.

[18 : 26] Many of them died for that. Why? Because, as Paul wrote, when they were writing these letters, they knew that Jesus could come back any day. So their whole life was reoriented around the things that was going on.

And what would become us, to help us to find the ability to change, is if we would acknowledge our condition that too many times we fall asleep. Because delay in his reappearing, and even delay in our passing from this life to the next, often is used by Satan to allow us to sleep, and to numb us to the reality, that you know what, today, because I have an appointed day of death, I don't know when that day is, but I do know it is an appointed unto man, once to die, and after this comes the judgment, right?

He has appointed me a day, he knows it already, I don't know it, but I know that today, I know one thing for sure, today I'm closer to that day of appointment than I was yesterday.

And I must acknowledge that, oftentimes I forget that, and I fall asleep. There's an acknowledgement of my condition. There's an acknowledgement of my condition.

Number three, I want you to see this, not only is there an awareness of the time, acknowledgement of our condition, number three, there is an adjustment of practice. An adjustment of practice. If we understand the time, means that every day is passing a lot quicker, and we don't have forever, and if we acknowledge our condition, that during that time, we often fall asleep, then we will adjust our practice.

[19 : 54] Look at what the word of God says. He says, now it is time to awaken from your sleep, for now salvation is nearer to us, and when we believe, the night is almost gone, and the day is near, that is the night of this life, and the day of his appearing.

Therefore, let us do something, right? Let us behave, let us do something. Let us lay aside the deeds of darkness, and put on the armor of light. Listen, he's writing to the church.

So, this tells us, that when we accept Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Savior, and we join the family of God, we become the ecclesia, that is the church. You know what this tells me?

That all of those deeds of darkness, don't just pass away instantaneously. That you're still going to mess up, you're still going to fall, you're still going to stumble. I would love to tell you, that if you accept Jesus Christ, as your Lord and Savior, all those bad things about you, you want to change, they'll be gone.

I'd love to tell you that. Now, there are some things, that when I accepted Jesus Christ, as my Lord and Savior, he delivered me from, some things instantaneously, in a moment, and there have been other things, that he's been working with me for years. It's his progressive sanctification, right?

[20 : 56] Things that he only shows, and I'm so thankful, he didn't show me, at the beginning of my walk with him, what he wanted me, to be at the end of my walk with him, because if I saw that list, of everything he was going to take away, over the years, I probably would have said, no, I'm not going to do that.

I can't make that kind of commitment. But he does tell us, that even if we accepted Jesus Christ, we still have deeds of darkness, in our lives, and now take those off, and put on the armor of light, begin to change your behavior, begin to make an adjustment, to your practice.

The deeds of darkness, are just those things to do, but it's an armor of light, which means, if you're going to walk, with Christ in the day, then you're going to fight, to walk with Christ, in the day.

The Christian walk is a battlefield, right? It's not a park, it's not a daisy field, it's a battlefield. That's why there's so many things, in the armor of God, that we're given here, and we're to put on that armor, so that we can fight, those temptations, and we can fight, all of those things.

It is an adjustment of practice. Paul says, quit doing them. Just stop. Cast it aside. But now all of a sudden, with those three things, we are faced with a problem, major problem, right?

[22 : 04] Because you can be aware of the time, and know that you don't have forever. You can acknowledge, that you're in a poor, pitiful shape. You can even adjust, your practice, temporarily.

But here's the problem, if you do those three things, you're still going to go back. Because there's nothing within us, that is strong enough, to fix ourselves. Nothing.

So the fourth one, is so critical. Number four. We must have, an affiliation, with Jesus Christ.

It's writing to the church. We must have, an affiliation with Jesus Christ. Look at what the word of God says. It says in verse 14, here's the affiliation, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

You notice it does say, just put on Jesus. I mean, just get you a little bit of Jesus. I like that, man. I love the name of Jesus. I love it. I love it. Man, Jesus is a wonderful name, and I like it, but let's not ever separate it.

[23 : 09] Let's not ever separate it, from how scripture puts it, okay? You don't need a little bit of Jesus. You don't even need a lot of Jesus. You need, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is a name that is still used today, often called Jesus. It's a name. It is translated Joshua, in the Old Testament. So you can have a Joshua, a Yeshua, or a Jesus in today's time, or a Jesus, as we read in scripture, and do all these other three things, and life still fall apart.

But when you align yourself, or affiliate yourself, with the Lord Jesus Christ, it changes things. Because Lord means lordship.

He is ruler and king of your life. Jesus is his name, according to man. And Christ means Messiah. He is the anointed one. He is the Messiah, the long expected one.

And when you begin to affiliate yourself, with his lordship, and his messiahship, things begin to change in your life. Because now all of a sudden, he has control, and he has ability.

[24 : 20] He has control as lord and king, and he has ability as Messiah deliverer. He is the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh.

See, if we have Jesus hanging around, and we got Jesus, and we got Jesus in the flesh, nobody really had a problem with Jesus in the flesh, the carpenter's son. Jesus in the flesh would feed the 5,000.

Jesus in the flesh could walk on water. That was pretty cool. Jesus on the fish could feed the 4,000. Jesus in the flesh could do a lot of cool things for us in the flesh. It is when Jesus said, I am the son of God.

You will see me standing on the clouds with the ancient of days. That's Daniel 7, by the way, that's saying he was God. It's when Jesus began to speak to himself as the king, and as the creator, and the sustainer, and the maker of men.

That's when people had a problem with Jesus. And in your life, Jesus in the flesh that you read about throughout history can hang out with you. But that Lord Jesus Christ will change you.

[25 : 23] And when you affiliate yourself with him, and align yourself under his rulership, then all of a sudden, all those changes you wanted to make in your life, he begins to make them.

You know, the problem is, is too many times we live as individuals, and not as people under the rulership and headship of Jesus Christ.

In the NFL, every year, week 13 in the NFL is a special week set aside for the players called My Cleat, My Cause. That's the only time in a year that the players can wear cleats they design in a special way, how they want them to look, all these wild different color schemes, and not be fined for wearing those cleats.

As long as those cleats represent a legitimate cause or foundation around the world. Some of them are for social justice, some of them are for orphan care, some of them are for like boys and girls clubs, some of them, a number of them are for animal abuse situations.

But that's the only time, one week, in one season, for one game, they can wear whatever cleats they want to wear and not be fined. Why?

[26 : 37] It's because no matter who they are, no matter how talented they may be, and they are, no matter how much money they make, and it's an unbelievable amount of money, to play a game, when they step on the field, they're not representing them.

They're playing for the National Football League. And the NFL's head office has the ability to tell them what they can and cannot wear.

Because that's their boss, that's their king, that's the one who rules them. And if they choose to go against that, that's fine. They could be fined and they could be kicked out of the game and all these other things, but they give them one week, one game, to wear a special shoe.

But other than that, they have to live in alignment with the affiliation of the NFL. Friend, what happens so many times in our lives is we think we can walk around living however we want to live because we forget who we're supposed to be living under.

And that stuff we want to change, and I'm speaking to me and you both, that stuff we want to change, we need to quit worrying about my cause, my cleats, my life, my decisions. Look at this. He says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust.

[27 : 52] How? Because when Jesus is the head and when Jesus is the king, now all of a sudden Jesus is making the decisions, not me. Now all of a sudden Jesus makes his plans, not me. Now all of a sudden Jesus is the Lord, he's the king, he's the master, he's the ruler.

All of a sudden Jesus is the leader of the life, so it's his desires, his plans, his purposes, his programs has nothing to do with me. He just uses me for them because he's the king, he's the Lord, he's the Messiah, it's his decisions, and you know what I have found?

When I live under that headship and lordship, Jesus never leads me to do something I wish I could change. Never. He always changes me in the midst of doing something.

But he never, there's never been a moment in my walk, and I don't think that any other believer can honestly say this, that when they followed the Lord Jesus Christ, that they ever said, man, I wish I hadn't done that or regretted anything.

Because he is the one making the call. Friend, I don't know where you're at, but I do know every one of us wished there was something we could change.

[29 : 12] And we can understand the time, and we can understand the problem, and we can even try to change our practice. But until we, even the church and his individuals, live in alignment with the Lord Jesus Christ, none of those things will ever change.

It has to be his plans, his purposes, his desires, his leading, and our following for his glory. Let me pray. Lord, I thank you so much for this day. God, I thank you for the ability we've had together together to worship you.

Lord, to praise your name, to exalt you. And I pray that even now, Lord, you would begin to speak to our hearts and minds. You would show us more of ourselves. Lord, so that we may see more of you.

How good you are. How gracious you are. The price you paid. Lord, the life you call us to live for your glory. We ask that you would just have your way. And it's in the sweet name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[30 : 46] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[33 : 16] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[35 : 46] Thank you.

Thank you.