

The Day is at Hand Romans 13:11-14

Intro

Ammonium carbonate is the active ingredient in what is commonly referred to as smelling salts. They came into use way back in the time of the Roman Empire.

And have been utilized over the millennia to revive the fainting and to stimulate.

From reviving fainting women in the Victorian era on their fainting couches to stimulating energy in sports like the NFL, competitive weightlifting, and track and field to name a few, smelling salts have been leaned upon for their eye opening effect.

ESPN article:

imagine military-grade concentrations of Windex, wasabi and Vicks VapoRub that get T-shirt-cannoned up both nostrils -- that most users instinctively snap their heads back to escape the stench.

The initial discomfort is quickly followed by a sensation that your breathing pathways have not just opened up but expanded exponentially while ramping up your alertness to an almost euphoric level. (David Fleming, *Waiting to Inhale*)

I am not condemning or condoning the use of smelling salts, nor am I being paid by the big Smelling Salts lobby.

Here's the deal - there are times in the life of every Christian where we find ourselves spiritually lagging, apathetic toward what is great and ultimate, forgetful about God, lazy in our spiritual life. We are busy, we are distracted, we are hassled:

Read the OT and you find again and again a central issue in the sin of the Israelites - they forgot God.

“Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, (Deuteronomy 8:11)

That is why God speaks to us through his Word in various places in a way that is straightforward, pulling no punches, in order to rouse us from that place of laziness and lethargy

Our text this morning is a kind of spiritual smelling salts. This text is a strong tonic to wake us up to ultimate realities and to revive our zeal for faithfulness. To rouse us from spiritual laziness and forgetfulness, to open up our spiritual lungs to breathe in grace and to make us alert and energized to move from this place with renewed zeal and spiritual fervor.

I see here three calls to stimulate our faithfulness

I. Wake Up

- A. You may recall that over the last 2 chapters, the inspired apostle has been exhorting us to genuine love and teaching us what it's all about. Last week we learned that love fulfills the law of Christ and when we love our neighbor as ourselves, we fulfill the law and find ourselves in the happy condition of living lives that are pleasing to God.
- B. v. 11 "besides this you know the time" - besides what? Here Paul is calling us to, having surveyed these exhortations to love and submission, take all of that and to consider the time that we live in and how these things matter and are relevant in these days. What time Paul? This having been written almost 2 thousand years ago - is this even relevant - a very different time?
 - 1. The biblical authors understood and we must understand as well that the central event in human history is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his death, burial, resurrection and ascension.

[1] Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, [2] but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. [3] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Hebrews 1:1-3)

- 2. When he ascended a countdown began. Every day proceeding from that day is part of a countdown to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ when he will establish his glorious kingdom in a new heavens new earth - this world redeemed and restored in glory
- 3. This is the time - biblically - the last days - the last days is all of the time between the ascension of Jesus and his return

Illustration: No lack of prognosticators declaring that these are the last days. Good bit of money in it. One fella who declared that the world would end in 1982 and then again in 2007 recently declared that Trump will be elected an asteroid is going to devastate the earth. I would suggest we have a category for the reality that America might not be in the center of God's end time plans...

- 4. These are the last days - just as much in Paul's time as in ours for these are the many days that Christians throughout church history have anticipated the return of Christ - no man knows the day or the hour...
- C. That's why he says "salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed" - IOW every day that goes by since our conversion draws us closer to salvation. Haven't we already received salvation? Aren't we already SAVED? Yes, and we anticipate the fullness of it

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. (Romans 5:9)

[18] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. [19] For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. [20] For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope [21] that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Romans 8:18-21)

1. The day is at hand when Christ will be revealed in glory and the world will be judged - but for those who have been justified by his blood - standing in the right before God through faith in the Savior who died for our sins - we will be saved from the wrath of God that will be executed on all who have rebelled against God in sin, suppressed the truth of God in unrighteousness and have not believed upon the Son
2. On that day - for all who are in Christ - it will be the glorious day that all of the created order that has been laboring under the curse of sin will be set free from bondage obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God
 - a) He's coming to save us out of a world of suffering, sorrow, and death and bring us into the fullness of adopting love where we will live in a world free from sin, suffering, and death shall be no more and he will wipe away every tear from our eyes - THAT DAY IS THE DAY THAT IS AT HAND
 - b) CALL TO UNBELIEVERS
- D. All of that is coming and so "the hour has come for you to wake from sleep" v. 12 the night is far gone - almost, nearly - the days is at hand - wake up!
 1. The night being a metaphor for this world, darkened by sin and corruption, this world that is passing away and will be cleansed and renewed in the brilliance of the coming of Christ - every day our salvation draws closer - AWAKE CHRISTIAN - WAKE FROM SLEEP - WAKE FROM SPIRITUAL SLUMBER AND APATHY

Illustration: some of us hit the snooze button - never understood - bad for your health

2. DON'T HIT THE SNOOZE BUTTON - we are in the epilogue of history
3. To the spiritually drowsy, to the apathetic and forgetful - AWAKE! CHRIST IS COMING!
- E. Application
 1. This is the kindness of God to call us through his sergeant to be alert - to stay awake - I am confident there are very few of us who think too often about the return of Christ.
 - a) Busy, distracted, self-absorbed, consumed by a million different things - don't grow sleepy - wake up beloved - wake up to what is coming - salvation draws nearer every day - THE DAY is at hand
 2. Comfort for all who are suffering - maybe a long time - your suffering has an expiration date - SALVATION IS COMING don't lose hope - Peter - place your hope

fully in the grace that is to be revealed at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Everything sad is going to come untrue.

- F. We have strong motivation for faithfulness the Christian in the grace we have received through the gospel and the future grace that we will experience when Christ returns is also part of our motivation for faith and faithfulness. We see this as he continues

II. Walk Right

- A. v. 12...so then last us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light - what does he mean by works of darkness?

[19] And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. [20] For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. [21] But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” (John 3:19-21)

- B. Cast off those attitudes and activities that are wicked in the sight of God - that belong to a world darkened by sin and put on the armor of light - the promises and attitudes and activities that belong to the future glory that is coming. Begin living now as you will then in a redeemed world free from sin

[5] For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. [6] So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. [7] For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. [8] But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. [9] For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, [10] who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. (1 Thessalonians 5:5-10)

1. ARM YOURSELF WITH FAITH, LOVE, HOPE OF SALVATION, TRUTH OF THE ONE WHO HAS SAVED US FROM WRATH WHO DIED SO THAT WHETHER AWAKE OR ASLEEP WE LIVE WITH HIM - ARMOR OF LIGHT
- C. STUDY OF ESCHATOLOGY - LEADS TO GOD-HONORING MORALITY - NOT DOING IT RIGHT!
- D. v. 13 - let us walk properly as in the daytime a list of sins that Paul urges us to resist - sins that will indeed cause spiritual slumber, laziness
 1. 3 categories - addressing both actions and attitudes
 - a) Orgies - carousing and drunkenness - living to get lit and partying your life away
 - b) Not giving oneself over to immorality or sensuality - covers the whole gamut of sexual sin
 - c) Maybe surprising - quarreling and jealousy - jealousy and arguing in the same breath as other sins that we may think of and treat as “really bad ones” - sobering effect on us - minimize more “respectable sins”

[14] But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. [15] This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. [16] For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. (James 3:14-16)

- d) A WORLD WERE BILLIONS ARE ENGAGED IN THESE ACTIVITIES EVERY DAY
- 2. What these things all have in common besides being offensive to a holy God and not in keeping with the conduct of those who are called to represent him - is that these are the kinds of things that will knock you unconscious spiritually. PUT YOU IN A COMA
- E. Application
 - 1. Struggling in any of these kinds of things. Given yourself over to sin and you know, you feel the apathy you have toward God. WAKE UP! RISE UP! CRACKS OPEN THE SPIRITUAL SMELLING SALTS!
 - a) Run to Christ - he is eager to forgive our sins and cleanse us anew - to show us grace
 - b) Grace to forgive our sins - grace to help us in our time of need to rise up and walk in his footsteps
 - c) Talk with someone you trust - talk to a pastor if you feel stuck - exhort one another

[24] And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

- d) Struggling with sin is not the problem - struggling means there is life - when we stop struggling is when we start falling asleep
- 2. Implicit application - cast off any preoccupation that consumes our time and thinking in such a way that we live as though we are still in the dark - maybe it's video games - or insta - we are those of the the daytime - walk properly.
- 3. Wake Up, Walk Right, Wear Christ - Vital key - cast off the works of darkness - do not walk in the sins that are common to the darkness - but rather

III. Wear Christ

- A. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ - and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. So, the way we live in light of eternity - as the day draws near involves regularly putting off sin and putting on Christ
- B. Make no provision for flesh to gratify its desires - what does that mean? I HAVE FLESH! Is he saying that the desires we have in our human bodies are fundamentally wrong and to be resisted? He's not talking about taking care of our bodies or enjoying the man good gifts that God has given us - prohibition to satisfy my desire for a Popeye's spicy chicken sandwich - open on Sundays

1. Flesh here - as elsewhere - refers to the category of attitudes and behaviors that belong to the old way of life and not the new of the Spirit under the reign of grace that we live in through faith in Christ. While we have been rescued from sin - the enslaving power broken - the presence of sin remains - and we must resist the many temptations to sin that we face both internal and external
 - a) Must not gratify sinful desire - those remnants and echoes of the old man -
MAKE No provision - no compromise, no quarter, no place reserved in our thinking and acting in the flesh
- C. How do we do this? Paul says by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. What does that mean exactly? What does that look like practically? If it so important for our faithfulness we need to understand. Not a hyper-mystical thing for “really spiritual people”

To put on the Lord Jesus Christ means to embrace again and again, in faith and confidence, in grateful loyalty and obedience, Him to whom we already belong...It means to follow Him in the way of discipleship and to strive to let our lives be molded according to the pattern of the humility of His earthly life. It means so trusting in Him and relying wholly upon the status of righteousness before God which is ours in Him, that we cannot help but live to please Him. (Charles Cranfield)

1. We fight against remaining sin - we walk properly as in the daytime - embracing HIM again and again each day in faith and confidence - our lives molded to his humility - trusting in him relying upon his grace - knowing that we stand righteous before God in him - OH IF WE PUT HIM ON WE CANNOT HELP BUT LIVE TO PLEASE HIM AND NOT OUR SINFUL DESIRES
- D. Application
1. Working through our temptations - PUT OFF AND PUT ON

Close

The day is at hand - it's been a long time - stay awake

We keep our anticipation evergreen - we keep hope alive - it is armor and strength as we make our way to a salvation that is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

Next week the day after the election whatever the outcome we know that our salvation is not in the victory of our political party but in him! Calm us whatever the outcome. Living in light of day drawing near is about that sort of thing too.

This life is long and so short - We keep hope alive. Like one waiting for a loved one who has been gone a long time:

A story is told in Smithsonian Magazine of a young woman named Lorrie Stirm who's father went missing during the Vietnam War:

Sitting in the back seat of a station wagon on the tarmac at Travis Air Force Base, in California, clad in her favorite fuchsia miniskirt, 15-year-old Lorrie Stirm felt that she was in a dream. It was March 17, 1973, and it had been six long years since she had last seen her father, Lt. Col. Robert L. Stirm, an Air Force fighter pilot who was shot down over Hanoi in 1967 and had been missing or imprisoned ever since. She simply couldn't believe they were about to be reunited. The teenager waited while her father stood in front of a jubilant crowd and made a brief speech on behalf of himself and other POW's who had arrived from Vietnam as part of "Operation Homecoming."

The minutes crept by like hours, she recalls, and then, all at once, the car door opened. "I just wanted to get to Dad as fast as I could," Lorrie says. She tore down the runway toward him with open arms, her spirits—and feet—flying. Her mother, Loretta, and three younger siblings—Robert Jr., Roger and Cindy—were only steps behind. "We didn't know if he would ever come home," Lorrie says. "That moment was all our prayers answered, all our wishes come true."

Our king is coming. Our beloved is coming and he's bringing our home with him. When he returns, all of our prayers will be answered, all of our wishes will come true

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20)

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