

- **Keep Loving; Be Ready For Jesus (Part 3)**  
**Pastor Rocklyn Clarke - Sunday March 18, 2012**  
**© 2012 Life Church Ministries, Inc.**  
**<http://www.LifeChurchBoston.org/>**

- **New Material**
  - **Preparation**
  - **Keep Loving; Be Ready For Jesus (Part 3)**
    - **Preparation - Romans 13:8-14**
    - **Standing Issues**
      - From a word Bishop gave me:
        - Make sure people do something with God's message.
        - Make it plain:
          - Use accessible language.
          - Use modern day parables based on every day occurrences:
            - Sitting at a stop light
            - Driving through a green light
            - Approaching a yellow light
            - Being cut off in traffic
            - Going shopping
            - Going to a mall
            - Going to school; sitting in class
            - Going to work; sitting in your office;
        - Keep it simple.
        - Use illustrations of truth out of my own experience.
      - Impart faith to obey the Word and receive God's promises.
- **Introduction**
  - Welcome to another service at the Hampton Inn & Suites.
  - Welcome Cards -
    - “I want to call your attention to the Welcome Card that you were given on your way into the auditorium”
    - These cards do two things for us:
      - They help us get to know our new visitors better.
      - They also give anyone (visitors or members) a chance to express a need or to give us feedback.
      - By filling it out you will help us to better serve you.
    - We're going to provide time for you to complete the cards at the end of our service, but we encourage you to start filling them out now.
      - **Please use this card:**
        - if you're a **first time visitor** or if you've **never** filled one out

before,

- to tell us about a **decision you made** today,
- to ask us for more information, or to give us **feedback**.

**Please include your contact information** unless we already have it. At the **end of service** we'll ask you to complete the card and then place it in the designated box or give it to someone from our staff on your way out.

- **Transition**

- We're following up on our discussion of Romans 12:1-8.

- 
- 
- 

- **Introductory Passage - Romans 12:1-3**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

- **Introductory Passage - Romans 13:8-10**

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

- **Read the Passage - Romans 13:11-14**

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has 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. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

- **Exegetical Idea**

Love one another; ignore your flesh and imitate Jesus instead.

- **What does this mean?**

- Romans is teaching us how to be the church.

- How to be the church:
    - How The Gospel Saves The Sinner (what individuals must know)
      - Romans 1 - Pagans are sinners
      - Romans 2 - Hypocrites and Jews are sinners too,
      - Romans 3 - All have sinned and are justified by faith
      - Romans 4 - Abraham was justified by faith
      - Romans 5a - Righteousness by faith ----> peace with God
      - Romans 5b - The problem of sin
      - Romans 6 - Dead to sin, alive to God in Christ
      - Romans 7 - Rules can't sanctify you
      - Romans 8 - Live by the Spirit
    - How The Gospel Relates To Israel
      - Romans 9 - 10 - How Israel blew it.
      - Romans 11 - There's still hope for Israel
    - How The Gospel Relates To Conduct (how the body must behave)
      - Romans 12 - Be living sacrifices
      - Romans 13a - Be good citizens
      - Romans 13b - Love one another and get ready for Jesus
      - Romans 14-15a - Relating to those whose faith is weak
    - From an apostolic perspective
      - Romans 15b-16 - Paul's ministry to Rome
  - Just as you pay your taxes, pay all of your debts.
  - Keep loving one another - it's the one debt you can never pay off.
  - Loving your neighbor as yourself fulfills the law.
  - Wake up and get ready for Jesus by living a holy life.
- **Is it True? Do I believe it?**
    - Yes: **Matthew 7:12** - . . . do to others . . .
    - Yes: **Luke 12:32-48**
  - **Homiletical Idea:**  
Keep loving and get ready for Jesus
  - **Purpose of the Sermon (what listeners should do)**
    - Review
      - Be the church.
      - Keep loving one another.
      - Keep loving your neighbors
    - Wake up!

- Put aside the deeds of darkness.
- Clothe yourselves with Jesus.
- **Review**
  - Be the church.
    - The church can be planted anywhere and bear fruit for God:
      - a workplace
      - a housing project
      - a prison
      - a street corner
      - a school
    - Love is the key component of our life together as the church.
    - If we don't love we cease to function as the church.
    - Don't be satisfied as a "Christian consumer" "paying" someone else to be the church for you. Learn how to "be" the church yourself by:
      - Embrace righteousness by faith in Jesus.
      - Embrace sanctification by listening to the Holy Spirit.
      - Offer yourselves completely to God.
      - Join with other believers in making your gifts available to one another.
      - Behave in ways that maintain body life.
      - Be good citizens.
      - Treat others the way you want to be treated.
      - Unify around Jesus rather than disputable points of doctrine.
      - Gain an apostolic perspective.
        - Jesus is invading this world. We are part of the invasion force.
      - Be transplantable.
    - Offer your bodies as living sacrifices
      - This is relational - you, a living being, offer your body to God, who is also a living being.
      - Offering is a conscious act that must be intelligently communicated - use your words!
    - Keep loving one another.
      - This is a key component of the Life Church Vision.
    - Keep loving your neighbors as you love yourselves
      - This sums up the law:
        - Do not commit adultery
        - Do not murder

- Do not steal
- Do not covet
- This is a key component of the Life Church Vision.
- **Wake up!**
  - Get ready; those who don't will be punished. - **Luke 12:32-48**
  - Do you know what time it is?
    - Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed!
    - Time flies - we need to make the most of it!
    - God saved you to do more than just pursue the American dream!
  - Are we really awake?
    - People who are asleep don't respond to important stimuli.
    - It's hard trying to function when you're sleepy.
    - Falling asleep late nights at my computer at MIT.
    - Some people are so busy they can't stay focused on spiritual things.
  - Do you have the right spiritually supportive relationships?
    - You already know what relationships God wants you to deepen.
- **Put aside the deeds of darkness**
  - Acts 15:13-31: Gentiles were told to avoid:
    - food sacrificed to idols
    - blood
    - meat of strangled animals
    - sexual immorality (*πορνεία* - Gk)  
fornication
  - Behave decently . . . not in "*night activities*" - **1Thessalonians 5:1-11**
    - Orgies (*κωμος* - Gk)  
drinking parties involving unrestrained indulgence in alcoholic beverages and accompanying immoral behavior — 'orgy, revelling, carousing.'
    - Drunkenness (*μέθη* - Gk)
      - Direct application - alcohol intoxication
      - Indirect application - recreational drug use
    - Sexual immorality (*κοιτη* - Gk) - Luke 11:7; Rom 9:10; Heb 13:4  
A piece of furniture used for bedding.
    - Debauchery (*ἀσέλγεια* - Gk)  
"License," mostly physical, figuratively spiritual. "Debauchery" or "licentiousness" is the sense in 2 Pet. 2:7 (Sodom and Gomorrah) and Eph. 4:19 (the pagan world). Sexual excess is probably meant in Gal. 5:19 and

certainly so in Rom. 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:21; 2 Pet. 2:2, 18. [O. BAUERNFEIND, I, 490]

- Dissension (ἔρις - Gk)  
to express differences of opinion, with at least some measure of antagonism or hostility — 'to argue, quarrel, dispute.'
- Jealousy (ζήλος - Gk)  
The usual translation of this term is "zeal": a. as the capacity of state of passionate commitment; b. comprehensively for the forces that motivate personality (e.g., interest, taste, imitative zeal, rivalry, fame, enthusiasm); c. in the bad sense jealousy, envy, competition, contention.

- **Clothe yourselves with Jesus**

- Count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God. - **Romans 6:1-14**
  - Sanctification
    - Erroneous sanctification theories
      - Eradication Theory: (e.g. Wesley): You have a sinful nature and sanctification eradicates it.
      - Counteraction Theory (e.g. Keswick): You have a sinful nature and sanctification causes it to be suppressed until Jesus returns.
      - Pentecostals: You have a sinful nature and the baptism of the Holy Spirit removes it.
    - Our old man (all of humanity in Adam) was crucified and we now put on the new man (all of saved humanity in Christ).
    - We have a single human nature (not two natures) that is pulled downwards by sin and upwards by the Spirit of God.
    - Sin is an infection co-extensive with your entire nature, not some malignancy that can be "surgically" removed.
    - Salvation involves us receiving new life into our single nature - not a new nature. Think blood transfusion rather than surgery.
  - Are you a shame magnet or a grace antenna?
  - The flesh is about more than just "pet" bad behaviors.
  - How can you count yourself "alive to God"?
    - Only by talking to him.
- Clothe yourselves with Jesus - Romans 13:14
  - How can you clothe yourself with Jesus?
  - Jesus is alive; clothing isn't! Putting him on involves talking to him.
    - Getting the conversation started:
      - Talk to God!
      - What should I talk to God about?
      - What you just read in the Bible and how to apply it to your life.

- Come boldly to Jesus - Hebrews 4:12-16
- Let God break you!
  - This is one of the implications of **Romans 12:1-3**.
  - God needs to free us from our reliance on our own analysis, planning, and abilities.
  - This looks different for different temperaments.
- **Small Group Discussion**
  - Are you awake?
  - How are you dealing with the deeds of darkness?
  - Are you clothing yourself with Jesus Christ?
- **Conclusion**
  - Keep the conversation going.
  - Wake up and stay awake!
  - Drop the deeds of darkness!
  - Keep clothing yourselves with Jesus Christ.
- **Altar Call / Welcome Cards / Communion ?**
  - Welcome Cards - refer to script
  - We're almost ready to close this portion of our service, but first we want to give you a chance to respond to what you've heard.
  - Earlier in the service we mentioned the welcome cards and we encouraged you to begin filling them out.
  - Right now we want you to complete your welcome card. We especially want you to use this card if:
    - if you're a first time visitor
    - if you've never filled one out before,
    - if you want to tell us about a decision you made today,
    - if you want to ask us for more information, or to give us feedback.
  - Please be sure to include your up to date contact information unless we already have it.
- **MC & Worship Team continue with tithes, offerings, and worship**
- **Benediction - Numbers 6:24-26**

““The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.””
- **Men's Prayer**

- **Life Group Material**

- **Life Group Word Material**

These are sample discussion questions / topics. Your life group leaders may choose to adjust these questions, substitute new ones, or spend the Word section of the meeting in a different way altogether.

Scripture taken from the [HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION \(NIV\)](#).

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 [International Bible Society](#). Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

- **Romans 12:1-3**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

- **Discussion Questions / Topics:**

- Are you offering your body as a living sacrifice to the living God? Do you talk to him about what you're offering him? Discuss.

- **Romans 13:11-14**

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has 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. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

- **Discussion Questions / Topics:**

- From the standpoint of this passage are you awake or still asleep?
- How does the list of bad behaviors in this passage make you feel?
- What role have alcohol and/or drugs played in your life in the past?
- What role do alcohol and/or drugs play in your life now?

- **Scriptures For 3/18/2012 Life Church Sermon**

Unless otherwise indicated scriptures are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

**Romans 12:1-3**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

**Romans 13:8-10**

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

**Matthew 7:12**

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

**Romans 13:11-14**

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has 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. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

**Luke 12:32-48**

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.

**But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."**

Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”

The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

“That servant who knows his master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

### **Romans 6:1-14**

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

**In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.** For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

### **1Thessalonians 5:1-11**

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. **You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.** For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

## Small Group Discussion

- Are you awake?
- How are you dealing with the deeds of darkness?
- Are you clothing yourself with Jesus Christ?

## Life Church Mission Statement

- Our mission is to teach people:
  - to enjoy knowing Jesus without fear, inadequacy, guilt, or shame,
  - to follow him together as his family,
  - to function together as his body,
  - and to work together to expand his kingdom.

## Understanding The Bible

Unless otherwise indicated, scriptures are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Here, for your convenience, are the Bible passages for today's sermon at Life Church. We use mostly the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible so that you can read it in modern English. You may have been accustomed to reading or hearing the King James Version of the Bible, which uses older English (with words like "thee" , "thou", "thine", "believeth", etc.). Don't be alarmed - the passages are really from the Bible!

The Bible was originally written in three ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. None of the people in the Bible, and none of the people who God used to write it spoke English. In fact, English did not even exist as a language when the Bible was written. The King James Version, first published in 1611, was a translation of the Bible from it's original languages into the every day English that people used back then - almost 400 years ago! They didn't just speak that way in church - they spoke that way with everyone. The King James Version was "modernized" in 1769, but, even so, English has certainly changed a lot since then! **We believe that if you're reading an English translation of the Bible it ought to be up to date - written in the English you speak every day. God wants you to understand his Word so that you can put it into practice!**

**Life Church Web Site: <http://www.lifechurchboston.org/>**