**November 27, 2022 Romans 13:11-14**

***Dawn is Here***

**Scripture:** Romans 13:11-14 NRSV

*(11)Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; (12)the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; (13)let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. (14)Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*

**Notes:**

1. Understanding the ***present*** ***time*** is important.
   1. When Jesus came, suffering, death, and pain weren’t ***eradicated***.
   2. ***Suffering*** and ***sin*** still exist in our world.
   3. The ***present*** ***time*** is important for us as well.
   4. We are well aware of the power of the ***Holy*** ***Spirit***
2. Those who follow Christ already live as though Christ has ***returned***.
   1. The church is ***awake*** in Christ.
   2. God invaded the old age to bring about the ***new*** ***age***.
   3. ***Dawn*** was a busy time filled with activity.
3. The people of the ***light*** live as people of the ***light***.
   1. Those who follow Jesus—live ***differently***.
   2. Those who follow Christ, ***focus*** on love, grace, truth, hope.
   3. The people of Christ live as though the light already ***rules*** the world.
   4. We live in ***hope***, even while we still see the shadows of darkness.
4. Advent is the season of the ***dawn***.
   1. We are to be a ***glimpse*** of the world to come; a ***glimpse*** of the light.
   2. Our lives are radically ***transformed*** because Christ came.
   3. The ***night*** is nearly over; the ***day*** is almost here
   4. May the candle of ***hope*** be a reminder to us that we are people of the light

**Script:**

Advent is the season of the dawn. Since moving up the mountain I have seen some beautiful sunrises. The colors so bright and the diversity, which varies from blue to violet, reds, oranges, and yellows. But the good news this morning is that the light is coming, we can see glimpses of violet and orange along the horizon, but the sun isn’t up yet. There are still long stretches of shadow and places of darkness. The noises of the day are barely audible as everything from animals to infants begin to rouse.

Advent is the season of the dawn, where we live in the space between the darkness of a world without Christ and the light of a world with Christ; where we see the light coming, yet it hasn’t fully come. While we observe this season of Christ’s birth, the coming of light, we are also reminded that we are still Advent people, living in the glow of the dawn. We no longer are people of the darkness, we are people of the light, even while Christ’s return is still before us.

Romans 13 reminds us, “The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.” We are called and reminded that we are Advent people— people of the dawn. We live in the reality that the kingdom of God is now, yet is still to come in its fulfillment. On the first Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of hope, a reminder of the hope we have in Christ coming in a stable so long ago, but also a reminder of the hope we have that Christ will come again.

It’s a reminder that we are people of light. A light in a world that is still so often cloaked in darkness. And we are called to live, to love, to serve, to celebrate, to mourn, and to grieve; all in the light of hope. The light has come, and the light is coming. Stand with me as we share in our passage this morning from Romans 13:11-14

*(11)Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; (12)the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; (13)let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. (14)Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. Romans 13:11-14 NRSV*

**Understanding the present time is an important statement in Romans 13.** It communicates to the early church that there is an understanding of the current world of suffering, death, and pain. When Jesus came, these things weren’t eradicated. Suffering and sin still existed in the world, and the early church was familiar with them. Romans is a letter to the early church in Rome, the land of the Colosseum so they were well acquainted with the pain and suffering of the present time.

“The present time” isn’t that far off from something we could use in our context either. We often talk about difficult times or seasons in our lives. The COVID season has been particularly difficult. The reality of suffering, pain, and grief have been very evident for us. We can look at any news source and know quickly that suffering and sin still exist in our world.

Paul is highlighting that “this present time” is different for the people of Christ. While the church is well acquainted with the sin and suffering of the world, they are simultaneously aware of the power of the Holy Spirit and the resurrection of Christ in their lives. The present age is a thin veil dividing a world of suffering and sin from the glory that is to come. The early church lived in the midst of this thin veil, within the dawn of the coming reign of Christ. The present time is important for us as well. Although a couple thousand years and cultural differences divide us, we are still a church well acquainted with the sin and suffering of the world and simultaneously aware of the power of the Holy Spirit and the resurrection of Christ in our own lives and community of faith. We are still living in the midst of this thin veil, the dawn of the coming reign of Christ.

**Because of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, those who follow Christ already live as though Christ has returned.** Paul uses the image of waking up, which is a term used throughout the New Testament, often to point to those following Christ (they are asleep if they are not following), or to the idea of resurrection. It seems Paul is using a familiar image to remind the church they are awake in Christ. This is something they already know. It is also a reminder of their baptism and of their current participation in communion or love feast that points them to and reminds them of participation in the banquet yet to come.

In Christ, God invaded the old age to bring about the new age. The people of Christ, then, are living in the new age while awaiting Christ’s return. They live as people of light. It’s also important to note that in the geographical location of this text, dawn was a busy time. It got hot during the day, so, dawn was filled with activity. The idea is not to move slowly; there is much to be done.

**The people of the light live as people of the light.** Darkness, especially in the context of this passage, was seen as a time when anything was permissible—yet the church is called to live as people of light. This is not a works-versus-faith argument but a statement that those who live in the light. Those who follow Jesus—live differently. Those who live in the light do not participate in the acts of the night (where everything is permissible).

Paul lists several acts that are associated with the darkness carousing and drunkenness, sexual immorality, debauchery, dissension and jealousy. The terms “carousing” and “drunkenness” are plural in the Greek; they refer to the banquets honoring Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, who is always associated with drunkenness and wild parties. “Drunken revelry” would be another appropriate translation for these words. “Sexual immorality” is also plural in Greek. It could be defined as “sexual excesses.” We might define that as sexual promiscuity today. “Debauchery” is a combination of the prior words, indicating promiscuous, violent, and licentious indulgence. Living wildly and rebelliously “Dissension” and “jealousy” seem to mean jealous infighting.

These acts are things that go on in the darkness, they are used to contrast how those who live in the light are to act. Those who have been baptized, those who follow Christ, have been transformed. They are clothed not in the garments of Dionysus but in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not focused on satisfying urges but on love, grace, truth, hope the things of Christ.

Essentially, the people of Christ live as though the light already rules the world. They live as though Christ has returned and made things right. They are a glimpse of the kingdom to come, already in the present world. This is not a call only for the early church of Rome but for us as well. This is a call to the church then and now. We are people of the dawn. We are people of Advent. We live in hope, even while we still see the shadows of darkness. We live as people of the light.

Advent is the season of the dawn. The kingdom of God hasn’t fully come, all things aren’t made right yet, and to deny the reality of suffering and sin in our world would be a heartbreaking mistake.

But for those who live the reality of suffering, we are to be a glimpse of the world to come. Even now, in the rubble of decay, in the heartbreak of sin, we are to be a glimpse of the light. We are a community of hope, of grace, of goodness, of righteousness, and of love. Christ came, and our lives are radically transformed because of it. We are no longer people of darkness; we no longer behave as people of the night, we are people of the day. We cast off the ways of the world to live as people of the light.

We are to live as people who exist in a different kingdom. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. A kingdom that is actively breaking into our world, just like the morning breaks into the night. So we light a candle of hope today. May it be a reminder to us that we are people of the light and that we carry the hope that Christ has come and that Christ will come again. Let’s live as people of the dawn.