

June 14, 2020

Speaker: Eric Naus **Series:** This I Believe – The Book of Romans

Passage: Romans 13:8-14

Community Group Questions: “Love and Light”

Read Romans 13:8-14 aloud as a group and then work through the following questions.

1. In Romans 13:7, Paul had just instructed Christians to pay what they owe: taxes, respect, honor, etc. Now, in vs. 8, he says there is one debt which we can never pay down: “Owe no one anything, except to love each other.” Why is biblical love like an endless debt? How does this apply in real life situations where it is difficult to love each other well?
2. Verse 8 and verse 10 assert that love “fulfills” the law. Vs. 9 illustrates this idea by showing how several of the 10 commandments find their deepest fulfilment in the love command of Lev. 19:18 (Note how Paul’s words are a reflection of Jesus’ teaching in Matt. 22:34-40). In what ways is it true that love is the fulfillment of the law? Can you think of some examples where keeping God’s commandments is the most loving thing you could do for someone?
3. Verses 11-14 use metaphors of day and night, light and darkness, sleeping and being awake, to describe the period of history in which we live as Christians. The moral darkness of this world is passing away, and the light of Christ and his kingdom is spreading over the horizon. In fact, “the day” (vs. 12) is likely a reference to the Day of the Lord, when Christ will return. Paul says, “salvation is nearer to us than when we first believed” (vs. 11). The word “salvation” is a reference to our final salvation at the return of Christ. Because we know time is “linear” from a Christian perspective, and because we know that Jesus’ return has been scheduled by God, this means that every day we get closer and closer to Christ’s return, to the day fully breaking in, and to our final salvation. How should this teaching create a sense of urgency in our lives as Christians? What does it mean to “wake up from sleep!” (vs. 11)? Do you believe that Christians tend to live with the urgency that Paul describes here? Why or why not?
4. Verse 12 uses the language of clothing (“cast off” and “put on”) to say that we must take off those clothes that fit with the night (the sins listed in vs. 13), and put on clothes that fit with the day (the “armor of light” in vs. 12 and “the Lord Jesus Christ himself” in vs. 14). Practically speaking, what does it look like each day to cast off the works of darkness and put on Christ? Do you practice the daily spiritual discipline of repentance from sin, and recommitment to the reign of Christ over your life? What does that look like for you?
5. Verse 14 tells us to, “make no provision for the flesh.” How do we often feed and make provision for our sin habits? What would it look like to starve, suffocate, and make no provision for sin? What has worked for you in your Christian fight against sin?

Prayer suggestion: In addition to sharing needs and requests, ask the Lord for his help in loving as he loves, and living as people of the day.