

Romans 13:11-14
December 1 & 2, 2019

Are you ready for Christmas? Did you get some Christmas shopping done on Black Friday? Or did you stay as far as you could from the crowds of people on Black Friday. Do you have your decorations up in your home? Do you have your tree up? Or are you one of those people who go out shopping for Christmas on December 24th? Whether we are ready for Christmas, it will still come. As much as we might want to change time, we can't. The end of the day will come today. The beginning of a new day will be here tomorrow. It will come, because we can't stop it.

This morning, we begin a new season of the church called "Advent." It's a time that we get ready for Christ's "coming." We get ready to see that little Christ-child lying in a manger. For thousands of years God's people had waited for God to keep his promise. Already, way back in the Garden of Eden, God made a promise to send a Savior. No one was going to stop Jesus from coming to this world.

Yet, it is Jesus' second coming at the end of the world that makes the first coming have any meaning. If Jesus' did not have to rescue us from God's Judgment, then he would have to reason to come into this world as a small child born in Bethlehem. That's why this first Sunday in Advent focuses on Jesus' Second Coming at the end of the world. The two are connected together. That's why Paul writes the warning in our text today.

"The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." For many people, there is the time that we are supposed to wake up and the time we actually wake up. The device that makes that extra sleep possible is what is known as the snooze button. This magical button gives us the option of getting up now or getting a few extra minutes of sleep. Perhaps it is snooze button that has trained our brains to pay less attention to the first alarm.

This morning the Apostle Paul tells us that there is no snooze button for Judgment Day. Every day of our lives brings us that much closer to the end of our lives. God has given us time. He has given the human race time. In our Gospel Lesson for today, Jesus speaks about the time he gave the human race at the time of Noah. For 120 years, Noah was telling the people that there was a flood coming. They saw him building a boat a 1 ½ times the length of a football field (450 ft.). But then the Day of Judgment came. The people of Noah's day had run out of time. God sealed the Ark, and the floodwaters rose. Out of all the people in the world by the time of Noah, only eight people were awake. Think of how many millions of people were surprised when the deluge hit. They ignored the warnings and signs. God carried out his judgment.

The Apostle Paul says that it is time to wake up. **"The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber."** Apparently, some of the Christians at Rome were falling spiritually asleep. They were beginning to close their eyes to God. Paul tells them that it is time to wake up. God also says to us: *Wake up! I have opened your eyes of faith. Don't let them go closed again.*

We don't know when that time will run out for us. Maybe it will run out before this sermon ends. Maybe before Christmas it will end. Maybe in 2020. Maybe it will end in another thousand years. After all, the Apostle Paul told us 2000 years ago that **"our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed."** It is time to wake up. It's time to be ready for his coming again. For when that day comes, you can't say, *"Give me a minute Jesus..."* You don't have time to brush your teeth. You don't have time to put a new suit or new dress on. You can't go to the next athletic event. You can't get your house in order. When Jesus comes, that's it. **"That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."** (Mt. 24:39-42)

How do we get ready for his coming? We hold on to Jesus. There was a story of a father who was with his two boys, a 3 year old and a 12 year old at the lake cottage. While the father was just do some projects in the house, the two boys were out on the dock. The older boy was fishing, the three year old was trying to get into the boat that was tied up to the pier. Suddenly, the three year old fell into the water. His older brother began to scream for help. The father came

running and jumped into the lake without hesitation. The water was so dark and murky that he could find his son on the bottom of the lake. He came up for air, and went down once again. He couldn't find his son. As he was coming up for air, he found his son. He was holding on to one of the posts of the dock about 4 feet underwater. His father pulls him up and out of the water. Everyone was fine.

As he calms down, the father asked his son – *what were you doing down there? Why were you holding on to the post under the water?* The boy turned to his father and said: *I was waiting for you, Dad. I was waiting for you to come and get me.* There are times in our life that everything is dark and murky around us. It's hard to see and understand why things are happening the way they are. It feels like we are just barely holding on to life. Here's the promise that God gives you when your life is filled with tears and sorrow. He says *Hold on, I'm coming. I'm coming soon.* The Son of God came into the darkness of this world to bring light. He came to find you. He comes to pull you up and out of the water, to a life that will never end. He wants to take you to a place where there is no more pain, sorrow or darkness. That place will have no sin or no sorrow because all the sin and sorrow of this world has been paid for by Jesus' blood. As we begin to look at the coming of Jesus in the next weeks, let's also remember that he will come to take us out of the world and be with him forever in heaven. Let's give thanks that **“our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.”** Come Lord Jesus, come. Amen.