

# 讲题：该醒过来的时候了

经文：罗马书 13 章 11-14 节

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## 引言

罗马书里有许多经典的金句，十三章 11-14 节就是其中的一个例子。这段经文之所以广受教会传颂，是与对教会贡献良多的神学家奥古斯丁有关。奥古斯丁在记述自己心路历程的《忏悔录》里，有一段关于他悔改的经历：在寻道和思考多年之后，纵然他决志日渐走近属灵归家之路，但不免挣扎。某天，他在一个院子里祷告和哭泣，纠缠何时决志委身的时候，突然听到邻近有孩子的声音说：“*tolle lege*”。拉丁语，即“拿起来读。拿起来读。”他感觉这是来自神的声音，嘱咐他阅读神的圣言，以获启发。他擦干泪水，回到原来的位置，翻开他早放在那里的罗马书，读到罗马书 13 章这段经文，奥古斯丁写：“我没有继续读下去，也不需要了。就读完这句，灵光直射我心，驱走一切黑暗疑云。”

这是关于奥古斯丁的故事，也是许多人在光明和黑暗中徘徊的故事。人在黑暗中挣扎，暮然瞥见真光，仿佛从睡梦中醒过来，立志要告别黑暗，步

入光明，此后过清醒的生活。然而这个历史不仅是个人历史或个人的经验和体会，也是信仰群体的等候和盼望。盼望耶稣基督来临的救赎、等待神介入驱走黑暗。（参罗 8：22-23）“我们知道，一切受造之物一同叹息，劳苦，直到如今。不但如此，就是我们这有圣灵初结果子的，也是自己心里叹息，等候得着儿子的名分，乃是我们的身体得赎。”

罗马书 13 章 11-14 节是教会年历中，圣诞节前四周将临期（Advent）里其中一周的经文，信仰群体在黑暗中等待和盼望。所以，教会在圣诞节前的四个星期里，在每周的主日崇拜内，每次点燃一根蜡烛，是提醒教会、提醒世界：“黑夜已深，白昼将近。”然而，人要觉察自己在黑暗里又谈何容易？除非被唤醒，沉睡在梦中的人怎会醒过来？

## 信徒生命的特征

教会在将临节第一及第二主日的讲道经课都是取自保罗致罗马人书后面几

章的经文。在这些章节中，保罗描述了基督徒生活的特征。例如其中一段：“我们就当脱去暗昧的行为，带上光明的兵器。行事为人要端正，好像行在白昼。不可荒宴醉酒；不可好色邪荡；不可争竞嫉妒”（14：12-13）

这些章节一般被视为保罗的伦理，但是严格说来，它们更是一种从圣灵的关注中产生的伦理，而不是一系列的规则或守则。或许，“圣洁”这个词比伦理更好地描述了这些信徒生活特征，因为“圣洁”只能来自神，是圣灵的礼物，而伦理是我们可以创造、设计和严守的东西。

但是你或许会说十诫不也是道德的准则吗？当保罗要求信徒活出生命的特征时，情况并非如此（顺便说一下，与耶稣的方式没有什么不同）。诫命总纲是“爱人如己”。这显然不是一个非常简单的总纲，要比遵守十诫条文难得多了。因为你会针对十诫的条文说，我没有杀过任何人；我没有偷；我没有犯奸淫；我守安息日等。但是你虽然没有触犯这些诫命，但不表示你是“爱邻舍如己。”我们一般所说的“爱己”是什么意思？这意味着我们总是寻求最适合我们的东西。我们寻求对我们有益的东西，对我们有帮助的东西。现在，诫命的总纲是“爱邻舍如己”，意思乃是爱邻舍，寻求邻舍的利益、好处和幸福。这种努力不仅只是遵守行为准则，更是看着为邻舍的益处而努力。

邻舍（正如我们从好撒玛利亚人的比喻中知道的那样）不是我们选择的邻舍（我们看得起来的人，或者是那些要求不太高的人）。邻舍永远是另一个人，无论我们喜欢与否，他都会走过我们的道路，是我们通常不会与之交往，甚至试图躲避的人！而这样的邻舍总是意想不到地出现在我们中间，出现在我们的生活中。

以这种方式理解邻舍的是耶稣基督。将临节是我们等待基督再来的日子。我们的盼望基督第二次的降临。（考虑到律法的总纲是“爱邻舍”，再加上降临节第一个星期日的福音经文，我们开始意识到，也许我们会很意外在街上遇到我们的“邻舍”。也许基督的第二次降临就是基督通过邻舍不断的再来。然而，我们一直在为将临节及圣诞节庆祝活动做很多预备工作，其实这些准备工作与基督再来无关，而真正庆祝圣诞乃是庆祝基督道成肉身，以邻舍的身体，住在我们当中。

现在是我们该从睡梦中醒来的时候了。在这种情况下，我们是如何理解“沉睡”或“在睡梦中”？沉睡可以视为死亡，死亡是没有圣灵的生活的特征。但是，保罗是在向罗马的基督徒群体讲话。他是在向受洗的基督徒，生活在圣灵里的基督徒讲话。看来，这种在沉睡中的光景乃是一种精神上的沉睡。这些领受圣灵的恩赐的信徒，却仍在沉睡中。仅仅因为我们受洗，因为我们有作神儿女的特权，并不意味

着我们可以轻松的活着，甚至任意放纵自己的私欲。

恰恰相反，现在圣灵的工作开始了，他要使我们成为圣洁，要塑造我们与耶稣基督保持一致。现今，是该趁早睡醒的时候，真正的冒险开始了！

我们是通过信仰的实践塑造自己，比如每天的祷告，认罪，守圣餐，对邻舍的爱。所有这些操练，以及更多，都是光明的兵器。在所有这些行动中，不是“我们”（你/我）在做某事使我成为一个更好的人，而是圣灵在我们里面工作，使我们成为圣洁，使我们（个人和作为一个群体）符合耶稣基督。

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（13：11-12a）

保罗将生活方式建立在这样一个事实中，即罗马信徒知道一个新的“时间”（*kairos*）。现在是“从睡眠中醒来”的时候了。“醒来”是动词的表达，这动词是被动的。意思是：你不只是在唤醒自己，而是被唤醒。另一方面，保罗用这个动词来指基督的复活，以及信徒因受洗归入基督而对自己有复活的盼望。正如保罗所说，“我们藉着洗礼归入他的死，和他一同埋葬，原是叫我们一举一动有新生的样式，像基督借着父的荣耀从死里复活一样。”（罗马书 6：4；也见 6：9；7：4）。在这种情况下，“沉睡”即是一种属灵的迟钝，一个人需要从中觉醒（也见帖撒罗尼迦前书 5：6-11）才能走在新生命中。保罗说，是时候回到

你的洗礼中，成为在基督里被唤醒的人。

## 洗礼唤醒沉睡的基督徒（13：12b-14）

所有这些活动都被保罗框定在洗礼上。

“穿上主耶稣基督。”这是记念我们洗礼的呼唤。洗礼是“披戴主耶稣基督。”在我们的洗礼，我们穿着宽恕的袍子，正是这份宽恕的礼物，这份神爱的礼物，使我们超越了自己的黑夜，超越了我们自己的欲望和肉体，为邻舍而活。基督徒的生活是每天持续不断的操练，从我们的洗礼开始，直到我们离世的那一天。洗礼是一个持续的开始。是的，这是一种死亡，一种结束，但它却使我们陷入一种持续一生的觉醒中。

## 总结

我们生活在盼望中，一种积极的盼望中，意想不到的基督的降临对我们来说，不再是可怕的，而是充满喜乐的，因为它是从上帝而来的。以赛亚的异象不再只是一个遥远的梦想（“他们要把武器打成犁头，把矛打成修剪钩”），而是在这个基督徒群体中，当我们“爱”我们的邻舍时，已经实现了。

**Title: It's time to wake up**

**Scripture: Romans 13:11-14**

**Speaker: Rev Phua Chee Seng**

**Translated: Deacon Ho Choon Siang**

### **Introduction**

There are many classical memory verses in the book of Romans, and chapter 13:11-14 is one of them. This Scripture passage is widely spoken in churches because of the theologian Augustine, who made many contributions to the church. In his book "The Confessions of St Augustine", where he recorded his experiences, there is a portion regarding his experience of repentance: After many years of seeking the truth and pondering, he still struggled despite resolving to walk closer day by day to the road of spiritual homecoming. One day, while he was praying and weeping in a garden, in a dilemma on when to commit himself to God, he heard a child's voice nearby saying: "*tolle lege*". It was Latin for "pick up and read". He felt that this was a voice from God, telling him to read God's Holy Word to gain inspiration. Wiping his tears, he returned to his original position, opened the book of Romans that he had left there earlier and read the passage of Romans 13. Augustine writes, "I did not continue reading, for there was no need to. After reading this verse, a spiritual light shone into my heart, chasing away all darkness and doubts."

This is a story about Augustine and is also a story of many people wandering between light and darkness. People struggling in darkness suddenly see the true light, and

appear to wake up from their slumber, resolving to leave the darkness and enter into the light to live a sober life from now on. However, this history is not only a personal history or personal experience, it is also the waiting and hope of the faith community. Hoping for the redemption with Jesus Christ's coming, waiting for God to intervene and chase away the darkness. (Refer Romans 8:22-23) "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies."

Romans 13:11-14 is part of the lectionary for one of the weeks of the season of Advent, the period of four weeks before Christmas in the church calendar, about the faith community waiting in darkness and hope. Therefore, in the four weeks before Christmas, at every Sunday service, a candle is lit to remind the church and the world: "The night is nearly over; the day is almost here." However, it is not easy for people to realise they are in darkness. Unless they are woken up, how can people in slumber awake?

### **Characteristics of a believer's life**

The church lectionary passages for the first and second Sunday of Advent are taken from the latter chapters in the book of Romans written by Paul to the Romans. In these chapters, Paul describes the characteristics of the Christian life. For example: "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 carousing and

drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.” (Romans 13:12-13)

These chapters are generally regarded as Paul’s ethics, but strictly speaking, they are more of ethics borne out of focus on the Holy Spirit, rather than a set of rules and regulations. Perhaps, the word “Holy” better describes these characteristics of a believer’s life than ethics, as “holiness” comes only from God and is a gift from the Holy Spirit, while ethics is something we can create, design and guard.

But you might say are the Ten Commandments not moral standards? When Paul asks the believers to live out these characteristics in their lives, that was not the case (by the way, it is similar to Jesus’s method). The summary of the commandments is to “love your neighbour as yourself”. This is obviously not just a simple summary, for it is much harder to obey this than the Ten Commandments. You may refer to the clauses in the Ten Commandments and say, “I did not murder anyone before”; “I did not steal”; “I did not commit adultery”; “I have kept the Sabbath” etc. But although you did not violate these commandments, it does not mean you “love your neighbour as yourself”.

What do we usually mean when we say, “love ourselves”? It means we always seek what suits us the best. We seek things that benefit us or things that help us. Now, the summary of the commandments is to “love your neighbour as yourself”, meaning to love our neighbours, seeking the benefit, best interests and happiness for them. These

efforts are not just obeying codes of conduct, but putting in effort for the benefit of our neighbours.

Neighbours (just as we know from the parable of the Good Samaritan) are not those that we choose (people we respect, or those who do not have high demands). Neighbours are always other people, who cross our paths whether we like it or not. They are those that we will not usually interact with, or even those we try to avoid! Such neighbours always appear amongst us and in our lives unexpectedly.

Jesus Christ understood neighbours in this way. Advent is the season where we wait for Christ’s coming again. We hope for Christ’s Second coming. Considering that summary of the law is to “love our neighbours”, together with the Gospel lectionary passage for the first Sunday of Advent, we start to realise that maybe we will meet our “neighbours” by coincidence on the streets. Perhaps Christ’s Second coming is that Christ will continue to come again through neighbours. However, we are always busy with preparation work for Advent and Christmas celebrations, but these are not relevant to Christ’s coming again. The true celebration of Christmas is celebrating the incarnation of Christ to dwell amongst us in the body of a neighbour.

Now is the time for us to wake up from our slumber. In this situation, how do we understand “slumber” or “sleep”? Slumber can be seen as death, and death is a characteristic of a life without the Holy Spirit. However, Paul is speaking to the Christian community in Rome. He was speaking to

baptized Christians who live in the Spirit. It seems that this period of slumber is a mental slumber. These believers who have received the gifts of the Spirit are still asleep. Just because we have been baptized or have the privilege as God's children does not mean we can live carelessly or indulge in our desires. Instead, now the work of the Holy Spirit has begun. He wants us to become holy, and mould us to be aligned with Jesus Christ. Now is the time to wake up as soon as possible, for the real adventure has begun!

We mould ourselves through living out our faith, such as daily prayer, repentance, observing the Holy Communion, and love for our neighbours. All these disciplines and more are the armour of light. In all these actions, it is not "us" (you or me) doing something to make us a better person, but the Holy Spirit working in us to make us holy, so that we (individually or as a community) match Jesus Christ.

### **It is time to wake up from our slumber (13:11-12a)**

Paul established a way of life in this reality, that the Roman believers know of a new "time" (*kairos*). Now is the time to "wake up from your slumber". "Wake up" is a passive verb, meaning you do not wake yourselves up, but are being awoken. On the other hand, Paul uses this verb to refer to Christ's resurrection, and the hope of resurrection of believers because of their baptism into Christ. Just like Paul said: "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." (Romans 6:4, also

referring to 6:9; 7:4). In this case, "slumber" is a type of spiritual tardiness. A person needs to wake up from it (also refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:6-11) to walk in the new life. Paul said, it is time to return to your baptism and become someone awoken in Christ.

### **Baptism wakes up believers in slumber**

Paul placed all these activities under the framework of baptism. "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ." This is a call for us to remember our baptism. Baptism is "putting on Lord Jesus Christ". In our baptism, we put on the robe of forgiveness, and it is this gift of forgiveness and godly love that causes us to transcend our own darkness, desires and flesh to live for our neighbours. A Christian life is to practise these daily continuously, starting from our baptism till the day we leave this world. Baptism is a continuous beginning. Yes, it is a type of death and ending, but it causes us to fall into an awakening that lasts for life.

### **Conclusion**

We live in hope, and it is a type of positive hope, that the unexpected coming of Christ is no longer something fearful to us but full of joy instead, because it comes from God. Isaiah's vision is no longer a distant dream ("They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks"), but something fulfilled when we "love" our neighbours in this Christian community.