



# The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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## STORM HITS CHILDREN’S CENTER

*By Brother Bill Lee*

Recently a storm, possibly a tornado, came through the outskirts of Chiang Mai and the area where our children’s center is located. This storm had very strong winds, rain and hail. There was much damage to the area as well as to the children’s center.

We thank our God that none of the children or workers at the children’s center were injured. Bro. Anond had the children, as well as the workers, Sarah and himself in one of the more secure buildings. But although there were no injuries nor loss of life, the children’s center sustained much damage as you can see by the accompanying pictures. Several building were completely destroyed, while others had severe damage.

Now we must begin the process of repairing and rebuilding. Most of the debris has now been removed. We are salvaging all the materials we can to use in the work we must now do.

This process of repairing and rebuilding will be expensive as well as time consuming. We do not have an estimate of what the total cost will



be, but to get back to anywhere close to where we were, we know the cost will be between fifteen and twenty thousand U. S. dollars.

Many who have an interest in this work have expressed to me from time to time their willingness to help when special needs arise. It is obvious we now have an urgent need.

To those who are already aware of this need and have already sent help, we sincerely thank you. This will enable us to begin the work. If others wish to help us in this endeavor, we will appreciate it very much.

On another note, let me thank all of you who have helped us to get clean, safe, drinking



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**Worship Service 11:00 A. M. Sunday**

**Evening Service 5:00 P. M. Sunday**

**Mid-Week Service 6:30 P. M. Wednesday**

*You Are Welcome!*

water for the villages where we have churches. It has only been a year since we first mentioned this need. Through the help of faithful individuals and churches we have reached our goal. Just recently we finished drilling the final well. The villages that so desperately needed a safe water supply now have it. God has been so good to us in furnishing all that was needed to fill this need. This completed project will have a lasting health benefit for generations to come. We thank each of you who have helped in us in this matter.

## AH! WHO CAN GRASP THE THOUGHT!

(Thomas Reade, "Christian Experience")

**One moment in heaven** will convince the believer, that his afflictions upon earth were light. When earth with all its glories shall have passed away, the lowly followers of Jesus will abide forever, and shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father!

**One moment in hell** will convince the pleasure loving sinner, that it would have been good for him if he had never been born!

**Ah! Who can grasp the thought of never ending joy, or everlasting woe!**

The mind labors to conceive, and yet can never reach beyond the first impression of eternity.

Numbers, years, ages, all, all are lost in the immeasurable, unfathomable abyss!

## A RELIGION THAT SATISFIES THOUSANDS.

(Philpot, "The Cry of Jonah Out Of the Belly of the Whale")

"Having a **form of godliness** but denying its power." 2 Tim. 3:5 Much that passes for religion, is not true religion at all. Much that goes for hopes of salvation, is nothing but lying refuges. Much is palmed off for the teaching of the Spirit, which is nothing but delusion.

**Vital godliness is very rare.** There are very few people spiritually taught of God. There are very few ministers who really preach the truth. Satan is thus daily deceiving thousands, and tens of thousands. A living soul, however weak and feeble in himself, cannot take up with a **religion in the flesh**. He cannot rest on the opinions of men, nor be deceived by Satan's delusions. He has a secret gnawing of conscience, which makes him dissatisfied with a **religion that satisfies thousands.**

# The Ministry

Bro. Bill Lee

Preached at Central Baptist Church 12-3-2008

Look in your Bibles this evening to the Book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians to Chapter 2:14-17, and also turn to Romans 11:13. I am going to read in Romans Chapter 11 first, but our text will be in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, Chapter 2. In Romans Chapter 11 and in verse 13, the Apostle Paul wrote, "**For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.**" I want you to notice Paul said, "**I magnify mine office**". The word, "**magnify**" can be defined; "to honor, to esteem, to glory".

Many pastors today seem to be hesitant to write, or to preach about the office of a pastor and the role of a preacher. And to a degree, I understand this hesitancy. It is because they are afraid they might give the impression they are trying to build themselves up or in some way exalt themselves. It is obvious throughout the writings of the Apostle Paul he never sought to build himself up. But he did magnify his office!

The man who holds the office of pastor is nothing but an earthen vessel, and Paul made this fact very clear. But, the office is one that is to be esteemed. It is one that is to have a place of honor. And I think we do not do justice to the Word of God or to our responsibility as preachers, if we do not deal with some of the things involved in the ministry. And again, certainly it is not to exalt the minister, but the office is very important. And it is one that ought to be held in high esteem.

If you would, just keep those thoughts in mind, and look in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians and in Chapter 2. I will begin reading in verse 14. "**Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. (15) For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: (16) To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? (17) For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as**

**of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.**"

Our text this evening is going to be verses 15 and 16. And I want to read those two again: "**For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?**"

Before we look at these two verses, let's don't overlook verse 14. And as we read verse 14, keep in mind these are the words of the Apostle Paul. This adds a lot of significance to what we are about to read. He said, "**Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place**".

Now if these words were spoken by anyone else, they just would not mean as much. I realize there have been many God called ministers down through the years who have suffered. Many of these have given their lives for their stand for the Word of God and for the cause of Christ. But, Paul wrote this, and we know he wrote by divine inspiration. The Holy Spirit singled out Paul to pen these words. He could just as well have used Peter or Matthew, or one of the other writers of the New Testament. But the Holy Spirit thought it best to have Paul pen these words.

If you would, look with me over to Chapter 11 of the same book. In Chapter 11 and beginning in verse 21, Paul wrote, "**I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit, whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. (22) Are they Hebrews? so am I.**

**Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. (23) Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. (24) Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. (25) Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; (26) In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers,**

*in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; (27) In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. (28) Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."*

Let me go back to verse 27. When Paul said "fastings", these were not self-imposed fastings. These were from just not having anything to eat. It was from doing without food because of being destitute. All through this passage Paul lists the sufferings he had endured in his role as the Apostle of the Gentiles. But notice, in all Paul suffered and in all he endured, he was still able to say, "**Thanks be unto God**".

Even though he had endured all of these things, he said, "**Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his Knowledge by us in every place**". Paul considered his life a triumph, even in the midst of the sufferings and the persecutions. "In Christ" Paul triumphed when he was beaten. He triumphed when he was in prison. He triumphed in the cold, and when he was hungry, and when he was thirsty. Even when Paul was being stoned and left for dead, it was still a triumph in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, notice in our text, Paul did not necessarily thank God for his sufferings. But he did thank God. For he knew God caused him to triumph in the Lord Jesus Christ. And more than this, in verse 14 he thanked God that through his ministry, God "**did make manifest the savor of his knowledge**". Now Paul was very quick to point out in verse 14 that his triumph was not of himself. Notice he said, "**in Christ**". That makes the difference, "**in Christ**".

Go back with me to Romans, if you would, and in Chapter 8 for just a moment. Notice beginning in verse 35, "**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.** And then in verse 37, "**Nay, in all**

**these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us**". Paul exalted Christ in everything. Even here, as he mentions all of these sufferings, Paul said, "**We are more than conquerors through him that loved us**". In our text he said, God "**causeth us to triumph in Christ**".

Look over to 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, if you would. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:17 Paul writes, "**Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. (8) Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead, according to my gospel: (9) Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.**" Paul said, "**I suffered trouble**". They treated Paul as a wicked person, "**as an evildoer, even unto bonds**". Then he added, "**but the Word of God is not bound**".

Persecution has never stopped the Word of God. Persecution has never stopped the saints of God. Persecution has never stopped the church of God. Throughout history, the saints of God have thrived under persecution. The church of God has been purged by persecution. It has been cleansed by persecution. You will notice Paul said in verse 10, "**Therefore I endure**". Paul was not a quitter. He is speaking here about the suffering mentioned in verse 9. And he says; "**I endure all things**". To endure means you go through it, and you don't rebel against it. There is an amount of longsuffering and endurance in this, coupled with a godly patience. We go through it for the cause of Christ.

But when Paul was going through all of this, he not only had in mind his sovereign God and the Lord Jesus Christ, he had in his mind a specific people. You will notice in verse 10, he said, "**Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes**". I will tell you this as plainly as I know how to tell you. Paul did not suffer one moment for the first reprobate. He said, I am enduring this for the elect's sakes. But why? Why would Paul suffer such trouble for the elect's sake? Look at the word "**that**" in this verse. He states his purpose: "**that they may also obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.**"

Do you think Paul believed God uses means

in the salvation of His elect? Certainly he did. Paul said, I am enduring these things in order that the elect of God may obtain salvation. Brother Camp, I am sure you have heard this over the years. Some people will say, "Well, that word **salvation** means deliverance, and he is just speaking here about physical or temporal deliverance of some kind or another." But, Paul makes it very clear it is the salvation "which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory".

Now, having said all of that, let's go back to our text, II Corinthians 2:14; "**Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ**". God always causes us to triumph in Christ! Again, even when they were beating him with rods, Paul was still triumphing in Christ. While in the dungeons and while being stoned, Paul was still triumphing "in Christ".

And in verse 14, he said, "**God also maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place**". Let me tell you, when a man of God knows this, it makes everything worthwhile. To know he is being used of God to make manifest the savor of His knowledge is something every God called man needs to know. Everywhere Paul went, the Lord used him to make manifest the savor of His knowledge.

Now, I want you to note this word "**savor**". This word carries with it the meaning of a fragrance, even the kind of fragrance a flower would give off, or a perfume of some sort, or the smell of incense as it rises up. And Paul uses this to teach us how God makes manifest the sweet aroma of His knowledge. And He does it by us in every place. Paul said God uses us to make this sweet aroma of the knowledge of God.

God used the Apostle Paul as if he was an incense burner, and the sweet aroma went up. And I will tell you this; God uses every true minister of God in the same way today! He uses us to make manifest this sweet aroma of His knowledge in every place.

And I want you to notice something amazing here. Look at verse 14 and notice the last part; "**and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place**". In the very next words he says; "**For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ**". The ministers of God are "a sweet savor of Christ". This is an

amazing statement when you really think about it. Counted by many as the off scouring of the world, treated miserably by the world, hated for the cause of Christ, but yet, unto God, "**a sweet savor of Christ**". And again, I am convinced this is true of every true minister of the gospel.

Notice how this word "**savor**" is used. Look in Ephesians Chapter 5, and we will start in verse 1, "**Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor**". Now, this is how the Holy Spirit describes Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. When God received that sweet savor, God was satisfied. And, notice in these verses, both Christ and His offering are pictured in these words: "**a sweet-smelling savor**".

But, when you go back to our text and in verse 15, Paul said. "**We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ**". We point people to Christ. We preach Christ. And because of that, we are a sweet savor of Christ. When we preach the gospel of Christ, it is a sweet fragrant aroma unto God. But notice this in verse 15, "**We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish**". It does not matter which. In both of these groups, them that are saved and them that perish, if the minister of God faithfully preaches the gospel, he is "**unto God a sweet savor of Christ**". It does not matter if people perish or if they are saved under our preaching, if we faithfully preach Christ, we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ. "**To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life**".

Notice the different effects here of the man of God. To one, the true God-called minister of Christ is the savor of death unto death. That is what we are to some people; a savor of death unto death. To the other group, the true preacher of the gospel is a savor of life unto life. Now, consider this, the same man preaching the same gospel to these two groups, but it has differing effects upon these two groups. God does not have one gospel for the reprobate and another gospel for His elect. We are to preach Christ to all. We have one message and that is the gospel. That is why we are commanded to

go into this world and preach the gospel to every creature.

There is an old saying that applies here, I think. "The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay". The Sun has a softening effect upon the wax, but the same Sun has a hardening effect upon the clay. So it is with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel always produces a result. It is not possible for anyone to sit under the preaching of the true gospel of Christ and it not have an effect upon them. It will soften some and it will harden some.

When I hear the gospel of Christ preached, it has a softening effect. It did the first day I was really able to hear it, and it still has that same effect today. But, others can hear the same message, and their hearts are hardened even more. And they are built up in rebellion even more. It has been said the gospel will either draw or it will drive, and I believe it is so. I believe what Paul said here, "**To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life**".

Now, let me tell you this, if some are hardened by the gospel it is not the fault of the gospel. There is no deficiency in the gospel. There might be a deficiency in the way that we as preachers deliver the gospel, but there is no deficiency in the gospel. The deficiency lies with those who reject the gospel. They have no one to blame but themselves.

You know, the Bible speaks of some who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness. It speaks of some that would pervert the gospel of Christ. And then there are those who hear the gospel and it seems like they cannot wait to get out and openly defy the gospel. There are people who can sit under the sound of the gospel, and then walk right out and defy God to His face. They are hardened more and more. And it seems like the more they hear the gospel the harder they become.

Did you know, and I am sure you do, the Bible speaks of different degrees of condemnation? Look back to Matthew for just a moment. Condemnation is not going to be the same for all. In Matthew and in Chapter 23, Verse 14, "**Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour**

**widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.**" There must be varying degrees of condemnation. The very next verse speaks of some who are a "**twofold child of hell.**" I don't know what all is involved there, but I know I don't want any part of it. I am just convinced those who hear the gospel and reject it are going to receive a greater condemnation than those who have never heard.

Look back to John, if you would. In John 3:17-20, "**For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.**"

Now, go back to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians again. We know that Jesus is the Light of the World. He said so. But, look in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:4, and about middle ways of the verse you will read, "**the light of the glorious gospel of Christ**". And men hate the light. By nature they hate Jesus Christ. Jesus said, if they hated you it is because they hated me. That is what He said. If the world hates you, it is because they hated Me. And, the servant is not above the Master.

But notice in this verse, "**the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.**" And men hate the light. They hate the gospel because it speaks of Christ, and the holiness and righteousness of God. There is something about the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ that, unless the Holy Spirit of God intervenes, it hardens people more and more. It fuels their hatred. And again, I want to emphasize, it is the same gospel God uses to save His people. It is the same gospel every one of us one day heard, rejoiced in, and believed. And we still trust it.

I have had people say, "Well, you could be wrong in what you believe". Let me tell you, if I go to hell, I will go to hell trusting in Christ! And I had rather go to hell trusting in Christ than go to

hell rejecting Christ. Yes, to some, we are a savor of death unto death. To others, we are the savor of life unto life.

Let me mention this to you. If the minister of God and the preaching of the gospel are the savor of life unto life to you, they always will be. It will never stop being so. You know, we use the word Arminian sometimes to refer to people who believe in freewill salvation, rather than the Sovereignty of God in salvation. That is not necessarily true in the strictest sense. In the strictest sense of the word, the true Arminian believes you can lose your salvation.

They believe you can be saved today and tomorrow die and go to hell, because you might slip up tomorrow. And they do not believe the savor of life unto life will always be a savor of life unto life unto you. But as surely as you could not do anything of yourself to cause it to be a savor of life unto you, you cannot do anything to stop it from being a savor of life unto you. And the reason is, God is more faithful than you are, and God will keep you!

Verse 16 of our text states, ***“To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life”***. I hope you realize the following fact; the preacher of the gospel is never responsible for the result of the gospel. Never! Never! This is the downfall of many churches today. If the preacher does not bring so many in and “get” so many saved, he is going to be gone pretty soon. Modern churches seem to think it is the role of the pastor to get results and they totally dismiss the Holy Spirit in the matter.

The true preacher of the gospel is never responsible for the results of the gospel. He is only responsible for what he preaches. He is responsible for his message. If we were to preach all of our lives and never see any results, if we preach Christ and are faithful in our message, I am convinced one day God will say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant”. We are to be faithful to the message. We cannot be concerned so much with the results. Paul said we can plant, and we can water, but only God can give the increase. The fact remains, ***“To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life.”***

In verse 20 of our text, Paul said, ***“We are ambassadors for Christ”***. Our country has many ambassadors assigned to different countries. Do you know what their role is? It is not to make policy. Their role, put very simply, is to deliver word from Washington. That is what their role is. The role of an ambassador is to faithfully represent the one who sent him. And Paul said “we are ambassadors for Christ”.

An ambassador, when sent with a message, must faithfully deliver that message. The ambassador must not add to the message, and he must not diminish a word of the message. Even if the one to whom he must deliver the message hates the message and hates the one who sent the message, the ambassador must faithfully deliver the message. The ambassador is never responsible for how the foreign government receives the message from Washington; he is only responsible for delivering the message. That is all they are responsible for and our responsibility is the same as ambassadors for Christ.

Let’s also look in Matthew 13:3, ***“Behold, a sower went forth to sow”***. When you study the parable you learn the seed sown is the Word of God. Jesus stated; ***“some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up: (5) Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth, and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: (6) And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. (7) And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. (8) But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Jesus said (9) Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”***

The sole responsibility of the sower is to sow the seed. He is not responsible for the harvest. He is only responsible for sowing seed. And when he sows seed, it is going to fall in different places, or upon different kinds of ground, but he is to be faithful in sowing. The one thing he must be certain of is that he is sowing the right kind of seed. The faithful steward who sows the seed will be careful to sow only the correct seed.

But, again I will say, he cannot control the

harvest, for only God can give the increase. Only God can make the ground good, as it is in verse 8. And, even after the ground is made good, only God can make a seed sprout. Only God can cause something come of that seed. While we are laborers together with God, we are totally dependent upon Him for any and all increase. And God does give the increase.

Back in our text, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 2:16 the apostle adds; **“And who is sufficient for these things?”** It just seems as if there is a weight on Paul as he says: “Who is sufficient for such a task”? The question itself implies there is difficulty in the role of a gospel preacher. And it is difficult work. The Bible speaks of “the work of the ministry”, Ephesians 4:12.

I am convinced many get into the ministry because they think it is a life of ease, and their ministry might be. For their ministry seems to be playtime and their churches are no more than playhouses. But for the true God called gospel minister, it is a work. But Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 3:1, it is “a good work”. Yet the question remains; “who is sufficient for these things?”

Well, in and of ourselves, none of us are sufficient for such a task. Paul was not sufficient for this, nor is any other God called man. Go with me to 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1:12 for a moment: **“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me”**. It is this divine enabling which causes any and all God called men to be sufficient. When a man is truly called of God, the Lord will enable him for whatever He has called him to do. It does not matter when, where, why, or any other question that may come up, if the Lord calls a man to do a job, the Lord will enable him to do perform his duty.

Now back to our text 2 Corinthians 2:17, **“We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God”**. This is what causes the man of God to be a **“sweet savor of Christ”**. This is what separates them from others who might be in the ministry. Paul said, “We are not as many which corrupt the Word of God”. Be assured, many do corrupt the Word of God. Some do it in ignorance, and yet some do it willfully. Paul said there are some who “would pervert the Gospel of Christ”, Galatians 1:7. He also spoke of some who turn “the grace of our God into

lasciviousness”, Jude 4. In Romans 1:18 he tells of those who “hold (hold down or suppress) the truth in unrighteousness”. And then he speaks of others who have departed from the faith and speak lies in hypocrisy, 1 Timothy 4:2.

Then Paul adds these words in verse 17 of our text, **“but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ”**. Every God called man ought to seriously weigh these words. Notice **“in the sight of God speak we in Christ”**. The man who stands before the people, opens this book and declares, “Thus saith the Lord”, is going to have to give an account one day, Hebrews 13:17. He is going to have to give an account for every sermon he has ever preached and every word he has declared as an ambassador for Christ.

If all who stand in pulpits and behind lecterns and podiums were aware of this, and really believed it, I think they might change some of the tactics they are using. I think it would cut out a lot of foolishness that is going on in churches and more especially in pulpits. For these are serious words uttered by the Apostle Paul, **“in the sight of God speak we in Christ”**.

## “KNOWING THE TIMES”

*By Bill Lee*

If you would, look with me in your Bibles this morning to the Book of Romans, Chapter 13. I would like for us to read verses 11 through 14. We begin our reading in verse 11. **“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. (13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”**

Our text is going to come this morning from verse 11> **“that knowing the time, hat now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we**



**believed.”** If you would, hold your place there in the Book of Romans and go with me back to the Old Testament to the Book of First Chronicles, and in Chapter 12. I would like for us to read one verse of Scripture here to go along with our text verse this morning. In this Chapter we have the record of that special band of men that David had with him. We know that David was in charge of all of the army of Israel, but he had a special band of men that he put great confidence in and that were a great help of him. Notice in verse 32, if you would. **First Chronicles 12: 32 – “And of the children of Issacar which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do;”**

Notice about these men and their special understanding -- which were men that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do. If you look back to our text in **Romans Chapter 13:11**. Paul said **“And that, knowing the time, that not it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”** There are many people who spend a lot of their lives, a lot of time, studying history and they want to know about the events that happened in the past. Then there are others that spend much of their time studying future events. They try to understand what is yet going to happen, and I think both of these are good studies – and they certainly should not be neglected.

And we know by studying the Scriptures that the Apostle Paul spent a good bit of his time referring the people of God back to their history – back to things that God had done in the past. And he also spent a lot of his time writing about eschatology - the end time events – things that are going to happen in the future. But, I notice throughout the writings of the Apostle Paul that he never neglected to tell people about their present duty and responsibility. Even though there were times he would write about the past – other times he would write about the future. But, then there were times he would write about the present. And tell about present needs, and enforce and encourage Christians in their duty and responsibility right now. And I think we need that over and over to know that it is good to look back...it is good to look forward, but we must look at the present.

The men that we read of in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles, the men of Issacar were men that had understanding of the times. They had understanding of the times in which they lived. And that understanding gave them knowledge of what Israel ought to do. That understanding was given to them for a specific reason that they would know what Israel ought to do. Not just what Israel ought to believe, but what Israel ought to do. In our text – in Romans 13, Paul is writing to the saints of God. And that is important that we point that out. Paul is writing to Christians – that is clear. If you look back to Chapter 1 and in verse 7 he is writing **“to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints:”** We must never apply our text to unbelievers. Paul is writing to Christians – he is writing for Christians, and we must never use our text in Romans 13 and verse 11 when we are talking to sinners about salvation. This is for saints.

There is just some parts of the Word of God that are for saints and for saints only, and we are doing harm to the Word of God and even harm to those to whom we are talking, if we apply the Scripture that is specifically for saints to sinners. Many do that in verse 11. They try to tell sinners that it is time for them to awake. We need to understand and always compare Scripture with Scripture. Unbelievers, sinners are not asleep. They are dead. There is a big difference, and they do not need to be awakened out of their sleep; their need is to be given life. Again, this is for the saints of God.

But, if you notice in Romans 13 and in verse 11, you read about the sad state of many Christians. And it is truly a sad state. They are going through this life as if they are asleep. Paul said, **“knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep:”**

Now, keep this in mind, if you would, that even though Christians are many times in this slumber state, they are just going through the world spiritually as if they are asleep. Notice that their salvation is never in jeopardy. Paul does not question their salvation. He does not say, “If you do not wake up and do what is your duty, you are going to lose your salvation.” But, rather he tells them in verse 11, that their salvation is nearer than when they believed. Again, nothing that we are going to do can undo the work of

God in salvation. But, yet, we are called to duty. And, we do have responsibility. And, notice in verse 11, if you would, that Paul tells these saints at Rome – and I am sure that it applies to many today – that **“now it is high time to awake out of sleep:”** If you understand the time, and what we ought to do, it is time for Christians to wake up out of their sleep.

Notice this in Romans 13, if you would, just before verse 11, Paul had begun to write to the saints about their Christian duty. In verses 1 through 5, he spoke there about their duties as citizens. Christian duty as citizens to honor those who are in authority. In verses 6 and in verse 7, Christians are to pay their taxes. They are to pay tribute. They are to pay their customs, and then in verse 8 through verse 10 he speaks about the law of love. Christian duty in the law of love.

And that brings us back to verse 11, and then verse 11 is simply a call – a rallying call – for Christians to perform their duty. It is high time to awake. Now is not our time of rest. When we are living here in this world, it is not our rest. Our rest is yet in the future. Now is our time to work. Now is our time to be in the service of our Lord.

There are many people, and many churches that sing that hymn “We’ll Work Til Jesus Comes”, but they spend their lives as if they are asleep. They spend their lives in idleness – doing nothing in the service of the Lord. And the Apostle Paul – in our text says, **“it is high time to awake.”** Now, that is not only true of individuals – it is true of churches, also. **“knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.”**

Hold your place in Romans, if you would, and follow me to the Book of Ephesians, and in Chapter 5. We begin in verse 14. **“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (15) See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. (16) Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (17) Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. (18) And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (19) Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and**

**making melody in your heart to the Lord; (20) Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”** Again in verse 14 is the call – **“Awake thou that sleepest,”** Verse 16 – **“Redeeming the time...”** In the Book of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, Chapter 15, and in verse 34. Again, keep in mind he is writing to saints. He is not writing to unbelievers. He is not writing to sinners, but to saints.

And in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:34, **“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame”.** Now, notice those words if you would. **“Awake to righteousness, and sin not;”** It is time to wake up, be active in the service of the Lord. Paul said, **“for some have not the knowledge of God:”** How can we sit idle as a church or as individuals, and not be busy in the service of the Lord when we know that there are people in this world that have not the knowledge of God. That is why we ought to be and why we are here active in mission work. We cannot sit idly by. We have been commanded to go, and to work and to do the things that we are told to do. Again, it is not time now to rest; it is not time now to sleep, but a time to **“Awake to righteousness.”**

In 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians, and in Chapter 5 let us begin here in verse 5. **“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. (6) Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. (7) For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. (8) But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. (9) For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. (10) Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. (11) Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”** Notice again, it is time to wake up. Verse 6 **“Let us not sleep, as do others:.”** Go back to our text in Romans 13. in verse 12, Paul said, **“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. (13) Let us**

walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (14) **But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof.**" And I'll point this out in verse 14. Paul did not simply say that we are not, while we are living in this world, to make provisions for the flesh. We certainly ought to do that, because we do have needs – fleshly needs. He said **we are not to make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.**" Our time is not to be spent in that. When you look back to verse 11 again, Paul gives the saints only one persuasion, only one motivation to awake out of their sleep. It does not have many arguments here, but he has one that is sufficient for Christian living. He has one argument, one persuasion, one motivation that is enough for the saints of God to wake out their sleep and do their Christian duty. Notice in verse 11. Here is his argument. Here is his motivation. Here is his reasoning, **"for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"**.

This word "salvation" in verse 11, it is a word with a wide variety of meanings, and it has several applications. There is judicial salvation, and then there is experimental salvation. There is a spiritual salvation, and there a temporal salvation. There are many different aspects to this. As surely as there is a past salvation for those who believe, there is also a future salvation. There is still a salvation that is out in front of us. When we are going to be delivered from these sinful bodies in which we live and be glorified together with Christ. That is the future salvation. Salvation includes deliverance, it includes regeneration, and it also includes resurrection and glorification. There is a future as well as a past aspect of this salvation. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:9 Paul said **"But we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead". (10) Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us"**.

Again, there are several applications to that. We can all look at our lives as believers, and we look back and we see where God has delivered us out of trouble. We know that He is now delivering us out of trouble, and as long as we live here upon this earth, He will yet deliver us

out of trouble. And, we can also look back, one day, at the divine quickening and regeneration, and God did deliver us there. He delivered us now. One day the Lord is going to come back and deliver us out of this world.

Our salvation is not complete yet. Paul told the saints at Rome, **"Your salvation is nearer now than when you believed"**. And there is that future aspect of salvation. Look in Romans 8:22. **"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (23) And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"**. Well, we had a redemption when the blood was shed at Calvary, but there is still yet a future redemption. Our redemption is not complete until in verse 23, we have the **"redemption of our body"**. In Luke 21:28 when Jesus spoke about the signs of the end time and His return to the earth, he told His disciples, **"when you see all "these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."** A future redemption.

In Ephesians 1:13 **"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. (14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.."** That redemption is yet future. Now, as Christians, as believers, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. God has given that to us as a seal and as the earnest of our inheritance, and we have this sealing until this yet future redemption of the purchased possession. In Chapter 4:30 **"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."** That day of redemption is still yet future. If we understand the future part of our salvation, our redemption gives us a better understanding of our text. Go back with me, if you would to Romans 13:11. Paul said, **"for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"**. Again, that is the persuasion, the motivation for the saints of God to not be asleep in the world, but to awake unto righteousness. He said, **"for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"**.

Consider this with me, if you would. There are two set definite fixed points in a Christian's life. If you don't understand that, you will never understand in verse 11 how your salvation can be nearer than when you believed. There are two definite set points. One of them is when we believe. The other is that definite fixed time-fixed by God when we shall be glorified together with the Lord Jesus Christ. Both of these are definite times. Fixed times. Unchangeable times. There was a definite time when you believe. Now, I am not among those who say you must know the exact time and place, or you are not saved. I don't want any part of that. But, everyone who is a believer surely understands that there was a day, there was an hour, there was a minute, and there was even a set second when you did believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And from that moment on, you began on a journey to heaven. You began on a journey to glory. And Paul said that your salvation is nearer now than when we believed.

Now, if that second point is not fixed and set as you begin that journey from the time that you believe – if that second point was not fixed and set, he could not say that you are nearer now. Because that point could have been backed up a lot. That point is fixed. As surely as that time you believed – a definite time, there is a definite time when you are going to enter into glory. And, Paul says that the saints of God need to understand the time. That you are closer to it now than you were when you believed. How long have you been a believer? Ever how long it is. Ever how many years it is...you are that many years closer than when you believed. You are closer now. When you look back to our text, Paul says, **"...that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed"**.

There is a time that is set by God when Jesus Christ is going to return. I don't know the time; that is in God's hands, but there is a time. And, we can carry it even further than that. There is a set time when you and I are going to die. It is a fixed time. Do you realize you are closer to that time now than you were when you first believed? You are closer to it now. There is a time when our spirits are going to leave these bodies and they are going to return to God who

gave them. There is a time coming when we are going to be absent from these bodies. There is a time when we are going to leave this present world, and in verse 11, Paul said, **"for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."** That future salvation is closer now than when we believed. If you and I realized that, and again, just consider how many years you have lived on the earth.

It is rational to assume that most of us don't have as many left as we have already spent. And, we cannot change the past. We can look back, and we can look at all the missed opportunities where just failed God and we were asleep, and we did not do out Christian duty. We cannot change that, but Paul said it is time to wake up now.

Your salvation is nearer now than when you believed, and if we just had the thought in our mind, it would really have an impact upon us that we are close to seeing Jesus. We are close to meeting God. We don't have much time left here upon this earth. Our redemption is drawing nigh. Paul says that's a motivation to awake out of sleep.

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