

A Sleeping Giant

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[0:00] Well, let's take our Bibles tonight and open them to Romans.

! Romans chapter 13 and find verse 11. Romans 13, 11 through 13 be the passage we're going to be looking at tonight.

Romans 13 verse 11. And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to wake out of sleep.

For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness.

Let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the day. Not in revelry and drunkenness. Not in lewdness and lust.

[1:08] Not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts.

Okay. That's our passage for tonight. Interesting passage, I would say. Surely, when you were young, and really you didn't have to be very young to first be introduced to that famous kind of popular story, Gulliver's Travels.

In fact, they've made some movies about it. In fact, one just recently. I understand, though I didn't see it. But you're familiar with the story. And I think my favorite part of the story is how it all begins.

You know, at least the part that I remember. I think it begins this way. You know, Gulliver is shipwrecked. And he's the lone survivor. Ends up on the beach of an island, an unknown island. Certainly unknown to him. It is inhabited by some strange people. Strange to him. And there's Gulliver, you know, he's asleep. Passed out asleep, whatever it may be, there on the beach.

[2:18] And here are these tiny little people. You know, they are tying him down to the ground. Driving in stakes, throwing ropes over him.

And they've got him all tied down to the ground. And they think he is evil. They think he is an enemy.

Even though he's not. Of course, they discover that a little bit later in the story. And so we're familiar with the story. Well, I think that's kind of a fitting, maybe a fitting analogy for a sleeping giant in our day.

A sleeping giant here in America. And just like the, like Gulliver, you know, that sleeping giant. This giant of which I speak is not an enemy.

Not evil, not bad, not an enemy to the world as some in the world would have us believe. And who is this giant? It is the church.

[3:25] The church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's like a giant that is dropping off into a deep, deep, deep sleep.

And I think that's what is, let's just be frank, let's be honest, has been happening to the church in America for a number of years.

We need to see that and admit that, that the church really has become, in the West, has become a sleeping giant. Almost oblivious to what is taking place all around her.

Would you agree with that? Okay, I see that hand back there. Okay, and I see another one. And another. Okay. But it's a serious problem, isn't it?

It's pretty easy when we're happy. And I'm pretty happy here. And you're happy, I think. Pretty easy to kind of be isolated. And, you know, we enjoy our fellowship and we love our church.

[4:29] And beginning to be even more and more involved in some things that God has called us to, it's pretty easy to lose track of the fact that, on the whole, the church in America has been asleep.

It's a giant still. And yet it is like Gulliver, a sleeping giant. And she is, I guess you might even want to carry the analogy a little bit further, is like Gulliver, being very quietly tied to the ground.

Inhibited as she sleeps in our country. And if this giant does not awaken soon, then I think it's safe to say that the church will be all but rendered completely useless in this society we call America. And that's a pretty strong statement, isn't it? Pretty strong concern. And yet if we would be honest, truly honest, and open our eyes to see, I think we would see this as true.

Falling fast asleep, being tied to the ground, being rendered to some extent to greater measures of inability, incapacity, to do what we've been called to do in this country.

[6:06] Now, God, that does not mean that God's plan is somehow going to be thwarted. That somehow God is going to fail just because we may fail in America.

It doesn't mean that at all. God is not a sleeping giant. God is alive and awake and working and will work. But He doesn't have to work through us.

And I think the church in America is falling asleep. And I think that's a good way to introduce what Paul is saying to us here in this particular passage. And he's saying it's high time that we wake up. Well, I guess first we could say it's high time that we listen to the exhortation given to us by the Apostle Paul in this particular passage of Scripture. It's high time to awake out of our sleep as the church in America.

Now, with that as the introduction, I see in this passage four truths. Four truths, all of which demand that we rise up from our slumber.

[7:18] All four of these demand that. And we're to rise up and do what we must do to prepare ourselves in this world and prepare this world for the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because that's the other theme here, obviously, in the text. He's speaking to the church. And the implication is that the church is asleep.

But the other theme here, and they're tied together, is the second coming of Christ. The imminent coming of Christ. And so Paul says in verse 11, for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed.

Now, what does he mean by that? What salvation is it that he's speaking of here? He says this salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

What is he talking about there? Well, you know, we have kind of covered this ground a number of times before. Remember this reality that salvation is to be understood in three tenses.

[8:32] There is salvation, past tense, present tense, future tense. We have been saved. Our being saved will be saved. And so maybe Paul is just talking about salvation in that sense.

The salvation that is yet to come. The fullness of our salvation. Well, I think he is. But primarily, I think we could draw from this text that Paul is actually personifying salvation.

And it's not a stretch to do that in all cases. To personify salvation. That is, to attach the word salvation not to a thing that has happened or a wonderful, gracious act of God.

But to tie the word salvation to a person. And so he, I think, is pointing us forward. He's talking about, certainly, the future tense of our salvation.

But it's salvation with a capital S. That is, our salvation is coming. And our salvation is Jesus.

[9:34] And he's coming. Coming soon, I believe. I think we all believe that and hope that to be the case. Jesus, though, whether it's soon by our reckoning of time or not, he is coming.

And certainly, it is a true statement to say that he's nearer now than ever before. Okay? You're not setting a date when you believe that. And this is pretty much what Paul is saying.

And, by the way, if the second coming of Christ was nearer when Paul wrote this letter, then how much nearer do you think he is today? Some few years less than 2,000 years later.

It's nearer. Now, I think it's near. More than just nearer. It certainly is that. But it is near. But this is Paul's point.

Paul's point is this. Not to try to determine whether it's going to be tomorrow or the next day or if it's near in terms of weeks, months, years. That's not his point at all.

[10:42] His point is, wake up. That's his point. Wake up. Based upon the fact that the coming of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ, is nearer now than ever before.

Certainly nearer now than when you first believed. Then, wake up. Wake up, church. It's time to wake up. Now, the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul says, if I understand this text.

Paul says, the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ is the incentive we need to live out the four truths that he's going to lay before us here.

Reveal to us in these scriptures. And what are these four truths? Number one. First of all, based upon the fact that Jesus is coming soon and his coming is soon.

Then we are to watch for his coming. Vigilantly. Watch vigilantly. We are to watch vigilantly.
[11:54] These are just really more than truths. These are admonitions from the Apostle Paul. We are to watch vigilantly. That is, if I could say it another way, we are to watch, yes, but we are to watch while we work.

While we work. Watch vigilantly. As opposed to watching and waiting. You know, moving up to the top of your house and, you know, onto the roof and position a little lawn chair out there and sit back. You've got a little cool glass of tea because you'll need it as hot as it is. And you're waiting for Jesus to come. You just put everything else aside, stop all other activity, quit your jobs, sell everything you own, except, of course, your lawn chair and glass of iced tea.

And you sit back and you're waiting for Jesus to come. Okay? That's watching and waiting, but it's not watching, waiting vigilantly.

We're to watch while we work. The church then must wake up because the return of the Lord is nearer now than ever before and there is much work still to be done.

[13:05] That's his point in verse 11. Look at verse 11. Again. Do this, knowing the time. And you do, don't you? What about that time?

That now it is high time to wake out of the sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. High time to wake out of sleep. What causes people to get drowsy?

I mean, to get kind of sleepy. And to nod off. There are a number of things that cause that. I mean, in a physical sense. And so let me just think about or suggest a few physical things or reasons for drowsiness.

And then we'll make a spiritual application. First of all, how about overeating? I'm sorry I had to mention that. I'm really sorry I had to mention that.

Because I like to eat. And sometimes overeat. In fact, I did it today. After church, Sherry made a great meal. We had all of our family over to the house. Except for Tim and Kelly and Ella.

[14:13] So there we are. We're eating and eating and eating. And man, after I was finished, I just... You know, sitting in the chair. We were watching the Olympics. And I don't know that I even saw much of it.

Kept nodding off. Overeating makes us drowsy, doesn't it? Or how about intoxication? And I'm not going to give a testimony about that. All right?

Number one, I don't have one. I mean, really. I hope you don't either. But we all know that the drinking of alcoholic beverages, becoming intoxicated, can cause a person to become drowsy, sleepy.

And how about this one? Idleness. Just laziness. Inactivity. You know, just kind of makes you tired. I see that every Sunday morning. When I look at it, I won't name any names. But, you know. But I've had some folks over the years just be honest with me after church and say, You know, Brother Don, there's nothing against you.

[15:19] But, you know, if I sit still for very long, I'm going to fall asleep. Well, thank you for that. Appreciate that. One man did say, But don't worry about it. I do the same thing when I'm watching football on TV.

But it makes us drowsy, doesn't it? We just kind of nod off sometimes. So, you know, whether it's overeating or intoxication or just simply idleness.

We become drowsy. Now, let's apply these to the church. This sleeping giant in our day.

The church has become drowsy by overeating. I'm not talking about potluck dinners. I did, by the way. I remember I recalled some lady, oh, years ago.

I don't remember what church it was. But she joined our church and she said, I don't know why she said this to me. She said, Pastor, I did not join the church because I love potluck dinners.

[16:24] And I thought, well, that's odd. I mean, why would she have to say that? Do people join churches because they like potluck dinners? Maybe they do. I don't know.

You know, churches, especially Baptist churches, like to have fellowship, like to eat. But I'm not talking about physical food. You know that. And so, in a literal sense, we're not talking about overeating, but rather eating too much of what the world has to offer.

We overeat. We take it in. We consume those things that are not necessarily bad things in and of themselves.

But they make us drowsy. I guess really we could sum it up this way, that the church in America has for a number of years now, because of our prosperity, the church has been gorging herself on

material things.

The material wealth of our world. Now, you know, there's a fine line. I praise God. And God does bless us in some of the things that we have and we enjoy.

[17 : 39] You know, God has given these things to us. But to some degree, they are part of an insatiable appetite that we as the church have to be like the world on the grand scale, in the area of materialism, to have things.

And so, you could sum it up with our eyes. Our eyes are becoming heavy with sleep because we have fantasized that our buildings and our budgets and bank accounts, and though this is not the case here, stained glass windows, and all of these things somehow are going to commend us to God when Jesus comes.

And we wouldn't admit that, put in those terms. But to a degree, we do operate kind of that way.

That we have these things and that somehow God's going to be impressed by these.

But, you know, we'd better wake up because these things don't matter to Him. They don't matter to Him. Except that some of these things be simply tools to an end, to serve Him and to accomplish His purpose.

But a lot of the things that we accumulate as believers, be it individual believers or now, but I'm talking about in the context of church, whether it's the church, the things we accumulate are not things that we really need and have to have in order to advance the cause of Jesus Christ in the world.

[19 : 19] And all you have to do is take a trip out of this country to another country that is not affluent and wealthy as America is and the American church is, go to another country and find out that they are doing great things or God is doing great things through the churches in some of these other countries and they have nothing, absolutely nothing.

Certainly nothing in relation to what we have. All right, so we kind of just become kind of drowsy because we're gorging ourselves on the things of this world.

You know the famous thing that was said, and I don't remember now who said it, but this is what someone has said about the church. No longer can the church say, gold and silver have I none. But also no longer can the church say, arise, take up your bed and walk. That we have lost our power, the church in America.

All right, so overeating. The other one is intoxication. Kind of, you know, drinking alcoholic beverages can make a person sleepy, drowsy.

[20 : 40] And we might think of this applied to the church in this way. I think it's pretty easy to see how this could apply. And that is that the church is indulging herself with the intoxicating sins of our culture, of this world.

Indulging ourselves with the intoxicating sins. And it is rendering us inactive and powerless to be the church of the living God.

Now, any church, by the way, has been put to bed when, for example, she can no longer speak out against the evils of our immoral behavior in our culture, when we can't speak out against immorality because the membership is indulging in those same acts of immorality.

And we're just put to bed on those things. We have no authority to speak because we've not dealt with the sin inside our own house. In a way, the church today has accepted what I think would be aptly called a self-imposed gag rule.

Because we've allowed the intoxicating sins to creep into the church. And so Paul is saying it's high time to wake up, awaken out of this kind of sleep and deal with these things.

[22 : 18] Then I also mentioned idleness. Idleness, laziness. I tell you, it will cause you to become sleepy and drowsy.

And that's what's happened to the church. Just plain old laziness. One farmer said about his hound dog, he said, Why, that old dog is so lazy, has to lean up against the barn just to bark.

You know, that's pretty lazy. But we've got to be on guard for laziness. And the spiritual application is really very clear.

There are many in the church today. And I'm not trying to be ugly or, you know, try to make any one person feel bad.

I mean, this is just a reality in the church and in our church as well. That the church today, there are many in the church today, become so lazy and lax in their commitment to Christ that they literally yawn in the face of God.

[23:26] Have you ever had anybody yawn in your face? I have every Sunday morning. No, I'm just kidding. I really don't. I really don't notice if anybody's nodding off, you know.

I really don't notice that. But I have had people yawn in my face. Have you ever had, you're just talking to somebody and you're continuing a conversation and they go, Well, how does that make you feel?

Am I boring you? It's not bad. It's because they're just sleepy. You know, they're just drowsy. And it can happen to us on a spiritual level that we just, you know, we just become lax and lazy in our commitment to serving the Lord through His church and in a sense yawn in His face while there are people dying and going to hell every day all around us.

There's work to be done, of course, always. Work to be done before Jesus comes. And He's coming. And we're mindful of that. He's on His way. And He is closer now than when we first believed.

So wake up. Wake up. Get busy. We're to watch vigilantly. And so I think this is a wake-up call. It's one of a number of passages similar to this and is one that probably is more poignant than any other passage because it's so direct and so clear where Paul says, And do this.

[25:00] Wake up. You know, He doesn't mince any words here. It's a wake-up call. We need to be conscious of what time it is. And the Lord is at the door, so to speak.

Take notice. All right. Then second, we're to war valiantly. We're to watch vigilantly. And we are to war valiantly.

The church then must wake up because the morality of our society is dissolving right before our very eyes. And we are the only ones in this world who have been appointed to do anything about it. Through God's Word and through our testimony and through the proclamation of the Gospel, we're the only ones who are literally the restrainers of evil in our society.

And so, Paul says, first we need to wake up and then we must put on the armor of light. That's what he says in verse 12. The night is far spent. The day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light.

[26:16] Put off. Put on. Could you imagine, I've got Matthew in here who's served overseas. Chris over there, the Army National Guard, several of you out here have served in the armed forces.

Can you imagine as a soldier lining up with the rest of the soldiers in formation? And all of the soldiers, can you imagine, can you picture that?

Here's a line of soldiers all lined up in formation and their commander in chief of the armed forces is about to give an inspection. And here they are, they're all lined up.

I mean, they look like carbon copies of one another. All have their uniforms on, dressed to the hilt with their uniforms. Not a thing is out of place. And so, here's the commander in chief and he's going down the line looking at each one.

And he gets to the last guy in the line and he's dressed out in a Nike t-shirt, some cut-off shorts and some flip-flops.

[27:25] Now, what do you think is going to happen to that guy? Well, not going to be good. What's his commander in chief going to do with that guy?

Well, I hate to think. But you see, here's the idea. Once he joined the armed forces, he was through with the civilian clothes.

He's through with that. And so, in one decisive act, and this is what Paul is saying, put on, put off, put on. Same thing is true of a soldier. In one decisive act, he discards the old clothes and puts on the uniform and from then on, he is identified by his new clothes.

His uniform. Now, that's what Paul has in mind here in this verse for the believer. See, the believer is to put off deliberately, decisively, the old clothes.

Or maybe actually, Paul defined it this way, the works of darkness. These are to be put off. Do you understand this?

[28:42] He's talking about all of the old things that were a part of your unredeemed life prior to your conversion, prior to salvation.

Old habits that were contrary to the Word of God. Old desires that God no longer wants you to have.

He wants you to have desires for Him. All the old desires, old habits, all the old affections are to be put off. The sin is to be put off. And he's talking here about a lifestyle and the activities that once identified you as an unbeliever.

Those are to be put off. Like you would take clothes off. They're to put off once and for all and in their place, what? Put on.

Put on what? The armor of light or the armor of truth. And then having done that, the believer is now ready to go forth to battle.

[29 : 48] To battle against the rulers of this world's darkness. So let me ask you, are you suited up properly?

If you were in formation and you're commander-in-chief, the Lord Jesus is inspecting, are you suited up properly? For the spiritual battle, the moral battle, are you suited up?

By the way, are you suited up for this year? This is a crucial year. We have an election coming up in November. Right? A big one.

A number of decisions are going to be made in the process of election. Government leaders and our leaders in our nation.

This is a big year, big election year. Are you suited up for it? What I mean is, in the first place, are you informed? Have you informed yourself?

[30 : 49] I mean, really informed from a biblical perspective. Now, I'm not going to tell you how to vote. I don't have anything in my notes about, well, tell them that they should vote for such and such.

No, that's not it. But, as a believer, we're to be suited up for every day's activity, but we're to be suited up for an all-important election this year. Are you informed about it?

Do you know what the issues are, the most important issues are? You know, because the church, I think, because of its half-dazed presence in our country, if things, listen, if things continue as they have been, as it has been going for the last 25 years or so, then what could we hope to experience in the next 25 years or so?

I've jotted down a few statistics. They say, in the next 25 years, in America, 100 million violent crimes, 250 million child abuse cases, 27 million divorces, 75 million illegitimate births, 43 million abortions.

That's a budget. And these are conservative estimates. And so, are you informed? Informed on these issues? That's what the armor of light is all about.

[32 : 21] The illuminating light of God's Word is what we're to put on for our daily lives and for everything that we do.

So, we'd better wake up, we'd better get involved and informed and be ready for the day, for what God has called us to. And that includes who we elect to be our president and our congressmen and women and so forth.

See, the Bible says that it is righteousness that exalts a nation. Not economic prosperity. I'm all for economic prosperity, but it's righteousness that exalts a nation.

Another part of the armor that we'd better put on, and I won't spend any time on that because I'm running a little late here, but that's the training and knowledge of Scripture. We need to put that armor on.

And so, let's sum this up and we'll move on. The church must wake up because Jesus is coming soon, right? Certainly, His coming is sooner than ever before and there is work to be done and the church must wake up because the morality of our society is going down the tubes and we're the only ones who can make any difference or do anything about that because we're the only ones who have the truth.

[33 : 45] So, watch vigilantly, war valiantly, and then third, walk virtuously. Walk virtuously.

Verse 13, let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

or to walk virtuously. Now, some people sleepwalk. Anybody here sleepwalk? Or would you even admit it here tonight before us?

Alright. No sleepwalkers here. I did when I was a kid. I was recalling a time, I don't remember very much about my childhood, but one time I woke up asleep in the bathtub.

How I got there, I don't know. My mom said that I walked in my sleep sometimes, and so I probably went to the restroom and then jumped back in bed. I thought it was the bed, but it was the bathtub.

[34 : 48] But there are people who sleepwalk, you know, and that's a pretty common kind of thing, and they go places and do things and sometimes even say things. And they are totally, totally oblivious, totally unconscious to it.

And in many ways, the church in America today is sleepwalking, sleepwalking giant. Now, the word walk here in this verse, of course, you know, is a reference to the outward life, the way we live our lives.

And it is, in large part, that part of our lives that people see, that they observe, those people around us. And so how does the world see you? That could be a sobering question.

Or, how does Bartlesville see you? Or let's broaden it to the church, our church, Highland Park. How does Bartlesville see Highland Park Baptist Church? I'm not talking about the building, I'm talking about her members.

How does Bartlesville see us? It goes without saying that our effectiveness as a church depends a great deal upon how our members walk.

[35:55] How we live out our lives. And Paul gives us the right way to walk and he gives us the wrong way to walk. And he says that the right way to walk is, according to this translation, properly.

Well, that ought to go without saying. We ought to live and walk properly. But what does that mean? He says, properly as in the day or the daylight. Now, the word properly, I think it's honestly in the King James, is a word that means becomingly.

All right? We're to walk becomingly. And that doesn't really help us very much. But you see, it's not just a matter of properly or honestly or as it is in the King James or a matter of integrity. That's certainly a part of it, but it's much more than that. It is living your life day by day as if it were always in the full light of the day.

That is, in the sense that everyone is watching. Everyone sees. Living your life as though it is being revealed by the light of the day.

[37:07] Now, that's pretty sobering when you think about it. That means even the things that we do in private, we're to do privately what we would not be ashamed of if someone were watching.

Always watching. And God, of course, is always watching. And so, Paul is saying talk the talk and walk the walk. And so, the unbelieving world is watching.

Don't think that they're not. And the time is growing short for them to trust Christ. And you and I are the only Jesus many of them will ever see. And then Paul tells us the wrong way to walk.

Verse 13, he lists a number of things. And some of these words sound a little bit strange to us, especially if you have a King James version. Some of those words just don't really connect with us today.

But the first one in the New King James is revelry. We're not to walk in revelry or rioting in the King James.

[38:08] Carousing in the New American Standard. Or orgies in the ESV. What does all that mean? Really, when you think about it, we have different kind of connotations that are attached to each of those words.

But what does it mean? You see, in the Greek culture, this word originally referred to a celebration, a parade, that would culminate in a parade which was done in honor of the God of wine.

And it was extremely wicked, immoral, an immoral event, kind of like our gay pride events that take place in this country. God help us. But in Paul's day, the word had taken on kind of a more expanded meaning, a more general meaning, and refers to any participation in activities that would arouse lustful and immoral passion.

Any kind of activity that would arouse these things. And that could be anything. Anything from unclean, immoral conversation, dirty jokes, off-color conversations that would arouse lustful thoughts, or certain reading materials, or television programming, or movies, or today, the Internet. Anything that would arouse immoral passions. And Paul says, don't walk that way. Don't do those things.

[39:35] Do not participate in these things. And then he mentions drunkenness. And I think, without exception, it is translated drunkenness in every version of the Bible. Meth-a is the word.

And it means ongoing intoxication. Drunkenness. And we don't need any commentary on what that word means. We know what that is, don't we? Drunkenness. And it would include drugs as well. Anything that would strip away inhibitions. And anything that would lead us and compel us to, or really, to allow us to do what the flesh wants to do anyway.

Drunkenness. And we're not to walk that way. And then he mentions lewdness. Lewdness. That's how it is in the King James. Or how about this one in the King James?

How about this one? Chambering. Everybody knows what that is. Right? Chambering. Maybe you don't. I don't. But I do know what the word means that's in the original text here.

[40:38] Some of the translations I think do a better job. Sexual promiscuity. Or sexual immorality. That really is the idea. Sexual immorality and perversion.

Participating in that in any way. That's what Paul's talking about. And, you know, we just cannot begin, I think, to imagine what effects have been, what the effects have been from our so-called sexual revolution in our country.

It probably started back in the 70s. You know, whether it's rape or teenage pregnancy or adultery or fornication or AIDS or incest or pornography or violent crimes against women and children and on and on the list goes from our sexual kind of freedom in our society.

And so, he mentions another one. He mentions lust or wantonness or sensuality would be really the word here, the idea here.

And very closely attached to lewdness here or chambering. And this deals more with the mental, with the thought life and the emotion, emotional attitudes toward immorality where we have unclean thoughts and impure fantasizing and so forth.

[42:03] Now, may I stop here just for a moment and remind you that Paul is not writing this letter to the first satanic church of Rome. Sounds like he is.

He's writing, though, to Christians. And so, can Christians involve themselves in these things? Yeah. They can and do. They do.

And Paul says, stop it. That's what he's saying. It's a call to personal purity. And then he mentions two other sins that involve interpersonal relationships and they almost seem out of place here, all these sexual sins, but there's strife and envy or literally quarreling with one another.

you know, he's talking about petty jealousies that occur within the body of Christ. And again, Paul says, stop this. Don't walk this way.

I tell you, the unbelieving world is having a heyday with the church over our infighting and internal fighting and so forth. They just love to hear that kind of stuff and it's happening all the time all around us.

[43:09] But we're to walk virtuously. We're to walk in a way that is becoming to a believer. A way that honors the Lord Jesus Christ. Now let me bring this message to a close by showing you one other thing here, the fourth thing, and that is that we are to wait victoriously.

Wait for the coming of Jesus and to wait victoriously. Verse 14, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust.

The church, of course, is made up of individual members. We collectively make up the church. And as individual believers, we need to stop making provision for the flesh, our fleshly desires, and start putting on, keep putting on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Literally, to clothe ourselves in all that Jesus is, is what we're to do. When you got up this morning, did you put Jesus on? When you got up to come to church today, did you put Him on?

All throughout the past week, as you got up and ate your breakfast and headed off to work, did you put Jesus on first? The times that you got together with friends and family, just little gatherings that you put Jesus on, when you had those times with friends and family and such.

[44:43] And so we better listen and act upon the exhortations that Paul gives us in this passage. And here they are in a nutshell or in a list.

Wake up, he says. It's high time to wake up. Cast off the works of darkness. Put on the armor of light, truth. Walk appropriately, properly, honestly, and make no provision for the flesh and put on the Lord Jesus.

Clothe yourselves in all that Jesus is. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

[47:30] Aren't you? And there's still a little daylight, so you can do a little work out in the yard if you'd like to. You know, trim the weeds that have been growing because of all the rain we've had.

And I'm just kidding. But you knew that, didn't you? All right, as you get these, take a look real quickly. First thing, of course, in the packet, as always, are the minutes.

Last minutes of the last business meeting, April 22, 2012. And you can kind of scan down through those very quickly. Okay. And unless I hear any objections, the minutes will stand as printed.

And hearing none. Let's move on. You have your financial reports from June. The first one is June's report.

And then after that, January through June or the year as it stands to date. And then the balance sheet after that. And you'll be looking at that.

[48:49] There's not much really to point out. I would say to you that June was not a great month.

Not a great month for giving. Can we be that honest? And summertime usually is kind of a tough time, most churches. But if you'll notice there that we were quite a bit under budget on receipts. And therefore, we were quite a bit over on the bottom line. And really, we spent less than we budgeted. But we gave less than we budgeted.

And so there you have it. And the only word I would say to you is that, number one, God has all the money in the world. Do you believe that? Now, He's given us to be stewards of it.

Some of it. Not all of it, but some of it. And we need to be faithful stewards. So I would just put that to you as your pastor. And let's continue to be faithful in tithing.

[49:53] But June was a little tough. The year to date. But we are sitting, if you'll notice, I'm not sure what page to tell you to turn to. But on the January through June, I would just point this out to you.

That even though our total tithing or income, as we're calling it, is a little less than budget.

We are, as far as net, we're 11,000, almost 12,000 above what we have budgeted. Or where we budgeted to be.

We actually budgeted to be a little bit in the hole by now. Because we were stepping out in faith.

And we're quite a bit above that. So that's something to be very thankful for. And yet continue to be mindful of our commitment to the Lord to support His church.

All right. Any questions about the financial reports, June's report, or the year in view, or anything there? I guess really I'm jumping ahead.

[50:59] We need to have a motion to accept the financial statements as printed. Do I have a motion to that effect? So moved.

There's one. Do I have a second? Got a second. Everybody's got their eyes down. Now, do you have any questions?

Okay. Well, not seeing any hands or hearing any questions, then if you're in favor of accepting our financial report as printed, then say aye.

And if you're opposed, say no. All right. Now, let Jonathan come up here and give maybe a brief report from the music ministry. And then after him, Chris.

And Yvonne's out with the children, so she will not be. And I don't see Lori either, so it'll just be you two. All righty. Well, choir took off for the summer as we have the past couple summers.

[52:11] And I think they well deserved it. They worked very hard. But we're getting back on track. Two weeks from today, we start back on working for Christmas and things we're going to be singing in the fall.

So be praying for us. And if you know of other folks singing by you that should be in the choir, let me know. I'll come and get them. But pray for us as we prepare.

Looking forward to Christmas. It's almost, it's still banging around in my mind a little bit, but it's coming together. Pray for us. I'm not sure what else to talk about.

That's pretty much it. I haven't been loafing all summer. I have been working, but we've been busy with other things around the church. But I have been thinking quite a bit about music and how we can use it more to not only help us here in the church, but also in our community, reaching out.

And I do think one thing I could say is about our M&M; singers that we go to nursing homes. We got to sing at a funeral this past week because our ministry reached a lady, ministered to her while she was up at Dewy Medical Lodge.

[53:21] She had such a, we had such a profound impact on her and her daughter who also sings with us that they wanted us to sing at her funeral. So we got to minister in that way. So pray for us as we go.

You never know who you're touching when you're spreading the love of Christ. So I think that's all I have to say. I don't have much to say.

Now, the youth ministry is going well. I would like to report to you. If you have not been able to get down there on a Wednesday night, I encourage you to.

We love visitors, even of the adult nature, as well as youth. We are experiencing some growth. It is kind of ebbing and flowing at this time because there's a lot of students kind of coming back through who were either involved in the IWANAS program and didn't make it into the youth program or they're involved very shortly in the youth program and have kind of dropped away.

So we have had some growth in that area. But still, it's kind of hard to nail down an exact number.

Generally, on Wednesday nights, we're running about 10 students now.

[54:31] This morning, we actually had 14. That's probably double what we have had on a Sunday morning. But the youth ministry is really taking shape.

We, of course, went to camp in June. And I did notice on the bulletin that the projected expenses for the missions giving, whatever, I can't remember what it's called, the missions offering, I think is what it's called.

Summer missions offering. Thank you. That we did meet that. And so I thank you all as a church for that because I believe both the youth and the children were able to go to camp. I know their cost is deferred quite a lot.

Really about half of what they would have had to pay without that for the youth. I do know that. As far as upcoming events, we're going to Youth Evangelism Conference in Tulsa, the 10th and 11th of this next month, August.

That will be a big event. We've already got, I believe, 10 students signed up for that. So that's more than we took to camp. So we're excited about that. We're still trying to nail down some commitments as far as, you know, making sure that more students are going.

[55:42] But the ministry is going great. We had our first parents' meeting. This, I think, I can't remember the date it was now. But it was a couple Sundays ago.

It was actually the original date for the business meeting. We had our first parents' meeting where we just kind of talked, hammered out kind of the vision. And I got the input from parents and kind of hopefully shaping that vision as we go forward.

We're going to start implementing volunteers in the ministry now so it's not just kind of a Tony and Chris show but more of an adult volunteers throughout the church.

So I encourage you to be praying for us. We're about to enter back into the school year. That's an exciting time for me. The summer is a difficult time. You think it's an easy time for youth ministry.

But it's difficult because I can't be in the school. And so when the school starts up, I get to meet that many more students and get to be that much more involved in the lives of the students.

[56:40] So be praying for us. Be praying for my wife and I. And also be praying about maybe God using you in our ministry. We would love to have more adult volunteers. We would love to have a few more down there on Wednesday night in all honesty.

Sometimes we have a lot of adults. Sometimes not. But if you would like to come and visit on Wednesday night and just sit in with us and just kind of connect with the students, I know they would love it. I would love it. It would be a great way to be involved in the ministry of Highland Park. But that is, I guess, about it for the near future. Thank you.

Anybody want to do that business?

If you're in agreement with that, let's stand together. I think we're all in favor. Mike Dershon, would you close us in a word of prayer, dear brother?

[58:44] Lord, we'll leave what we've decided to leave. Let's go up on the board. This will be better. Amen.