

Romans, pt.20, 13.8–14, 4.29.07

What time is it?

Introduction

1. Read text
2. What time is it? We're in an overlap of time between the old age & the new age; we're in an inexorable transition; you can't turn back the clock...the night is giving in to the day!
3. Story of malfunctioning clock chiming 15 times. Little boy runs to his mother & says, "Mommy it's later than its ever been before!"

What time is it?

THE LORD'S RETURN IS NEAR AT HAND (13.11–12a)

- Expl – We are in the season of the Lord's return; Greek understanding of "chronos" & "kairos"; the Kairos moment
- V.12a – The night is the old age of sin & Satan's reign. Its dominance abruptly came to an end at the death, burial & resurrection of Christ. They still have control over lost humanity & a false sense of control over backslidden or deceived Christians, but they hold no sway over victorious Christians
- "Wake up" (v.11b) – KJV: "it's high time to awake;" the time of sleeping is over
- Jesus warned us: Be sober, be watchful, be on guard; be vigilant...we can't give into sin or the pursuits of the world or we will be caught off guard
- Appl. – Why is it important to be watchful of the Lord's return?
 - It keeps you focused on your walk with God...it keeps eternity in the forefront of your mind...you're constantly reminded you'll have to give an account to God. It keeps you mindful of the Lord's presence...that he is ever before you
 - Hebredees Revival testimony – "eternity was always before us." It's not a natural thing.
 - It keeps us aware of God's activity in the world...when I hear reports of Christian's being martyred (**Turkish Christians martyred for their faith this past week**), whole communities being saved, relief work being done in the name of Jesus in countries closed to

the gospel I am reminded that these things must happen before the Lord returns

IT'S TIME TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER (13.8–10)

- V.11a – “This is all the more urgent”. “This” is referring to all that preceded in v.8–10.
- “Owe nothing to any man” is specifically directed at paying taxes (13.6f.), but when it comes to love you constantly owe that to others. We owe a “debt of love”. Origen in the 2nd century said: So Paul desires that our debt of love should remain & never cease to be owed, for it is expedient that we should both pay this debt & always owe it.”
- Cornerstone Kingdom concept
 - Jesus said – “The greatest commandment” & a new commandment
 - Paul said – these three remain...but the greatest is love.
 - John said – if we love each other God lives in us.
 - James (2.8) calls it the royal law.
- Matt.24.10–12 – During the end times there will be a battle to keep a soft heart towards others. **10** And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. **11** And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. **12** Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.
- (Francis Frangipane’s article on the Spirit of Offense – 4.17.07 email from Janet Harrison)
- How is love expressed? (**Not love as emotion or thought, but action**)
 - Should – Love your neighbor. Neighbor is anyone in need. You help, serve, show kindness, pay respect, etc. Love is practical – 1 Cor.13.4–6: Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud **5** or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. **6** It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.
 - Shouldn’ts – Don’t do them any harm, i.e., don’t commit adultery, murder, steal, covet

IT'S TIME TO TAKE OFF YOUR DIRTY CLOTHES (13.12b – 14)

- Expl. – He speaks in terms of removing sins like taking off dirty old clothes.
- Specific sins

- Wild parties, drunkenness & sexual promiscuity – very prominent in Rome
- **Immoral living/debauchery** – ugly word meaning you are incapable of feeling shame...you parade your sin & feel no conviction or shame...all the above sin were commonly done in the dark
- **Quarreling & jealousy** – more common among Christian & done behind someone’s back. You want your way...you can’t stand being surpassed; you hold grudges against another’s success.
- Appl – see yourself taking these clothes off your body.
- The impact of darkness/sin upon a believer’s heart
 - You end up getting bruised & hurt & breaking stuff- just like fumbling around in the dark trying to find something.
 - It will damage your spiritual vision
 - Illustration of a person lost in a cave – lose perception, disoriented; **sight doesn’t automatically return; positionally you can make an immediate change, but internally it takes a while for things to catch up.**
 - God can restore it, but it isn’t automatic or w/o consequence. King David & sin that led to all sorts of problems later in life.
 - It opens a huge door to demonic infestation
 - It wounds your spirit & can forever be a place of regret
 - Like running through a muddy field an hour before your wedding in your wedding dress. You can still get married in a muddy dress & even enjoy the reception. But, once you get the pictures, you’ll experience regrets & probably always have some level of shame when people bring up your path.
 - Satan will forever bring up those pictures until you finally put it completely behind you but for many that never happens. The good thing about remaining sexually pure & not getting drunk & doing immoral things is I have no regrets...there is no platform the devil can work from in my life.

IT’S TIME TO CLOTHE YOURSELF WITH THE LORD JESUS (13.12b – 14)

- “Put on” – means to play the part of Jesus; you put on Jesus.
- Ray Stedman said: “When I get up in the morning I put on my clothes, intending them to be part of me all day, to go where I go and do what I

do. They cover me and make me presentable of others. That is the purpose of clothes. In the same way the apostle is saying to us, "Put on Jesus Christ when you get up in the morning. Make him a part of your life that day. Intend that he go with you everywhere you go, and that he act through you in everything you do. Call upon his resources."

- Putting on Christ is spiritual warfare. He says it is "shining armor". When I am living the kind of life God wants me to live I seldom have to worry about spiritual defeat. You don't have to go around rebuking every demon when you are walking in obedience. When one begins to contend with you then you take authority, but otherwise "putting on Christ" is its own spiritual warfare.
- It is an "armor of light". Light extinguishes the darkness.
- How: Separation from sin & the world; dedication to Jesus & his Kingdom; appropriation by faith the Holy Spirit

Other things that I see that pertain to the time we're in.

IT'S TIME TO TRANSITION FROM A CHURCH MINDSET TO A KINGDOM MINDSET

- We have moved away from doctrinal alignment to missional alignment. The day of the denominational structure being the main means to accomplish kingdom impact is over. This doesn't mean that denominations are finished, but rather denominations must realign their methodology & philosophy with the current move of God's Spirit they will serve no useful purpose in the future.
- Southern Baptist on a local level are in many places flowing in this new paradigm, but on a denominational level they are becoming more exclusive.
- No longer is it about church growth, but about kingdom growth.
- We are more concerned about what God is doing in a city or region than in one church. Example of Mission Houston.
- We are more concerned about wholistic transformation of an entire society - business, gov't, arts, education, & church

IT'S TIME FOR THE SUPERNATURAL TO BECOME NATURAL

- Signs & wonders are becoming a normal part of our life in Christ.
- No longer a Word only gospel, but a Word & Spirit gospel

IT'S TIME TO TRANSITION FROM DESPAIR MENTALITY TO DOMINION MENTALITY

- A weak, frail, declining church to a strong, vital, reigning bride.
- From the church being raptured away before her defeat; to the church capturing the nations for her beloved Christ.
- The bride of Christ will not be a cowering, and fearful when the Lord returns, but rather conquering & fearless.
- I'm not suggesting she will take over the gov't of the world, but rather in the midst of great persecution she will stand unwavering in her commitment to Christ and be ablaze in sharing His gospel with the nations of the earth.

IT'S TIME TO TRANSITION FROM JUDGMENTALISM TO COMPASSION

- This is happening. Hurricane Katrina & so many other relief efforts & mercy ministries are being noticed by the culture at large.
- The church still has a prophetic role to call the nation back to God & away from sin. We can fulfill that mandate with greater effectiveness when we are at the same time serving the least of these.

Conclusion: Take off the old; put on Christ; love one another; wake up for our salvation is at hand.

Lord's Supper