

Advent 1 A 2019
Wake Up
Matins
[written in oral form]

Romans 13:11-14
Advent 1 Year A

December 1, 2019
Gordon Allaby

I am using the Romans text,.... because it refers to reveling, drunkenness, debauchery..... all appropriate concerns for this audience. []

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Actually, I was drawn more to the "Wake from sleep" part.

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When I was a pastor in Dover, Ohio, I was still single for the first six months. I was all alone in the house there. Jessica had just started at university, and Leslie was in Louisville, Kentucky finishing her last year at seminary. About the fourth or fifth Sunday at the church, I had a rather unique experience.

That particular Sunday, I keenly remember hearing my alarm go off and thinking, “**wow** already?..... well, I’ll just rest for a minute.”

A minute later, I rolled out of bed, got ready and drove down to the church, which was about ten minutes away.

Everything seemed quite normal – the service began as usual, and I was in the middle of preaching what I thought was one of my best sermons, when I started to hear this strange sound getting louder.... and louder, then my lower abdomen began to ache.

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This was all very perplexing. The strange buzzing sound became more pronounced, **and then I realized**the ache was from my bladder and the strange sound was my alarm clock. !!!!

I quickly woke up focussed on the alarm clock, and saw that it was 10 minutes before church was to begin.

Ooooh, that is a terrible feeling!

Have you ever done that? – heard the alarm, and NOT get up?
..... and then dream that you did get up??

This points out one of the hazards of living alone: you don’t have any one to help you get out of bed when the alarm goes off.

Well, I called the church, frantically got ready, and arrived 30 minutes late. Of course, when I sheepishly walked into the middle of the church service, everyone stared at me with a snicker on their face.

That was the first time I’d ever been late for worship service, and hopefully the last time.

If I’m ever late again,it will be Leslie’s fault.

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**NO**, ..... I’m responsible for responding to the alarm!  
And, hearing the alarm is not enough.

\* Hearing the alarm is not enough.

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In the Romans passage, Paul is sounding the alarm with the challenge, and I quote, “**You** know what time it is, it is now the moment for you to **wake from sleep!**”

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During fearful times of persecution and political turmoil, Paul creatively writes this short message, which some think it is a hymn.

Much of it presents darkness and things that happen in the night, but the alarm is sounding.

Verse 12 states the night has been long, but the dawn is approaching.  
Paul dictates that we are to let go of the night and the ways of the night,.....and take on/put on the uniform / the armour of light.

In verse 13, "Not" repeats three times like a drum beat.....like reveille calling a soldier to awake,... which was their alarm.

Yet, it is still night, but the reader is encourage to envision the day,... which includes living honourably, as people of the light.

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We understand the symbolism of night and day / darkness and light.
The NT contains numerous references to living in the light and letting our light shine.

Paul gives examples of night activities to avoid, and they are both personal and community sins.

Finally, the directive is given that brings salvation nearer and it is the way for believers to live. Followers of Christ must not be slaves to our lusts and personal self indulgences. We must not yield to those destructive desires.

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The aspect of "salvation is nearer": ~~~~~

Most scholars think that this is more than the parousia - Christ second coming. By the time of writing the letter to the Romans, Paul was shifting away from believing the parousia would happen soon.

So, this *salvation* is personal and communal.

Paul is sounding like Isaiah and Jeremiah: giving "contingent" hope.

In other words, things will get better,.....but the reader must do their part.

We believers must shed the night, and be the light that is so desperately needed.

It is time to wake from sleep.

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Is the dawn approaching? Is redemption drawing nearer?

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It sure seems dark these days, and I am not referring to the amount of sunshine we are receiving now.

There is political turmoil.

More countries are choosing populous tyrants, as democracies are faltering.

There are millions of refugees seeking safety.  
Gun violence is increasing.  
And, the Climate Crisis is getting worse,.....and that is frightful.

These are all very big and complex issues, and we are prone to respond, "Who me? What can I do?"

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What is that sound? []

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People.....and nations are whining, "Look at others! Why should I do with less to reduce my carbon footprint, when others are not."

"China, the US and India are huge polluters. Why should I change and suffer?"

Yet, if all believers in God were to wake up. Consider the impact!

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To be sure, change means much more than driving less or lowering the thermostat.

The problem is massive. Therefore, we must focus on the cause -- on what is feeding the problem.

And,.....like it or not, we are part of the problem.

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Broadening Paul's list of sins / of what Not to do:

reveling -- is living in luxury; merrymaking, with a selfish focus.

drunkenness -- is being numb; it is again self centred.

debauchery is excessive indulgence, usually referring to sensual pleasures, but it also infers a departure from virtue and faithfulness.

licentiousness: beyond sexual connection, means living without honour and discipline. It is also claiming selfish exception and entitlement.

In addition, both quarreling and jealousy are traits / behaviours that stem from being self centred -- selfish.

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Yet, we are all good church going people.
This does not apply to us. ??

What is that sound? []

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I think it is human nature to seek a safe place of comfort and security.  
Yet, being self focussed is the cause of the world's problems.

However, we rarely examine the implications of our decisions.

Being in the light / being a person of light includes self exposure / self introspection.

Illumination can be painful,.... painful indeed.

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I think a helpful question to ask ourselves is: "What am I avoiding?"

This will expose our fears and our selfishness.

"What am I avoiding,.....and what is that alarm sound?"

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Moreover, God wants us to live beyond our human nature / beyond safe comfort and security.

We are called to live by faith,.....and that is scary.

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The dawn arrives when we enter the light / when we see the world in a different way--a divine way.

The dawn arrives when others see our light shining, shining hope and a deep, vibrant faith in God.

We are not asked to change the world.

We are simply asked to change ourselves,.....and I think that is the start of a new day.... a new world.