

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

### THE HOUR IS NEAR – PART II

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

“The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.” Jesus has said He will return to take you to be with Him. He simply did not say when. The Scriptures say, “you do not know the hour” (Matthew 25:13) and He will return “. . . at an hour when you do not expect Him.” (Matthew 24:44) The “hour is near!” (Yesterday’s devotion.)

Jesus told the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) to teach the importance of your spiritual preparedness for His return. The foolish virgins were not diligent in their preparedness. The wise virgins realized they had to have extra oil because they did not know when the bridegroom would come. While the foolish ones were away, He returned. When they returned from purchasing more oil for their lamps, they knocked on the door and were not permitted to enter. Those unprepared and not anticipating Jesus’ return to Judge the living and the dead think they still have plenty of time. Even though the Scriptures warn that the day is near, many do not take these words to heart.

The writer to the Hebrews exhorts you to be prepared for Jesus’ return with these words: “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25) St. Paul wrote the words of Ephesians 6:10-13 to encourage you to be properly prepared to engage in the spiritual warfare you will become engaged in while you wait for Jesus’ return, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Prayer: Prepared me Lord Jesus through Your Word and the Sacraments for Your return. Amen.

The Bridegroom soon will call us, "come to the wedding feast."  
May slumber not befall us Nor watchfulness decrease.  
May all our lamps be burning With oil enough and more  
That we, with Him returning, May find an open door!

There shall we see in glory Our dear Redeemer's face;  
The long-awaited story Of heav'nly joy takes place:  
The patriarchs shall meet us, The prophets' holy band;  
Apostle's, martyrs greet us In that celestial land.

There God shall from all evil Forever make us free;  
From sin and from the devil, From all adversity,  
From sickness, pain, and sadness, From troubles, cares, and fears,  
And grant us heav'nly gladness And wipe away our tears.

In that fair home shall never be silent music's voice;  
With hearts and lips forever We shall in God rejoice,  
While angel hosts are raising With saints from great to least  
A mighty hymn for praising The Giver of the feast.  
(LSB 514)