

Series Title: Truth Unashamed, Part 6- How then shall we live?

Sermon Title: Week 3: How then shall we live?

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✠ **Waiting for God**

- *On January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1953, a play opened in Paris that would become the most known work of the author and playwright Samuel Beckett. "Waiting for Godot."*
- *Story focuses on two down and out men, Vladimir and Estragon, who are sitting on a roadside bench, both waiting for a person named Godot. Not sure who Godot is, not sure if right place to meet him.*
- *While they wait, they carry on mostly mundane conversations and activities, and at times consider just killing themselves. You get the sense that the only thing of any meaning to them is waiting on Godot. Late in the day, a boy appears who claims to be a representative of Godot, and that he isn't coming today, but will arrive tomorrow. Act two is the next day, and it unfolds almost identical to day one. Finally, the same boy appears again to tell them Godot will for sure come the following day.*
- *Lots of opinions of what Beckett was trying to say, but most agree that it is a commentary on outlook that life is basically meaningless, and that Vladimir and Estragon represent humanity's tendency to look for the arrival of some form of savior who will bring deliverance, answer their questions, and bring meaning and purpose to life.*
- *Beckett's MAIN POINT then, seems to be that when people neglect their current life, and instead hope and wait for something to come and deliver them from their current circumstance, this deliverer- whoever GODOT may be, never comes.*
- *It's a pretty depressing outlook. But it's not hard to see how a person would observe the human condition and come to such a conclusion. World is full of people miserable and desperate in their current situation- in their NOW- and rather than finding hope and meaning in their now, they project their hopes of deliverance onto some hoped for deliverer- be it a person, government, a situation, or perhaps even God. When Godot never shows, the result is despair, and desire to give up.*
- *CONTRASTED with THIS is the NT hope of the return of Christ. Paul has just proclaimed the RADICAL truth that IN CHRIST, we have been set free from living by law and rules, set free to live by LOVE and a RELATIONSHIP with GOD. Now, he turns his attention to THE BELIEVERS GREAT HOPE that God- specifically Jesus- will one day return to this world.*

**Romans 13:11-12** *And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.*

- *REALITY! Biblical teaching about 'end times' (eschatology)... NT/Christian perspective being return of Christ... this is one of most debated, discussed, and at times distorted and misunderstood of all the major biblical themes. TWO EXAMPLES*
- *A de-emphasis or dismissal of the pressing issues of our time. "If the world is going to end soon, and 'dissolve like snow', then why bother trying to improve the world?"*
- *WORST... A loss of the sacred value of the now, replaced by a singular waiting for tomorrow. If the rapture is your retirement plan, you've lost sight of scriptures emphasis regarding Christ's return. New Testament Eschatology isn't really about us leaving the earth, rather Christ coming to restore the earth. KEY- Christ's plan to restore the earth INCLUDES US, and our role has ALREADY begun.*

- **IN THIS PASSAGE, Paul doesn't touch any of the big 'end time' concepts we often think of. What he DOES do is proclaim that there indeed is a TIME we need to understand, but it's not the 'end'. When thinking of the hope of Christ's return, the TIME Paul directs us to is not the future, but NOW.**

### † The Time is NOW

**Romans 13:11-12a** *And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. <sup>12</sup> The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.*

- **"present time" Not about parsing scripture and trying to find signs of second coming. Greek is "knowing the time". Paul is speaking of our CURRENT AGE- what is TRUE NOW FOR HISTORY OF CHURCH- yes, corrupt world, but the greatest truth of OUR AGE is that is a time in which CHRIST HAS COME AND MADE ALL THINGS NEW. OUR NOW is a time when Christ's redemption, freedom, HIS LIFE, is PRESENT, and points toward the reality that Christ will return and bring completion to all things.**
- **Paul speaks of an 'hour' a time that we need to consider, understand, and it is a time that has ALREADY come. Considering the 'hour' of our lives, he exhorts us to...**
  - ...To be awake **Get to this in a minute**
  - ...Our salvation is near
- **Salvation- 'have been saved', 'are being saved', 'will be fully saved'. It is this- future hope of the completion of our salvation, that Paul is looking toward, and he says it is 'nearer now than when...'**
- **Many think he means the return of Christ is very soon, as we understand soon, but that's not what he says. WHAT HE GIVES is sense of URGENCY and EAGER EXPECTATION- hope that what is GREATEST is yet to come.**
- **GOES ON TO SAY 'Night is nearly over, day is near' Image that our age, right now, we are living on the..**
  - ...The cusp of dawn
- **The 'night' that characterizes our world- time of spiritual blindness- will not last forever. In fact, given everything that Christ has done, the darkness is almost gone.**
- **KEY. When considering Christ's return, we tend to think of TIMING. But Paul is talking about a PERSPECTIVE. It may seem that things are getting darker, but in fact dawn is on the horizon. We live in a time WHEN THE LIGHT HAS COME- Rather than being people who would give up on the word, we are to be people filled with HOPE FOR OUR WORLD, for the DAY IS UPON US.**
- **Therefore, HOW WE LIVE NOW MATTERS! RESTATE! Given the reality that Christ will return- Scriptures emphasis is not on what will happen THEN, but HOW WE SHALL LIVE IN THE NOW.**

### † How then shall we live?

**Romans 13:12b-14** *So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh*

- **Wide awake! "Wake up from our slumber"**
- **Slumber is sense of being forgetful of God... he's here, but not front of mind. It's a picture of MISSING God's presence, goodness, and power, NOW.**
- **In Ephesians Paul gives powerful picture of this...**

**Ephesians 1:18-20** <sup>18</sup> *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, <sup>19</sup> and his incomparably*

great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

- **Eph 5: Wake up! Rise from the dead! KNOW WHAT IS TRUE. IT WILL GIVE YOU HOPE, EXPECTATION, CHANGE HOW WE LIVE**

- What we lay aside **“Deeds of Darkness”**

- **Simply put, don’t let sin have a hold on us. Let spirit bring conviction- whatever actions, thoughts, habits, false beliefs that are part of darkness... put them down! In Eph 5 “fruitless deeds” lives are not pointless!**

**Hebrews 12:1** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us...*

- **HOW DO WE DO THIS? By what we PUT ON**

- What we put on **“Armor of light”**

- **THIS IS KEY. We ‘put off dark deeds’, but we don’t ‘put on good deeds’. We PUT OFF negative actions and thoughts, but we PUT ON CHRIST HIMSELF.**
- **DO WE SEE! Perspective of the ‘night’ is that life is about what we do. LIGHT PROCLAIMS that LIFE IS ABOUT WHO WE ARE.**
- **Paul says, ARM YOURSELVES WITH LIGHT. Engage the darkness by being bringers of LIGHT. One way...**

**Philippians 4:8-9** <sup>8</sup> *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. <sup>9</sup> Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*

- **WHEN this is our perspective, we will see that we are NOT living in the night, but...**

- Living in the day

<sup>13</sup> *Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.*

- **Literally- behave lovely. Idea of simple, steady, continuous expression of God’s love.**
- **LIKewise, the negative behaviors here are all, at their core, actions and thoughts that place ourselves above others. They are a FAILURE TO LOVE.**
- **CONTRASTED, “CLOTHE YOURSELF WITH LORD JESUS”. Put on our armor, with is CHRIST HIMSELF**

- Living Armor

- **This is the relationship! Daily, purposefully, making the choice to SET OUR MINDS on what is true, on Christ himself.**

**Colossians 3:9-10** <sup>9</sup> *Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

- **OUR NEW SELF is THE LIFE OF CHRIST AS OUR LIFE. When we BY FAITH walk with HIM, we will...**

- Make no provision **“not think about how to gratify”**

**Galatians 5:16** <sup>16</sup> *So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

- *Everyone of us has a ‘big temptation’... something our flesh just loves, but is counter to Christ’s love. How do we not get sucked in? How do we not let this have any place in our mind?*
- *RELIGION SAYS by trying to remove the temptation. Just structure life in such a way that we never see or are exposed to anything that could tempt us. Legalism. Doesn’t work, not freedom. (Ro 14)*
- *WE PUT THE FLESH OUT OF POWER BY CHOOSING TO SET OUR MINDS, FILL OUR MINDS, WITH CHRIST. LIVING BY SPIRIT.*
- *Two final thoughts. As we consider the glorious promise of the REALITY that Christ will return...*
- ✠ *As New Creations in Christ who have brought from death to life, our hope is not in an EVENT, it is in a PERSON.*
- *And because that person, Jesus Christ, is here NOW- indwelling us- available to us by FAITH as our very source of LIFE... BECAUSE THIS IS TRUE*

*In Christ, we are not just waiting for the FUTURE!*

- *NOT SITTING AROUND WAITING FOR GODOT*

*We are bringing the future into the NOW.*

- *We aren’t just waiting for ‘THE DAY, but God calls us to live as if it is already the day, because we have been given the light. As Jesus himself said (Matthew 4) “Let your light shine before men, so they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven”*
- *THAT LIGHT SHINES not just in dynamic speakers, in big christian events, in stories of supernatural miracles... THAT LIGHT IS YOU. Each day, in the sacredness of the NOW of the normal lives we live, as....*