***Know the Time  
Romans 13:11  
RO169-01***

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Please turn in your Bibles to Romans 13:11-14 as we begin a new section today. Our subject is "The Consummation of Salvation," and this is segment number one.

**Pay Back Evil with Love**

In the portion of the book of Romans which deals with the application of doctrine to daily living, God the Holy Spirit has made two basic demands of Christians. First of all, He has instructed us not to pay back equal treatment with equal treatment. Secondly, he has told us to treat every person with mental attitude "agape" love. These virtues are the product of God the Holy Spirit working in the life of a believer. The sin nature in man often tries and does counterfeit them to some degree. But the real capacity not to give people back what they give you in the way of evil, and the real capacity to treat people with mental attitude goodwill, is not natural to any human being. It is something that God must produce in us, or it's not there.

Nevertheless, it is easy to see how absolutely wonderful human relationships would be in all areas of life if these two qualities alone were practiced by Christians. Probably all of us can think back this week to some contact with another human being where, had we brought to bear not to give them back what they're giving to us in a way of what is unkind; unreasonable; and, unfair, what a difference it would have been in what our experience would have been at that point in time. Had we taken the attitude of exercising "agape" love toward someone that was acting in a very offensive, unloving way, what a difference it would have made in that particular point in time in our relationship.

A talk show host recently had his nose broken as the result of a riot that took place during the taping of one of his shows, as a chair came flying across the room and hit him on the nose. The subject of the show had to deal with race relationships. And, as one group expressed, it's very unkind and unloving and an ugly outlook on life, the other side finally couldn't stand it anymore. So, a fracas broke out. Evil was returned with evil. Mental attitude hatred was not exchanged with mental attitude love, and the show director got a broken nose. It all would have been different had these people been capable of listening to what was said, and responding with these two basic principles. It's obvious that all of human relationships would be immediately transformed on the face of the earth if people quit giving evil back for evil, and treated people with "agape" love. That, of course, is the way human relationships will be conducted in the millennium. And we Christians, who have the Holy Spirit, are capable of having a head start on that kind of a lifestyle.

**Love your Neighbor as Yourself**

Conflicts, of course, today would be dramatically reduced between people, and life would be happier all around if these two principles were practiced. The royal law of God, which is expressed for us in the book of James, calls upon us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. If we do this, the apostle Paul has told us that it will ensure that we will obey God's moral laws. When you obey God's moral laws, then life becomes a very happy experience, and it is happy not only for yourself, but it is happy for other people as well, because you do not go out wounding them.

Here at the end of Romans 13:11-14, Paul now tells us why "agape" love is especially important to the present evil age – this age since the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven. Verse 11 is one of those verses that has numerous ramifications. I'll do my best to tie them all together, and call them to your attention. The greater background you have in doctrine will enable you to more deeply appreciate what this verse is saying. Furthermore, it will enable you to be alerted to a very important point of doctrine that you need to keep in mind at this stage of your life, and at this point in human history.

So, I hope you will pay attention, and not be distracted by the cares of life, or by the good handouts that we have passed out to you, which are not for reading during the service. But we do hope that you will take them home for your afternoon reading.

The apostle Paul says in Romans 13:11, "And that knowing the time (that it is now high time) to wake out of our sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The first two words, "And that," require the addition of a verb: a word like "do," because what this expression means is: "And this do." And what it is referring to is what he has just been talking about in the context before, about exercising mental attitude "agape" love toward all human beings.

**Knowing the Time**

So, he says, "And the reason this is so important; the reason you should do this; and, the reason you should exercise the James 2:8 royal law of God, of loving your neighbor as yourself is for this reason." And he's going to introduce the importance of exercising this kind of love in another way, for another purpose: "Knowing the time." The word "knowing" is the Greek word "oida." This is the word for knowledge which we have by rational processes. It is something that we've arrived at because we think it through, or because we have a burst of intuition.

There's another Greek word for knowledge which has to do with what you learn by experience – something that you learn as a result of your practice. This is knowledge as the result of information that you have, and that you have thought through, and arrived at a conclusion. It connotes specifically understanding something. And it is a constant understanding. It is a personal insight.

**The Time**

The Christian is to practice "agape" love diligently in view of something that he knows to be true. What is that? He says, "Because you know something concerning the time." The word "time" is the Greek word "kairos." It is important to point this out to you, because this is the word for "time" in the Bible which refers to time in terms of an era – a period of time. This is an era of special significance that distinguishes it from other periods in human history. It is not time in a chronological order.

There's another Greek word that used when it's talking about 9 o'clock, followed by 10 o'clock, and followed by 11 o'clock – time in its chronological sequence. This is a time in history that has specific special significance. And you Christians should know about this, Paul says. You tend to forget that you live in a very special time in human history. What he is referring to here is the current era when Satan rules the world. It implies that this is a very critical, determinative time in human history. It refers to the present era indeed in which we live, during which Christ is in heaven. And we Christians await His return for us to set up His Millennial Kingdom on this earth.

We have other descriptions in the Bible of the same period. For example, Galatians 1:4 calls it "this present evil age." Galatians 4:4 calls it "the fullness of time." 1 Corinthians 10:11 calls it "the end of the ages;" that is, near the end of the dispensations. Hebrews 9:26 calls it "the consummation of the ages." Titus 2:12-13 refer to it as "this present age."

**The Church Age**

It is a specific time in human history, and the termination of this specific time in history is the return of Jesus Christ. Titus 2:12 points that out to us. So, we are called, as Christians, to consider the nature and character of the church age in which we live, during which time Christ is in heaven, and we are awaiting His return. It is indeed a time of unique world conditions which causes our point in history to merit our special attention, and therefore, for us as Christian, to act in a certain way, because we are in a distinctively different point in time than any Christians who have preceded us. Let me point out a few of those.

**Israel is again a Nation**

First of all, we live today at a time when Israel is again a nation. We live in a time when Israel again controls the holy city of Jerusalem. We live in a time when the Jews increasingly are the cause of world tension, and when increasingly the Jews need somebody to protect them. We live in a time of growing hatred of the Arab world for the Jews as a nation, and the desire of the Arab world to destroy that nation.

**Russia, China, and Europe**

This is a time when Russia has risen to become a superpower as the mortal enemy of Israel. We live in a time when China has become a military force to be reckoned with in the Orient. We live in a time when European nations have drawn together in a confederacy to create an economic and a military unit.

**World Government**

Today, there is a movement toward establishing world government under the United Nations. It is no longer an unthinkable thought. We are living in a time when there is a growing demand for socialism as the economic system of nations in order to increase the control of government over the lives of people via taxation and redistribution of the wealth of those who have earned it. Today is the time of the existence of nuclear weapons which are able to destroy the whole human race.

**The Time of our Own Age**

This is a time when the Bible is now generally rejected as the inerrant revelation from God, which human beings must obey. It is just another book. This is a time of apostasy of Protestantism from biblical Christianity. It is a time for the worldwide exaltation of Roman Catholicism under a popular traveling pope. It is a time of the widespread acceptance of the charismatic movement, with its emotional experience of deceptions as the epitome of Christianity. It is a time of popularizing of Eastern mysticism, with its defecation of man in the religion of humanism as exemplified in the New Age movement. It is a time of growing participation in occult practices and Satan worship. It is a time for the destruction of the biblical family with its lines of authority, and male and female distinctions, deliberate and decisive on a governmental level – determined effort to destroy the family as it's structured in Scripture.

It is a time for the open promotion and acceptance of sexual immorality and sexual perversions. It is a time of enormous use and the sale of drugs. We live in a time of the rapid spread of incurable diseases like AIDS, causing a rising tide of death. It is a time for an enormous growth in crime at all levels of society, so that we do not have enough prisons to hold those who are guilty. It is a time for the toleration of murder by abortion of unborn children saturating the nation with innocent blood, which God is going to judge. It is a time for the rejection of God's death penalty for premeditated murder, so that God is portrayed as a brutal creature who does not understand how to be compassionate. It is a time for the rise of terrorism to intimidate societies and to impose tyranny upon them. It is a time when people are controlled by computers in their daily activities.

All these and more have created a unique time in human history. And all of this indicates the newness of the return of Jesus Christ, because when you put all these together, and many more which I haven't mentioned, you get a realization that never in the history of the human race before have so many conditions been brought together that are ideal for the antichrist world, and thus for the return of Christ Himself. It is indeed true that the Lord Jesus Christ is at hand, ready to pick up the pieces of mankind's self-destruction. And Christians should be watching daily.

For this reason, the Lord himself admonished His disciples, in Matthew 24:42-44, when He said, "Watch, therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord comes. But know this: that if the householder had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore, be also ready, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man comes."

That is what the apostle Paul is talking about in Romans 13:11: "And do this. Exercise "agape" love toward all people, in view of the fact that you know the time in history in which you live, and the conditions that are absolutely unique to this point in time," more so in our day than it was in the day of the Roman Christians to whom he was writing. Specifically, he goes on and says, concerning this time: "And do that, knowing the kind of time in which you live (the era of history in which you live), that now it is high time." And the word "high time" is really the Greek word for "our:" "hora." And what he is using this word for is to refer to a period of time which is terminated by the return of Jesus Christ.

**Wake Up**

What he is saying is that it is already the hour for Christians to do something, and that is: "to wake up." The Greek word is "egeiro." The word "egeiro" means "to rise up from your slumber." The Greek has the separate pronoun "you," in order to emphasize that he is speaking to each individual Christian to wake up. This is in the Greek aorist tense, which indicates that at some point in time, every Christian in our day needs to wake up. It is passive voice, which tells us that the thing that should wake you up is the conditions such as we have described that characterize the day in which we live. It is in the infinitive mood, which is the Greek way of telling us that this is God's purpose for you as a Christian: "to wake up out of your sleep" – "out of your 'hupnos.'" This word refers to a lethargic condition.

**Lazy Christianity**

What's he talking about? What the apostle is talking about, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is lazy Christianity. He's talking about lethargic, spiritually lazy, non-aggressive Christians – Christians who, in fact, are yawning in the face of God Who calls them to serve Him. These are Christians who, in fact, are yawning in the very process of being instructed in the Word of God, because they're not impressed. These are Christians who are so out of touch with what they are, and where they're going, that they do not understand how serious a condition they're in, in how they are living their lives and squandering their lives.

These are people who do not know how foolish and how ugly they've become. And we're talking about Christians. We're talking about the Christian who is so preoccupied with self-interest that he is only incidentally interested in God's work. Why? Because he has lost track of what time it is. He has lost track of what time it is in life. He's lost track, worse, of what time it is in human history. Today, if ever there was a time when Christians have to be awake, in terms of what they're doing with their lives – today is the day.

This includes, I believe, being asleep in terms of not getting out to church services. This is a problem that Christians have about getting out to be instructed in the Word of God, in order to be prepared for the spiritual combat of the week before them. This is the practice that is so resistant of churches gathering together with the believers to be instructed in morning and evening. And so many Christians do not have a problem with living at a distance; or job interference; or, some other reason for not being at a morning and evening service, when they have the opportunity to do that. The reason they're negligent is because they're asleep. They just lull themselves into a lethargic dullness such that they lost track of what is really important. And they do not understand, as we read this morning, in the Scripture in Deuteronomy: man does not live by all that food and money, and all those things you can accumulate. Man lives only by one thing, ultimately, and that's by the Word of God.

The person who is oriented to the Word of God, and on track with the Word of God, is the person who is functioning and finding that God provides everything else that you need. It's like the clock that I have in one of my cars. It is right only two times in every 24 hour period. The rest of the time, it's wrong. And I always enjoy driving in the morning when I see 9:25 coming along, and I watch the clock, and I always take the time to see what time it is. And I look over and it's 9:25, because I've checked it against my watch. And it's just kind of euphoric to have a clock in a car that works. And it struck me that that's like our lives. When we really get awake, and we become aware of what's going on, and we get on track, suddenly we cross the Lord's path. And when we hit it, all fireworks break loose. Things get together. Things start jelling. Things start making sense. A Christian who is sensitive at that point in time realizes how great God is, and how wonderful it is to be in compatibility with Him, and on track with what He is doing.

However, then you find that you cross His track, and you drift off, and you're dozing off again until maybe you swing around, and then hit that track again, and everything comes alive. Now He has been here all the time. And it's awesome when suddenly you have seen His hand working because you've made contact. He's presented something that you are about to do. He has backed you from some direction. He's given you a solution for an impossible situation. And suddenly you become aware of the fact that you've crossed, and you've made contact.

This is what the apostle is talking about – the lazy, indifferent, dull, monotonous Christian is not aware of what time it is. And the Christian who does not get out to church services, barring genuine reasons that would cause that to be a problem twice on a Sunday, is a Christian who is dozing off. And he does not understand what kind of a world he is to face of angelic conflict in the week that is before him. Someday you'll understand it. Someday you will say, "Boy, was Dr. Danish ever right. He knew what he was talking about because he was quoting indeed Scripture to us, and he let us know that God said, 'Don't neglect the sampling of yourselves together.'" So, don't give me this stuff that you have to put your children to bed early; you have to do all kinds of things that must be in order for you to survive in life; or, that you have to get a little extra sleep for your job. You don't have to do anything. You only have to do one thing in life: to feed yourself on the Word of God. And once you get aware of the fact of the times in which we live, and the critical moment in history in which you live, and how much of a burden now is upon you, as those who have been raised up as witnesses of the living God at this point in time (not a century ago – but right now), you are it. And you lean back, and you sit there dozing off, and yawning in the face of God?

I should remind you that what Paul is driving toward in this verse is to point out to us that the termination of this period of time is confrontation with Jesus Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ. So, when he is saying that this age is distinctive, and you are distinctive in it, and you are blowing a great opportunity, he is talking in terms of the fact that soon you will be accounting face-to-face with Jesus Christ. Don't be disoriented toward God, wasting your life on temporal things. Yes, some even sit in church and do their yawning. Some sit in church and do their reading. Some sit in church and do everything they can to distract themselves, lest they be instructed, and be brought face-to-face in confrontation with themselves.

The apostle Paul is saying, "Start breathing in doctrine, and start exhaling prayer toward God, and you'll come alive:" "And this do – exercising "agape" love, because you are aware of the unique time in history in which you live, that now it is the hour for you to wake up spiritually out of your sleep." Why?

**For Now is our Salvation**

The reason for this, he says, is: "for." And he uses the conjunction "gar" to signal to us that he's going to introduce an explanation of his previous statement: "For now (at this particular point in time) is our salvation." And he uses the word "soteria." "Soteria" refers to deliverance from some disaster or from some suffering on earth. The word is used here as deliverance from the lake of fire, and entrance into heaven. This is true salvation that he is referring to – salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ as one's Savior. He says, "This salvation from the lake of fire and entrance into heaven is now nearer (closer) than when we believed." And he uses the standard word for faith: "pisteuo," which means "to trust in some object" – here, for salvation, to trust in Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior.

This is in the aorist tense, which means that you do this at some point in time in your life. You make this conversion act. It is active. It means that you do your own believing. You're not going to heaven because you came from a nice Christian family and have good Christian parents. And it is indicative – a statement of fact. This is the principle which is declared for us in John 3:16. This is the principle which is declared for us in Ephesians 2:8:9, where the apostle Paul says, "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that (salvation) is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." At any particular point in the Christian's life, he is nearer to the consummation of his salvation than at the moment that he believed the gospel. Some of you were saved many, many years ago. Every day that you wake up, you're one day nearer to the consummation of your salvation.

**Salvation**

That leads us to specifically interpret this word "salvation." So, we have to recognize that, in the Bible, salvation is viewed as having three phases. This is pointed out to us, for example, in 1 Thessalonians 1:3, where Paul says, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith (a past act of trust in Christ as Savior), and labor of love (your present serving of Christ – salvation in the present), and patients in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our father" – you're looking forward to the return of Christ: salvation in the future.

Notice in 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 the same idea: "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you; how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (past salvation – salvation in the past tense), to serve the living and true God (salvation in the present tense), and to wait for His Son from heaven (salvation in the future tense).

You find the same thing in Titus 2:11-13, which you may read. And there again, you will see that salvation is spoken of as something that's in the past; something is happening now; and, something that's happening in the future. So, immediately we have to take into account, when we read this word "salvation" – we have to determine which phase we're talking about: past; present; or, future.

1. **Justification**

Phase one is salvation in the past. This can be summarized by the word "justification." The Bible speaks of salvation as something which is completed in the past for every believer. For example, in Ephesians 2:8, we have this illustrated in the verse that we read: "For by grace are you saved through faith." Period – a past completed action.

1 Corinthians 1:18 also indicates a salvation which is a completed test event. The apostle Paul writes: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God."

**Eternal Security**

You may add to that Luke 7:50. These verses speak of salvation as something which is completed in the past for every believer. This past tense salvation, we are happy to point out, is so perfect because it was all done by God, and we were not invited to have any part in doing it. We were just invited to accept it. Because He did it all, this past salvation can never be lost. John 5:24 therefore says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that hears My word, and believes on Him that sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." Those, in the Greek language, are all definitive statements that are telling you that once you become a Christian, you're in solid. It's a past action, done by God, and you can never lose it again.

You may add to that John 10:28-29, which are even more specific about the fact that this past tense celebration is so perfect that it can never be lost. The Lord Jesus says, "And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall anyone take them out of My hand. My Father, Who gave them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

**Positional Sanctification**

Salvation in the past tense produces sanctification. In terms of your position, we call this positional sanctification. 1 Corinthians 1:2, 1 Corinthians 11:6, and 1 Peter 1:2 – all of these passages indicate that Christians are now sanctified. The word "sanctified" means that you are set apart to a special purpose of God. 1 Corinthians 1:2 says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit." So, every Christian who has salvation in the past is also the position of sanctification before God; that is, he has been set apart to eternal life through Jesus Christ. Sanctification means "to be set apart."

Hebrews 10:10, therefore, says, "By which will we are sanctified (the will of God) through the offerings of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." The reason you have the position of being set apart in the past of salvation is because it is the will of God that called you.

**Saints**

So, a Christian, because he is sanctified, is also a saint. It is a permanent position as the result of our baptism of the Holy Spirit that has placed us in Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13 tells us about that. So, you may indeed refer to each other as the saints. And if you wish to call each other "saint," you may do that. And I would not be offended if you called me St. John. I understand that it is an appropriate title, and that I'm not assuming something that is not true. In terms of my sinlessness, that would not be true. But we are talking about positional sanctification, because I have a salvation in the past that is completed. This position in Christ bears no relationship to the way a Christian lives. Whether you are a carnal or a spiritual Christian, you are both sanctified, because you are in Christ. Therefore, you are as perfect as He is. Positional sanctification does not mean that you have attained sinless perfection in your experience.

So, we have phase one of salvation, and that is salvation past in positional sanctification. That's not what Paul is talking about.

1. **Spirituality**

There's phase two in salvation, salvation in the present tense, which we could describe by the word "spirituality." The Bible speaks about a present salvation for the believer. This is a salvation from the reigning power of sin in his life – from the control of the sin nature. In Romans 6:14, we read, "For the sin nature shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under grace."

**Experiential Sanctification**

You may add to that 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Philippians 2:12-13, both of those which reinforce the principle that we have a present tense salvation in terms of the fact that we no longer have to be enslaved to the sin nature. Salvation in the present tense produces what we call experiential sanctification. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 says, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." And then he expresses how that sanctification will work. Here he says that you abstain from fornication. A Christian who is sanctified in experience is a Christian who avoids sin. This refers to being set apart to God in your daily life. It is determined by your yieldedness to God through the confession of known sins; and, through the use of the grace system of perception for learning doctrine, and for the development of the spiritual maturity structure in your soul. The more you do those things, the more godly you will be.

Experience sanctification is not a matter of how you feel, or your emotions. It is a matter of how you act as the result of the Word of God in your life. Progress in experiential sanctification is determined by what God has provided for the prevention of sinning.

**How to Avoid Sinning**

How do you avoid sinning? Number one is by the intake of doctrine into your soul. Psalm 119:11 tells us that. We hide the Word in our heart so that we do not sin. Secondly, you avoid sinning, and progress in experiential sanctification, because of the intercession of Jesus Christ in heaven. Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25, and 1 John 2:1 all tell us that Jesus Christ is up there praying for us, interceding, acting as our advocate. We are also prevented from sinning by the enabling power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16 and Romans 8:4 refer to the fact that the Holy Spirit, when we depend upon Him, enables you to say "no" to the sin that is so attractive without Him.

Christians can never eradicate the sin nature, and therefore, they will never arrive at sinlessness on this earth. Romans 7:21 and 1 John 1:8 indicate that to us. 1 John 1:8 is a very significant verse to anybody who thinks that he is moving to be, or has become, sinless, because it puts it in point-blank language: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." When the word "sin" is used in the singular, it means the sin nature. If you say you have no sin, you are just kidding yourself.

So, we have a present salvation, and we have a positional sanctification. It doesn't mean sinlessness, but it does mean progress in spiritual maturity. The Spirit-filled status is what secures victory for us over sins. Galatians 5:16-24 describe how God the Holy Spirit brings that victory.

So, the sin nature has been judged on the cross, and its authority over us has been broken (Romans 6:1-14). And experiential sanctification is dealing with our growth in spiritual maturity, so it's progressive. You become more sanctified as each day goes by. 2 Peter 3:18 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 tell us about that.

1. **Glorification**

Now this salvation in the present, with its experiential sanctification, is not what Paul is talking about either. What he is talking about is phase three of salvation when he says, "Your salvation is nearer now than the day in which you believed," he's referring to phase three, which is salvation in the future tense summarized by the word "glorification." The Bible speaks of a future salvation for believers when they will be absolutely like Jesus Christ, and they will be absolutely sinless in practice and in thought.

Romans 8:29 tells us about that marvelous time when it says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren." Jesus Christ is going to be just one type of perfect person among many of us perfect people.

1 Peter 1:5 also says, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." There is salvation in the future. This phase of salvation, as well as the first two, is entirely dependent upon the faithfulness of God, not upon your faithfulness. Philippians 1:6 points that out.

Now with salvation in the future tense, we also receive ultimate sanctification, and that's what we're all looking forward to. In future salvation, when that confirmation comes, we also receive ultimate sanctification. 1 John 3:1-2 express that: "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us; that we should be called the children of God. Therefore, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now are we the children of God. And it does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is."

What is this first telling us? It is telling us that the time is coming when you will be as perfectly sinless as Jesus Christ: the worst of you; and, the best of you. This same principle is reiterated to us in 1 Corinthians 15:51-57. I always read this at funerals, because that passage is a comforting passage. We are burying somebody who is the victim of sin, and it is an appropriate time to remind ourselves that there is an ultimate salvation in the future when God is going to rub out the consequences of sin, and this dead body is going to come back to life. You may also add Philippians 3:21.

Ultimate sanctification refers to being set apart from the presence and the practice of sin in eternity, with the old sin nature removed from the genetic structure of your body. This is the final goal of salvation (1 Thessalonians 2:23). This is the state when you will be sinlessly perfect.

Now the salvation then, of which the apostle Paul is referring to here, when he says in Romans 13:11, that, "Your salvation is nearer than on the day you believed," is salvation in the future tense. This is salvation in terms of ultimate glorification. He's referring to the time when Jesus Christ returns to meet His bride, the church, in the air, and takes her to heaven. This significant era in which we live, with all of the things that we describe that characterize this era as never before, is going to be terminated by the arrival of Christ to meet us in the air.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 is the passage well-known to you that describes our being caught up (living and dead Christians), to meet the Lord in the air, and He turns around and takes us directly into heaven with Him. This will be the consummation of salvation in the future tense.

This is the future glorification phase of our salvation that Hebrews 9:28 makes reference to in these words: "So, Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. Unto them that look for Him, He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation." He comes the second time not to deal with the sin issue, but simply to complete our salvation, which is our glorification. This is the time when we are saved, then, from the presence of sins.

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

So, the point of this, that Paul is making, as he will follow up in the verses that follow, is that Christians are to be alert to the fact that they live in a timespan which is soon to end with their arrival in the presence of Jesus Christ. That is what I cannot get into the heads of a lot of Christians. I suppose it is only because God wakes you up, and finally you get it straight. You are living, not only in a critical timespan of human history, but you are living in that timespan as one who, very shortly, is going to come to a terminal point by confrontation with Jesus Christ. You will either do that through your personal death or through the rapture of being caught up to meet Him in the air. It doesn't matter which way. The results will be the same. Once that happens, the church-age believer will face the Judgment Seat of Christ for the evaluation of his service to God in the life that he led. And I think you should think about that.

That's what Paul means when he says, "Wake up people, because put yourself ahead of time in that picture. You're going to stand before Him. And they're going to open the books. And they're going to start reading down what you did with your life. They're going to start evaluating your works to see how much that you have done is divine good production. Romans 14:10 makes that very clear when it says, "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you set at naught your brother? For We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ."

2 Corinthians 5:10 says the same thing: "For we Christians must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad" – whether it be divine good or human good, which is bad.

The implications of this verse in Romans 13:11, I think is clear. There is no time, people, to waste our storing our treasures in heaven through divine good service, since each day brings us closer to meeting the Lord. How many Christians can you imagine who are in heaven now, who regret that they did not get with investing their lives in eternal things because they were so sure that they thought they had time to do it? And how many Christians are sitting up and saying, "I just didn't realize I was going to get up that day and, bingo, I'm out in eternity? I never even planned. I never dreamed it. I just kept going about what I was doing that day. And all of a sudden, I'm out there. Boy, do I wish I had lived a little differently. If I had known!" How many Christians are up there now saying, "Oh, if I had known that my time was that short, I certainly wouldn't have trivialized it with all that junk I was doing in life. I'd have gotten with it. I'd have indeed gotten a better picture of Jesus at the heart's door knocking, and asking me to let Him into fellowship with Him so that my life could go with His life, and count for eternity."

There is no time to waste in the era of history in which we live. Indifference toward serving God will lead you to waste your life as a Christian in temporal, self-centered interests.

Having said that, I'm free of responsibility for what you do. At least you can never be out there saying, "Why in the world didn't you pound it into my head, and alert me to the fact that I was doing a really stupid thing, and that I had my priorities all botched up, and that my eyes were on the wrong thing, and I was getting excited over the things I was doing that were nothing. I was all up in the air because I had accomplished something that was totally useless. And I was so lethargic. I was yawning in the face of God. I couldn't even get out of the church services to hear the things I needed to hear."

It is time for Christians to wake up to spiritual realities, and to shake off slothfulness toward God's work, because all of us are already in full-time Christian service. Some of us are just going about it in a groggy carnal way, and we're oblivious to God's work, and to our part in it. Christians have to fight against being lulled to sleep spiritually by their material wealth and by their freedom, therefore, to indulge their desires. You are not using your material capacity to honor God, your Creator and your Savior, and to store your treasures in heaven by joining Him, and making that point of contact where everything comes alive, like an electrical current that finally goes through. You are not using all the capacities of money, and position, and influence, and wealth, and physical well-being – that you're not always going to have. Instead, you trivialize it and waste it.

Where do you think you're going to end up with that? You have to fight against being lulled to sleep when you are as prosperous as Americans are. Once a Christian meets Jesus Christ, through death or the rapture, you should remember that there'll be no further opportunities to earn rewards for storing treasures in heaven. All you'll have then is opportunity for regret, and tears for what might have been.

**All Things Work Together for Good**

It is the Lord Jesus who will reward His servants in heaven who have lived to please Him. Romans 8:28 describes this as the ultimate good: "For all things work together for good." There is also a good in the past – our salvation. There's a good in the present – our experiential sanctification. There's a good in the future – our rewards in heaven.

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, the qualified believer is going to receive the full impact of his ultimate sanctification. You'll be in heaven, in a resurrected body, free of the old sin nature. You'll be completely converted. You'll be completely transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. You will stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive blessings of rewards for the work that you have done.

**The Crown of Rejoicing**

And for some of you, there will be special, special honors. There will be crowns (medals of honor) for certain Christians: the crown of rejoicing for a life of maximum divine good production in God's service. You will have a crown for using your spiritual gifts. A life that has maximum divine good will be recognized by God. Most Christians will have divine good, and mostly carnality; or, divine good, and mostly human good. But the Christian who is constantly on divine good, in a maximum way, God says, "I have to recognize you. You're a special kind. You will receive the medal of honor called the crown of rejoicing. Philippians 4:1 and 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 tell us about.

**The Crown of Righteousness**

There's also the crown of righteousness for some believers, for a life of maximum time spent in temporal fellowship with the Father, and thus, in godly living. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 tell us about that. Most Christians live a carnal life. They burst up into a period of spirituality, then they're down, most of the time, in carnality – and then they're in spirituality. But there are some Christians that say, "No, I'm going to stay up here all the time. I'm going to stay in the Word. I'm going to stay in confession of sin. I'm going to stay in church. I'm going to be instructed. I'm going to be there. And I'm going to be preoccupied with what goes on in God's work. And I'm going to be there to do it. I'm not going to yawn in God's face." And God says, "I have to recognize you. When you lived that much in temporal fellowship with Me, you deserve My special recognition forever in heaven, and I'm going to set you apart.

**The Crown of Life**

There's also the crown of life which is given to those who have a life which is progressing from spiritual immaturity to super grace maturity, and for staying there. James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10 tell us that. There are some Christians that never get past the baby stage of maturity. Some maybe crank themselves up to adolescent stage, but that's as far as they go. But there are some Christians that get right on up there to the top – adulthood in spiritual things, and they stay there. When you get in heaven, God says, "I've got to recognize that. That was a superb performance. You will be given the medal of honor of the crown of life.

**The Crown of Glory**

Then there is a special medal. It's called the crown of glory. It's only for pastor-teachers. 1 Peter 5:4 tells about that – those who have faithfully cranked out knowledge of doctrine to their people, so at least the flock had a chance to enjoy the divine good that God potentially has for them in heaven.

This is the thing that Paul is referring to – the ultimate divine good of Christians who have invested their lives in God's service. And when they have done that, they have indeed saved the value of their lives forever. Your salvation – your ultimate salvation, with the consequences of the evaluation of your life at the Judgment Seat of Christ is just over the hill. That's what Paul is saying. And in our day, it is more important than ever that you stay on track. You keep the lines of power flowing in your life, because this age, more than any time in history, needs true doctrine, and needs true ministry from believers who have the capacity to serve God under the guidance of the Spirit of God. That kind of a Christian have a special place in heaven with eternal blessings, after a year of suffering on earth. This is God's final good to us.

However, obviously, we must recognize that the Judgment Seat of Christ is not going to be a lot of fun for most Christians. The Judgment Seat of Christ is not going to prove to be a maximum divine good for most Christians. They have wasted their lives in doing their own business only, and have ignored the business of God.

How childlike it would behoove us to be, after the pattern of the Lord Jesus, who, as a 12 year old boy, could look into the eyes of university religiously-trained, knowledgeable professors and say, "Here's what I know about the Word of God," and had a deep exchange because His mind was awake to the things of God. And then when his parents couldn't understand his pursuit of this kind of religious activity, in the process of which this boy was giving a magnificent testimony, he could say, as we ought to say, "Do you not know that I must be about My Father's business."

I think that you should consider yourself very fortunate that you were here today to hear all this. It may be a turning point in your life that you look back on from eternity and say, "Thank God that that November the 6th, I was there to hear it, because I needed that perspective." It is the one thing which is missing in the lives of most Christians, and it is the maximum thing that Satan is covering up, and is causing Christians to ignore. It's the one thing that he does not want you to do. He does not want you to realize that your ultimate salvation is nearer now than the day you believed. And when it's over, it's over.

Yes, Yogi Berra was right. We take great comfort from that. It isn't over until it's over. So, while you have a day of opportunity, maximize it. Wake up. Stop yawning into the face of God, and get on track. And when you hit the contact point, and the current pops out, you'll know it. And you will be exhilarated to realize: why have I not done this before? Why have I gone along as if I am all that there is in the universe, instead of being in touch with the power of the living God? So, suddenly, His hand is moving; adjusting; arranging; and, bringing together. And I'm standing there with my mouth open at the magnificent working of the Creator God in my life. That's what He would like to do when you decide to let Him do it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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