



**Sermon Transcription • Romans 13:11-14 (NIV)**

## **Wake Up!**

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**[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]**

So, many years ago, my wife and I were newlyweds, we had rented a basement suite together, so it was tiny, cozy spot that we had. And we had all these dreams. I was going to school, she was working, and again we're just trying to make ends meet, we've just started our life together. So, financially things were tight. But we had all these dreams. Hey, you know what, we will travel the world, and we will buy this and that and the other. For me, you know I had this dream, hey you know what, I'll have this sports car, convertible, maybe a Corvette. So, me just cruising down with my friend seated beside me, Jeff with his mullet, and you know, the wind blowing through his hair. It will be fantastic; it'll be cruising to Chilliwack. Fantastic, right? Jeff and I. And so, all these dreams that we had, and so one day I come home, and she shows me a stick, and I'm like "Oh what's that?" And she shows this stick and she's so excited, I'm like "Why are you so excited about a little stick?" And then the penny drops, and I realize that's a pregnancy test. Are you telling me what I think you're telling me? She's like "Yeah, we'll be parents!" And then all of a sudden it dawned on me that a car seat, a stroller, a playpen cannot fit in a Corvette. It can't. All of a sudden minivans were very attractive to me. So, I went out and bought one and I've never looked back since. It's parked outside. You see, at that very moment, I realized one thing, that I was now living in-between the times. You see, I was a parent, but not yet. I was going to be a Dad, but not yet. My wife was still pregnant at the time. Going to be a Dad. Not a Dad yet.

So now what am I going to do with all these dreams of travelling the world and owning a Corvette and all these things? What am I going to do with those dreams? I will gladly let them go because I have this tremendous opportunity to be a Dad. And then there's all these questions about how do I prepare myself for this new world, this glorious world that will be mine. How am I going to prepare myself for this? There's certain changes in my life that I need to make in order to live this life that is to come. I'm still in between the worlds here, now I'm beginning all these adjustments. You see this is what we'll be studying here today, together, where Paul is reminding his readers this: you're a Christian. Christ has done something tremendous for you and for me. He's forgiven our sins. He came, he died on the cross for you. Salvation is yours. He's done all of it. He's adopted you into his family. You are now a son and a daughter of the King. Praise God! This is good! This is awesome! But you still live in a fallen world. Christ will come back again and make all things new. So, all our suffering, all our misery, all our sorrow, all the sin, it'll all be gone when he comes. He'll make all things new. But right now, I'm still living in this in-between world. Now I'm a Christian – converted – so now how am I going to live my life in this in-between period? Where I know I have kissed the world goodbye, Christ is yet to come. I'm right here. How do I live my life there? This is what Paul is talking about in this passage. So, we'll look



at this text in three segments. You'll say in the first, we'll see, there is a command, almost, kind of like Wake up! Wake up dear Christian! Realize that you live in this in-between period. The darkness is about to end. The dawn is coming. Christ is coming again, so wake up and realize the times that we're living in. Second, Smarten up! Smarten up in the sense that now you're living in this in-between period. How are you to live? Are you going to still continue living as though Christ hadn't saved you? Are you still going to be entertaining your sinful practices? You're saved. Christ has redeemed you. So, how are you going to live your life? You need to smarten up! And then finally, dress up! How are you going to now combat, fight the sinful tendencies, the temptations that will keep coming? How do you fight them? You'll need to dress up! In what? Hah! You shall see ... in a few moments here. So, let's read the passage, and then we'll unpack it together. Romans 13:11-14, Paul says,

“And do this, understanding the present time: [Let me stop there for a moment. And do this. What is *this*? You see, he's just been talking about love, “owe no one anything *except* the debt of love.” He's been talking about love, love, love, love. So, he's saying and do this, love people with this in mind, is what he means then. Do this, understanding the present time.] The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”

### **[Wake Up!]**

Very, very rich passage. Man, we could preach three or four sermons from this particular text. But I have only have a few more minutes here, so let's get going. First point: wake up! And I'm zeroing in on verse 11 and twelve here. Romans 13:11-12,

“And do this, [keep loving people. The motivation behind the love is what?] understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”

So, let me give you an example. Now let's say you have this American friend. You have this American friend of yours, he just happens to be called Jeff. I'm not saying it's Jeff, but he just happens to be called Jeff. So, this friend of yours, you learned...you heard from the grapevine that his dear wife was expecting, and this was going to be his first child. First time parent! He's a newlywed and all that and a first-time parent. So, you learned that hey, his wife is pregnant! So, you're all excited. So, you're visiting your errands and all that and you stop at Starbucks. Who's there? Your friend, Jeff. You run to him; you hug him! Hey! Congratulations buddy! It's so good news.” He's like, “Yeah, my wife's expecting! It's now November, she's due around June.” You're so excited for him. So, you're just jubilant. And then he says, “Yeah, I'm so excited.” And you're thinking, “Oh, he's so excited to be a parent.” He's like, “No, I'm so excited about this tour that I'm going to do!”  
“Tour? What tour?”



“Oh, I’m going to tour the world!”

“What? Yeah, so how long are you gone for?”

“Oh, I’m gone for a year!”

“Gone for a year? Who are you travelling with?”

“Oh, I’m going alone!”

“And but your wife is expecting in June...”

“So, when are you leaving?”

“In January; back in December. Oh man, let me just tell you about this tour.” And then he begins to tell you how he’s travelling to Egypt, and he’ll see the pyramids and the Nile delta. And then he’ll go to Zambia and see the Victoria Falls. He’ll go to Madagascar. And you’re listening to all this, knowing,

“Are you ok? What about your job?”

“Ah, it’ll take care of itself.”

“But what about your wife? Are you going to be going to the hospital appointments, like, won’t you be missing all this?”

“Ay, ay, ay, it’ll take care of itself. But dude, let me tell you about Madagascar.” And he goes on and on and on and on. “Oh, I’ll be in Africa, maybe I’ll go and see Simba, because I watched him on TV. I’ll go see Simba. And by the way when I get back to Canada,” he says, “I saw someone on TV on a commercial who went to Canada and he bought a yellow knife and moose jaw. And I’ll buy both.”

You’re looking, and you’re thinking, “Jeff, man, your American is showing right here.” But then you would grab him, and you would call him by his three names, “Jeffrey Ronald Bucknam, there’s something wrong with you! Wake up!” Why would you say wake up? Why would you say wake up?

“Dude, there is a new reality that’s about to happen in your life. You’re going to be a dad. In June. What on earth are you thinking about travelling the world and leaving your poor wife alone? This is not the responsible thing to do! Wake up and realize the time that you’re living in right now.” This is what Paul is saying in our passage. Because he’s saying, love people, do all these things. See, he had just unpacked the gospel, Paul had, from Romans 3 all the way to Romans 11. He has just unpacked the gospel, telling people this is what Jesus Christ as done for you. The salvation you have in Christ, he has paid for your sins, he has brought you, immersed you in him. Nothing can separate you from the love of God. God demonstrated his own love for us in this, while we, you and I, rebels, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. How do you become a Christian, Romans 10. Confess in your mouth Jesus is Lord, believe in your heart, and you will be saved. It’s all done for you. Then chapter 12, he begins to unpack, ok so these are the basic, basic things that a Christian needs to do. You need to love. You know in view of God’s mercy, Romans 12:1,

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God [this is your spiritual act of worship] ...”

Romans 12:2,

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world.” [Why? Because you’re a Christian now, new creation, Christ paid all of it. You’re a Christian. So, let me show you how you’re going to do this.]



And he talks love, love. The main theme of Romans 12 – 13:10 is love. So, I'll show you. For instance, Romans 12:9,

“Love must be sincere.”

So, you have to love. Romans 12:10,

“Be devoted to one another in love.”

Romans 12:14,

“Bless those who persecute you.”

Why are you blessing them? The ones persecuting you. Because it's a loving act. Romans 12:17,

“Do not repay evil for evil.”

Why? That's a loving act. You love the person. Romans 12:19,

“Do not take revenge.”

Why? Loving act.

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him, thirsty ... give him something to drink.”

That's Romans 12:20. It's a loving act. Romans 13:8,

“Owe no one [anything] except [except] the debt of love.”

So, love, love, love, love, love, love, love. Now you may say, man loving some people is hard. You know when you see that guy, that American friend of yours, you want to turn. Why? Because he's hard to love, he's the <makes air quotes> 'extra grace required' kind of person. So, how are you going to do this? How are you going to love? And Paul will say the motivation... the motivation of loving this person is the fact that Christ is going to come back again and then make all things new. He's going to make all things new. That's the motivation. There's a new life that awaits you. A new hope. All the sufferings that you're going through right now, the difficulties and challenges, gone. So, I'll give an example that may drive this point home. So, when I was in Africa, grew up there, things were difficult. Parents were getting older, they're getting sicker, and you need a lot of money to get medical care. I was making \$40 a month. Man, I had to live on 40 bucks a month. How do you live? And yet gas is more expensive there than it is here? How do you live? On 40 bucks a month. Getting two coins to rub together was difficult. You had to walk everywhere, one meal a day, if that. And so, I looked, and I saw, ok, what would the future look like, what would my future look like? The future didn't look bright at all, living in Africa. Until there was an opportunity for me to travel to Scotland and do some pastoral



work there. I was now going to leave Africa and go to Europe, and then eventually come to Canada where there'll be a better life. Where I'll have a better job and have more resources to send home to take care of my family there. I cannot tell you the joy that the hope, the open door provided. I'm still in Africa for a time, still wondering how's Mom going to be and how are we going to eat and how am I going to make ends meet. But there was hope now. Because there was an open opportunity. Still there, I have to wait for a few months before I leave. Was I still having issues with some people? Yeah. Was I having disagreements with my friends? Sure. But, now because of the hope of a better life, those disagreements became so small and insignificant. Why? Because one day I'll be out of here, and one day I'll be able to pay tuition fees for some of my cousins who don't have tuition fees to go to school. Buy medication for some of my family members who cannot afford it right now. Right!

It would like if you were in deep financial debt, not because of your choosing, you tried an investment, you thought it was solid, and then it crashed. The market crashed. And you lost almost everything. And now the creditors are calling your house constantly, wanting you to pay, and you have no idea how you're going to do it. The kids are going crazy. Your spouse is crazy as well, and you're wondering how am I going to get myself out of this hole? You receive a phone call. Aunt Betty unfortunately passed away. It's really sad. But her inheritance, you're going to get the lion's share. How much? Enough to pay out all your debt and then some. Question: are your kids still crazy? Yes. Are you still butting heads with your spouse? Yup. But how are you going to look on those situations now? Now that you know, yeah, it will be a few months before you receive the money from Aunt Betty's inheritance, toward you, it'll be probably four, five months before they liquidate all the assets. So that you can now pay your debt. But now how do you view the challenges you're going through? Differently, right? Right. Different. Because there's hope now. You're looking at those challenges through the lens of "I will be ... the situation I'm in is going to significantly improve." That's the point. So, when Paul says in verse 11, "...understanding the present times, the hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber..." Oh, dear Christian, do you know the times that we're living in right now? Or are you asleep? You see, Satan is very crafty. He will lull you to sleep – he's not going to scare you; he will lull you to sleep with all this glitzy entertainment saturated life so that you can sleep deeply and have nothing to do with God. That's what he's going to do for you. He's going to put all the candy around you, and all the soft pillows of pleasures around you so that you do not pursue God. Paul is saying wake up from your slumber because our salvation, when Jesus is going to come back again, is nearer now than when you first believed. The night is nearly over. What's the night? The night is the age of darkness. The age when this – this current age right now – of suffering and misery and sin and darkness. This age is almost done. It has a shelf life, it's almost done. The night is nearly over, and the day is almost here. What's the day? The day is when Christ will come back and make all things new. And now your salvation will be complete – completed. No more suffering, no more sin, no more tears, no more cancer, nothing! That day is coming. This is the time you're living in. Do you realize that dear Christian? Wake up! Wake up! Is what Paul is saying. Understand the day – understand the times – we're in the last days and Christ's return is at hand. But again, it's not enough... it's not enough to just understand the times. It's not enough just to know Jesus is coming again soon. It's not enough to know that. You have to behave accordingly. Satan knows Jesus is coming back again. He does. Is that knowledge enough? No, it's not enough just to know the times that we're living in, we have to behave accordingly.

**[Smarten Up!]**

That's why, point number two, Paul will tell us to smarten up! Smarten up! Look at verse 12 and 13, Romans 13:12-13,

“The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So [he says] let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.”

You see in the first century they didn't have hydro. So, when it was dark, man it was dark! Good luck finding me! <laughter> It'd be a great place for us to play hide and seek! Ha ha! It was super dark. But it was during those times when those who will engage in carousing, this is drinking, and merrying, and having a party and being loud like some yahoos who do this during camping season. They do this in the dark, and then of necessity, it will lead to drunkenness or sexual immorality. When does this happen? People lingering in street corners, which leads to debauchery. Debauchery is this un... unhindered, unhindered sexual perversion where people are not even embarrassed about what they wear and what they do in front of others. Not even embarrassed. Not in dissension. Dissension is arguing and arguing and arguing. Which leads obviously to jealousy when you're not winning. So, Paul will say, put aside the deeds of darkness, put them side. So, I'll give you an example. So, my son. I have a wonderful son. Man, he is smart. So, he was in Grade 8 last year. And so, in Grade 8 he's doing math. And he was just very little effort, and he's acing the tests, acing the assignments, he's really doing well, he and a select few friends of his. A little geeky. So, towards December of last year, the teacher comes and says, “Hey, you guys! It seems like you've really grasped Grade 8 math, so how about this – why don't you study the remaining chapters and then before the Christmas break, you guys can challenge the Grade 8 math exam, and if you pass the exam you don't have to do Grade 8 math anymore. So, in January you could jump into Grade 9 math, and you're still in Grade 8. He's like, “Oh, sweet!” So, he studies and sure enough he aces the thing. So of course, I'm very proud of my boy! Very smart, like his Daddy, you know. So, he aces this thing and then come January, so the teacher says you need to put him in an online class to do Grade 9 math. So sure. Online math, he's in. So, January, February, March, Spring Break comes around. End of Spring Break I call him, “Hey son, come on over here! So how are you doing?”

“Oh, I'm doing ok, it's fine, It's all great.”

“OK, so what assignments...”

“Oh yeah, I'm still doing – yeah, I still have a bit to do,” and all that. I said, “OK, now bring me your folder, let me see.”

“Ah yeah, yeah, but, but...”

“No, no, no, bring the folder.” So, he brings the folder. So, I open the folder. Now I know what he was doing in Spring Break. Almost all Spring Break, yeah, he's playing video games. Fine, yeah, he's a smart kid, so give him some little break time, you know. So, I'm now looking at his folder. This is April, so I know May, June is coming. And I look at the folder and I realize, “Oh my word!” He's barely done math. So, I look at him, “Son, what have you been up to?”

“Ah, well, you know I was doing this, and I have a plan, I was going to do this...”





“No, no, no, no. Son what have you been doing?” You see what I realized he’s been doing is, there’s a little friend of his called Minecraft. And a little friend of his called Roblox. And a little friend called Fortnite. He and Fortnite have been best friends and have been really fellowshipping together for a long time. A very committed friend, that. And so, what do I do? As I’m looking at this, I realize, son I need to remind you of the time you’re living in right now. We’re in April, and in June you need to have finished the entire course. So, guess what, son? You’re a student, you need to act like one. This means you need to put aside, you need to cast off, you need to give up your three friends: Minecraft, Fortnite, and Roblox. You need to give up these friends. You need to strive! You need to struggle and assert yourself as a student. In order to finish this race well, son. You need to do this.

You see, for Paul it’s not just enough to understand the end times, like my son understands, hey you know what, at the end of June I need to have finished. No! you have to live accordingly. Christians have to live accordingly. We have to live accordingly. Hence, when Paul says here, “the night is nearly over, the day is almost here, so because of that, night nearly over, day almost here, you’re in between the times. Hey so put away the deeds of darkness. See, you’re a Christian already. Saved by grace. Jesus loves you. Died for you. Forgiven you. Has given you eternal life. You have eternal life, but not yet. Because he hasn’t come back yet to make all things new. So, you’re still waiting for him. So how do you live? Put to death, put aside the deeds of darkness, put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently. So what Paul is saying here is, Christian needs to do things: first, you need to put aside, you need to cast off, you need to give up the deeds of darkness, and he will name them: carousing, and drunkenness, sexual immorality and debauchery, dissention and jealousy. He’s talking to Christians. Question – are you doing any of these things? [pause] Are you doing any of these things? You’re a Christian, so Paul will say to you, put them aside, cast them off, give them up, put aside the deeds of darkness. The second thing he will say is, put on the armor of light. Now we’ll talk about the armor of light in just a bit. But think about the language he’s using here. The armor of light. Do you use an armor to go to the beach? “Hey, let’s go to a beach! I’ve got my armor on!” “Hey, let’s go to a party, I’ve got my armor on!” “Let’s go on holiday, I’ve got my armor in my suitcase.” Do you do that? No! you don’t take an armor on holidays; you don’t go to a beach or to a party with armor. When you see someone in armor you know they are going to engage in conflict. Right? They’re going to engage in conflict, so Paul would say here, “Put on the armor of light.” Why would he use the word *armor*? Because in Paul’s mind, Christianity involves a fight. A fight with who? It’s not with *who*, it’s with *what*. You’re fighting the deeds of darkness that are in your life. This is the fight. So, the image I’ll give you is this – think of the Olympics. So, the Olympics are happening, and you’re watching shows. One of the sports I enjoy watching in the Olympics is wrestling. Because you have two individuals, two wrestlers, male or female, and they’re basically the same size, the same weight, and they’ll now wrestle to try to pin the other. And man, they engage! And now they’re tussling and tussling and if one slips up, the other uses that slippage to their advantage. And so, there’s always this tussle, back and forth, back and forth, it’s sometimes literally blood, sweat and tears. As they’re striving and agonizing, trying to pin the other. And it’s a tussle and a tussle and a tussle and a tussle as they’re wrestling. Question dear Christian – is that the way you describe your fight against sin? Is that the way you would describe your fight against sin? What about you? And you? And you? Is that the way you would describe it? What about you? Is that the way you would describe your fight against sin? Where it is a wrestling match. Where you’re struggling and agonizing because sometimes it has you, but then you turn



around and you pin it there. And you keep it. And sometimes it wants to have the better of you and you pin it there still. And it's a tussle and a struggle and a fight and an agonizing. Is that the way? You see, Paul is saying this is what a Christian does in this in-between period. You're a Christian, saved by grace. You bear the name of Christ. You're waiting for Christ's return. How do you live in the world that is filled with evil and darkness? Yeah, you strive. You put aside the deeds of the flesh. You're fighting in Jesus. In Luke 13:23-24 (ESV), Jesus says this. Someone asked Jesus a weird question. The question is,

“... ‘Lord, will those who are saved be few?’ [What a weird question. Will those who are saved be few?] And he [Jesus] said to them, ‘Strive [the word strive means agonize, strive] to enter through the narrow door.’”

Agonize, to enter the kingdom of Heaven through the narrow door. What was Jesus talking about there? It will be a fight. Against who? The evil desires that are in you! Paul will say this, in Colossians 3:1-10, Paul will say,

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, [You're a Christian, since then you have been raised with Christ,] set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [verse 2 of Colossians 3] Set your minds [So set your hearts, verse 1; verse 2, set your minds] on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God [when you became a Christian]. When Christ, who is your life, [and my life, when Christ who is our life,] appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. [So, in other words, in the second coming of Christ, we will all be – we will all be made new and we will enjoy eternity with him. Now, in light of all that, verse 5. Same passage, Colossians 3].

“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature [put to death whatever belongs to your earthly – you see the things that belong to your earthly nature, they want to live. They want to live! The jealousy, the greed, the lust, the angry, the unforgiveness, man it wants to live! And Paul is saying, “No! Put to death therefore whatever belongs to your earthly nature!” And he names them]: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these [Paul says], the wrath of God is coming. [That's what he's saying. Kill it!] You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these [and then he gives another list]: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips [filthy language from your lips. Rid yourself of all that. Verse 8]. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

Wow! Put to death, dear Christian. How are you doing? How are you doing? How would you describe your fight against sin – you see the point is, if we're really honest, we're not really tussling and wrestling, and striving with our sin. It's kind of like we're passive with it, and sin has a field day with us every day and twice on Sunday. That's why Paul would say, “Smarten up!” But the big question is, how do we do this? How do we fight against our evil desires? How do we fight against that?







## [Dress Up!]

Paul would say, “Dress up!” Verse 14, he says,

“Rather, clothe yourselves [clothe yourselves] with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.”

It's interesting in verse 12, he'll talk about, Hey, you know, put aside the dreams of darkness, and put on the armor of light; verse 14, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the armor of light means you're clothing yourselves with Jesus Christ. So, how does this work? This is a good question. Think of actors who are doing a good Hollywood movie, blockbuster movie. And what these actors do, depending on the role, if it's a really good movie, and the actor will win an Oscar from portraying this character. What the actor will do is he will go and hang out with people who lived through this. So, for instance, if they're doing... if they're doing a show on World War II, right now we're in Remembrance Day and we're remembering the sacrifice of those who died to give us the freedoms we enjoy here. So if it is a movie to do with World War II, and this particular actor is trying to emulate a story, a real story of someone who went through difficulties and struggles, what they'll do is spend a lot of time watching film after film and documentary after documentary and he'll go and live with a veteran and multiple veterans and listening to story after story after story. Or if it is a show about, hey, this person who is schizophrenic, they might go to the hospital, and say, to the psych ward, and live with people who are schizophrenic, who are in the psych ward, and he may stay there for months on end. Why? Because they're trying to forget themselves, and assume the new role, the new character of someone who's going through schizophrenia. So that when they're filming, you could look at this person and say, yeah surely that person is who they're depicting themselves to be. This is kind of like on putting on the armor of Christ. But it's more than just imitating behaviour. See, Halloween just happened recently. And I don't know about you, but my door some kids came and knocked and looking for candy. And when you opened the door, you see all these funny costumes. And oh, I'm an Elsa and I'm Jack Sparrow, and I'm whatever, right? And you're giving these kids candy and so on and so forth as they come to your door. Now these kids are pretending to be who they're not. Is that the same as a child who will sit next to the mom, mom is putting lipstick on and mascara because she wants to go out, and this little girl is also trying to put on the mascara and put on some lipstick and look like Mom and put on makeup. And Mom is howling, because the kid is just doing all these crazy things. And they look weird. But Mom is trying to coach this little girl and teach her how to do this. This girl is not wanting just to imitate Mom, this child wants to be like Mom. They want to be like Mom. Here. It's not just imitating now. All her heart, or his heart, they want to be like their parents. This is what putting on Christ looks like.

So, you may ask, ok, so how does this armor, this putting on of Christ help us in our striving? How does it help us in our putting aside the deeds of darkness? How do we actually do this? Well, it's daily. Daily. Every single day, it is this deliberate conscious acceptance of the Lordship of Christ. Daily. Where you wake up in the morning, and this day it's a deliberate conscious acceptance, Christ is Lord over my life, which means he will have absolute control on my motives, my desires, and the deeds of my life. All of it, my motives, my desires, my actions, all his! In other words, today I will consciously



allow Christ to direct my thinking and my conduct. So, this means, every single day I will choose to trust him as my protection. I don't know what today will – what I'll face out there, but I'll choose to trust him. Because he has said as well that hey, you know, he said I am sending you as sheep among wolves. So, what will it – I need protection. If I'm a sheep and I'm going among wolves, I need him to protect me, so I'll choose to trust him. I'm not going to trust in my money, I'm not going to trust in my wit, I'm not going to trust in my reputation, I will trust Jesus. Today I'll choose to hope in him. How? Because he is the supplier of my future needs. I'm not going to trust my investments, I'm not going to trust my income, I'm not going to trust my... my inheritance that I'm going to get. No, I'm going to hope in Christ. Because I know the climate can change like that. So, I'll choose to hope in him. I'll choose to love him as my supreme treasure. Why? Because you see, when I engage in drunkenness, when I engage in sexual immorality, or I'm busy fighting for my own turf, and I'm arguing with people, what I'm seeking is joy. And those things will not give me the joy that I desire. Only Christ will. Only Christ will. I will choose to do this. Now, you may turn around, and say, "But Ezra, I am trying! I am trying!" And you're crying, "I'm trying to do this! I am trying to do this, but I keep failing!"

How then do I as a Christian continue to put my hope in Christ; my hope in him, and make him my treasure. How do I do this practically?" Response: in order to trust Jesus, you need to listen to his Word a lot. You need to listen to his Word a lot. Think of it this way, if you're dating someone and you want to marry them, you find them attractive and you want to marry them, but you're dating them still. What do you want to do? You want to spend time with this person, hearing their stories. The more you hear their stories, the more you trust them. The more you you hear their stories, the more you trust them, right? So, you need to hear the Word of God a lot. What does the Word of God say about this, Jesus? Hear the Word of God a lot in order to trust him. How do you put your hope in him? Well, you remember his promises. You remember his promises. What has he promised? He's always true to the promise. So, if his promise and his promise and his promise and you've heard his stories and he's promising and he's promising now you can put your hope in that promise, that he will never let you down. Even though it looks cloudy and the storm is about to come. You still put your hope in him. How do you make him your treasure? By remembering his beauty. And what is his beauty? Oh, what did Jesus Christ do for you? If you were God, would you save you? If you were God, would you save you? Yet Jesus saved you. He loved you when you were unlovable. He loved me when I was unlovable. So, we recall his beauty and his grace toward me and toward you. You see, as I finish, here, many parents who are expecting children, many parents who are expecting children for the first time. You're going to be a first-time parent. There's not a moment through the course of your day, while you're in your pregnancy, while you're in the in-between time, there's never a moment when you're not thinking about baby. Yes, you are busy with your work, with your errands and things need to be done, and papers need to be signed, and so on and so forth. Responsibilities need to be taken care of, yes. But there is never a moment where baby's arrival is out of your mind. It's always there. And when people come and visit you and you're talking about life and your fellowshiping and you're playing cards and all that, you will talk about baby. At some point, that conversation will come. Baby's coming, baby's coming, baby's coming. Oh, dear Christian, Christ is coming back again, what are you talking about? Have you ordered the affairs of your life to reflect that the Messiah, the King of Kings is coming? May the Lord help us to wake up, to smarten up, and to dress up as we await the return of our glorious King. Let us pray.



So Father, with these few words, how I pray that you'd fill us with your Holy Spirit, and help us to realize the times we are living in, but also Father, grant us the strength to put to death the deeds of the flesh, to put them aside, to give them up. Oh Father, how I pray you'd help us. We commend ourselves now to you, in Jesus name. And God's people said, "Amen."